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**Displaying Edinburgh in 1886:
The International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art**

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Abstract

The International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art held in Edinburgh in 1886 was the first universal international exhibition to be staged in Scotland. This thesis examines the event as a reflection of the character and social structure of its host city and as an example of the voluntary organisation of an ambitious project. The background to the Exhibition is located in the progress of large-scale exhibitions in Victorian Britain, in competition between cities, and in Edinburgh's distinction as an administrative and cultural centre and a national capital. The Exhibition's organisers are situated within the city's networks of power and influence and its circles of commerce, industry and municipal government. The space created to host the Exhibition is examined as an ideal depiction of Edinburgh as both a modern and a historic city. The origins of the exhibitors populating the Exhibition space are analysed, and their motivations and exhibiting strategies are scrutinised. The composition of the visitors to the Exhibition is considered and the development of the event as a venue for popular entertainment and spectacular display is discussed. In conclusion the chaotic aftermath of the project is examined, together with its influence on subsequent British exhibitions.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed by me, and is my own work. It has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.



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Preface

Abbreviations

#	Exhibit number, International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art, Edinburgh 1886, <i>Official Catalogue</i> , 5th edn. (Edinburgh: Constable, 1886)
BoOE	J.C. Dunlop and Alison Hay Dunlop, <i>The Book of Old Edinburgh, and Hand-Book to the Old Edinburgh Street</i> . (Edinburgh: Constable, 1886)
BoSE	John Gifford <i>et al.</i> , <i>The Buildings of Scotland: Edinburgh</i> . (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984)
DSA	<i>Dictionary of Scottish Architects</i>
ECA	Edinburgh City Archives
ECL	Edinburgh Central Library, Edinburgh and Scottish Collection
GCA	Glasgow City Archives
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
NRS	National Records of Scotland
NBA&LJ	<i>North British Advertiser & Ladies' Journal</i>
NBDM	<i>North British Daily Mail</i>
NLS	National Library of Scotland
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>

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1. The idea of an Exhibition

In February 1885, a group of Edinburgh businessmen, industrialists and other notable citizens assembled to promote a venture intended to bring prestige and trade to their city. That undertaking, the International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art, opened only fifteen months later as Scotland's first universal international exhibition. Despite initial misgivings, sufficient finance had been raised to support the project. The West Meadows, a popular public park, had been provided by the city's Town Council as a suitable site. Within their enclosing stockade the grounds had been landscaped to include attractive promenades. A distinctive range of temporary buildings incorporated a Grand Hall, art galleries, exhibition courts and the full-scale reproduction of a historic Edinburgh street. Exhibitors took advantage of the opportunity to produce spectacular displays. A Machinery Hall contained steam engines, working powerlooms, bakeries, and a full-size printworks. Courts were set aside for an Artisan Section and for the display of Women's Industries. Lighting was provided throughout by the novel technology of electricity. In the grounds, a demonstration Electric Railway conveyed visitors to a Model Tenement showing modern improvements in housing and the science of sanitary engineering.

The Exhibition became the social event of Edinburgh's summer of 1886. Middle-class season ticket holders paid repeated visits. The event brought tourists to the city, many on specially organised excursions. Hesitantly at first, arrangements were made for cheap admission for workers and their families. Besides the appeal of the displays of art, commerce and industrial production, larger and larger crowds of visitors were attracted by an increasingly ambitious programme of entertainment and spectacle featuring music, sporting events, fireworks, balloon ascents and a Highland Gathering. Three royal visits graced the Exhibition with appropriate pomp and ceremony; the serving Prime Minister appeared, briefly, in the midst of a crucial election campaign. Less pleasingly, the closing day was disrupted by an Edinburgh student riot. This could not detract from the Exhibition's popular success: by the end of its six-month run more than 2,750,000 visits had been recorded.

The Edinburgh International Exhibition was one event in a year of exhibitions, evidence of the growing contemporary exhibition craze. Smaller-scale international shows had already been held in Edinburgh, of Fisheries in 1882 and Forestry in 1884. The 1886 Exhibition ran concurrently not only with the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, the latest in the South Kensington series of London events, but also with the International Exhibition

of Navigation in Liverpool. Thereafter, international exhibitions were held in Newcastle and Manchester in the Jubilee year of 1887, and in Glasgow in 1888. The latter two events were massive undertakings, on a scale to match those of South Kensington. The interplay between Edinburgh in 1886 and Glasgow in 1888 ushered in a sequence of exhibitions alternating between the two Scottish cities: international shows in Edinburgh in 1890 and Glasgow in 1901 followed by two Scottish National Exhibitions, one in Edinburgh in 1908 and the other in Glasgow in 1911. In this sequence the Glasgow events were in every case on a larger scale, were more spectacularly successful, and drew larger crowds. In the process Glasgow became renowned as an exhibition city; the corresponding Edinburgh exhibitions have languished in comparative obscurity.

The 1886 Exhibition nevertheless retains a vestigial place in Edinburgh's popular historical imagination, not least through the isolated monuments which remain as public sculpture. The Albert Victor sundial and the memorial Masons' pillars still stand *in situ*; the Brassfounders' column, once the centrepiece of the Artisan Section, now graces Nicholson Square; and its best known landmark, the arch of whale jawbones imported for the Shetland and Fair Isle knitting stall in the Women's Industries Section, has intrigued generations of pedestrians crossing the Meadows by Jawbone Walk.¹ The Exhibition enjoys a similar tangential presence in the historical record. It has been called to witness subjects as diverse as urban theory, home industries, women illustrators, collecting, or the connoisseurship of souvenirs.² To date however no detailed examination of the event, its background and its significance has appeared. This thesis sets out to fill that gap by confronting the Edinburgh Exhibition directly, in totality, as a phenomenon of its city and of its period.

The literature of nineteenth-century exhibitions is extensive and methodologically diverse. Grand narratives trace the emergence of the exhibition as an institution of

1 The arch is currently [2014–15] removed for conservation.

2 Volker Welter, 'History, Biology and City Design—Patrick Geddes in Edinburgh', *Architectural Heritage*, 6:6 (1995), pp.60–82; Janice Helland, 'Working Bodies, Celtic Textiles, and the Donegal Industrial Fund 1883–1890', *Textile*, 2:2 (2004), pp.134–55; Rosemary Addison, 'Women Artists and Book Illustration in Edinburgh 1886–1945'. (PhD, Edinburgh College of Art/Heriot Watt University, 2004); and her 'Corporate Images, 1886: Advertising at the International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art', in Iain Beavan (ed.), *Images and Advertising: Four Essays*. (Edinburgh, 2002), making use of the NLS Constable Archive; Stana Nenadic, 'Exhibiting India in Nineteenth-Century Scotland and the Impact on Commerce, Industry and Popular Culture', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 34:1 (April 2014), pp.79–82; Graeme Cruickshank, *The Edinburgh International Exhibition of 1886 and Its Souvenir Mauchline Ware*. (North Berwick, 2000).

modernity, the *éclat* of the Great Exhibition of 1851, the growing scale and complexity of the international events and the emergence of a mass public seeking sensation and entertainment. Historians of engineering and technology analyse the exhibitions' avant-garde architecture and their role in displaying and publicising technological advances. Urban history examines their spatial organisation, their expression of civic pride, of power relationships and the positioning of interest groups, and their demonstration of inter-city competition; and cultural history stresses their spectacular nature, their display of consumption and commodification and their representation of city, nation and empire. This study will engage with these issues as they arise. It remains at the same time rooted in the specifics of place and moment. The discussion will feature the prominent personalities involved in the Exhibition, most notably the dominant figure of Lord Dean of Guild James Gowans, who became inextricably identified with the project for good and ill. The leading presence is however that of the city of Edinburgh, around which this discussion is centred: by observing the Exhibition, we can view the city and its distinctive personality.

In 1994 R. J. Morris and Graeme Morton identified 'the Edinburgh problem' in the historiography of Victorian Scotland: the wealth of literature on Enlightenment Edinburgh was followed by a dearth of nineteenth-century material, in contrast to contemporary Glasgow whose history, the writers suspected, was more intelligible in English terms: 'Dare we ask if this is because Glasgow responds well to English questions?'³ It can be argued that this historiographical imbalance also echoes the different characters of the two Victorian cities. Despite their traditional and continuing rivalries with Edinburgh, Glasgow's élites compared their city naturally with the great English commercial and industrial centres: Manchester, Liverpool or Birmingham. Edinburgh had on the other hand no available comparator.⁴ The city's position as a stateless capital was expressed in its institutional, historical, topographic and touristic distinction and was evident in its rulers' concern for ceremonial and their aspiration to leadership of the Scottish nation. These concerns and aspirations would be made manifest in the story of the 1886 Exhibition.

3 R.J. Morris and Graeme Morton, 'Where Was Nineteenth-Century Scotland?', *Scottish Historical Review*, 73:195 (April 1994), p.94. As many of the references throughout the present study will attest, more recent scholarship, including that of these authors themselves, has gone some way to correcting this imbalance; though see also Ewen A. Cameron, 'Glasgow's Going Round and Round: Some Recent Scottish Urban History', *Urban History*, 30:02 (2003), pp.276–77.

4 Relationships with Dublin, the other stateless capital of the Union, centred on a fruitless squabble over precedence: David Robertson, 'The Precedence of Edinburgh', *Edinburgh, 1329–1929*. (Edinburgh, 1929), pp.131–44. For Glasgow see also n.78, p.33 below.

Plan of the work

The Exhibition is presented here as the outcome of the interaction between three groupings of participants. The *organisers* came together to advance the Exhibition project; they created an ephemeral space for the event. The *exhibitors* were invited to populate this space with merchandise and displays; and the *visitors* assembled within it to contemplate the objects and to enjoy the show. All three groups hoped to profit, in one way or another, from the experience of the Exhibition.

Within this framework the thesis is organised in six parts. The remainder of this Chapter 1 sets the scene. It returns to the distinctive makeup of Edinburgh in 1886, to examine its development as a modern city and its construction as a historic capital. It then turns to the mixed fortunes of the great exhibition phenomenon in Victorian Britain after the success of 1851. The two themes are united in a discussion of the organisation of Edinburgh's first two international exhibitions, of Fisheries in 1882 and Forestry in 1884.

Chapter 2 focusses on the first of the three sets of actors, the Exhibition's organisers, as they initiate and promote the undertaking. It follows the campaign from its inception within Edinburgh's small business circles, through its enlistment of commercial and industrial interests and influential Town Council members. Its growing momentum as a Scottish national enterprise extending to an initially reluctant Glasgow; and the campaign culminated in the mobilisation of municipal assets—in the gift of its defining West Meadows site—assured finances, and the human resources of Edinburgh civil society to guarantee the project's success. The Exhibition's organisation is thus identified as an expression of the powers of Edinburgh bourgeois voluntarism. Its Scottish compass reveals Edinburgh's aspirations to capital city status and national leadership, though analysis of its financial support exposes its overwhelmingly local roots. This Edinburgh focus is confirmed by an examination of the network of committees carrying the venture forward: incorporating the city's male middle-class professional and technical expertise, but finding a place, not always comfortably, for working-class artisans and activist women.

Chapter 3 turns to a consideration of the space which these organisers created on their Meadows site. It considers the Exhibition buildings and grounds as a 'perfect city', an idealised construction of Edinburgh itself. It examines the event, like its host city, as a contrast between modernity and history. The spectacular modernity of the great exhibition project is seen in the design of the layout and grounds and in the Machine Hall and the installation of electric light. The opposing recourse to tradition is found in the historic trophies and symbolism on display, leading to the centrepiece attraction of Old Edinburgh.

This reconstruction of its ancient—but recently lost—urban fabric is read as an assertion of Edinburgh’s place as a romantic historic city and a national capital. The decay of the real Old Town, the opposing processes of sanitary improvement, and the consequent salience of working-class housing as a public issue are encapsulated in the discussion of the Model Tenement, James Gowans’s demonstration of an ideal of artisan housing. These issues of modernity and tradition, of reconstruction and improvement are brought together in a discussion of the response to the Exhibition of its most distinguished critic, Patrick Geddes.

Within the Exhibition city Chapter 4 scrutinises the exhibitors, the second group of participants in the undertaking. It analyses their origins: overwhelmingly Scottish, with a strong Edinburgh representation, they belied the event’s claims to internationality while confirming its status as a national undertaking. While foreign exhibitors were few a ‘banal’ presence of imperialism and global trade is nonetheless detected in the displays of Scottish exports and of imported materials. Two specialised Exhibition courts merit specific examination: the Artisan Section, displaying the results of modern working-class leisure as much as traditional craft skills; and the Women’s Industries Section where the emancipatory possibilities of employment were invoked beside women’s work as a source of genteel income, and the demonstration of craft skills by workers in rural home industries. This last theme of performance is extended to women workers on display elsewhere in the Exhibition, most obviously in Old Edinburgh, an arena of unconstrained commerce in the midst of historical reproduction. More generally, conflict between the commercial interests of exhibitors and the organisers’ intentions is exposed in two areas of dispute: the attempted prohibition of unauthorised over-the-counter sales; and the protests over jurying and the award of medals, for many exhibitors the entire point of their presence. These aspects of the Edinburgh event are revealed as typical of late Victorian exhibition practice.

The third and last group of Exhibition participants, the visitors to the show, are considered in Chapter 5. Detailed analysis of the collected admission figures for different classes of entrant is used to reveal the size and makeup of the Exhibition crowd as the event followed its trajectory from middle-class pleasure garden to a site of mass entertainment. The characteristics of the different categories of visitor are discussed: of season-ticket holders, excursionists and other tourists, and the Edinburgh populace paying at the turnstiles. In this latter category, the organisers’ controversial reluctance to provide cheap entry for artisans is explored. The discussion proceeds to the crowd-pleasing ceremonials of the Exhibition’s formal royal visits, once again demonstrating Edinburgh’s

leadership of civic Scotland. The second of these, Victoria's visit in mid-August, is seen as a turning point, heralding the increasing emphasis on entertainment which, with eventual cheap entry, underpinned the Exhibition's increasing popular success. The visitors' experience of the event and the behaviour of the Exhibition crowd is explored, concluding with an evocation of the riotous events of the Exhibition's closing day.

The final Chapter 6 unravels the Exhibition's tangled organisational and financial aftermath, in the controversies over the fate of the buildings and the uses of the Meadows as public space; and in the uncertainties over the size and disposition of the expected surplus from the event. This latter issue concerns the fate of Gowans, now ill and insolvent; his reward from the proceeds striking at the basis of Victorian voluntary public service. Despite these misadventures, the overall success of the Edinburgh Exhibition leads to consideration of its status as a model for the other large-scale exhibitions of the late 1880s, and to some more general conclusions on its significance as an event in the life of the city.

A note on sources

This thesis makes extensive use of a variety of primary sources. The principal archival resource for the 1886 Exhibition consists of the papers of Cuthbert & Marchbank S.S.C. held in the Edinburgh City Archives, James Marchbank and David Cuthbert having been respectively secretary and law agent to the Exhibition.⁵ Their papers include Committee and Executive minutes, legal papers, correspondence, circulars and ephemera relating to the Exhibition. The relevant minutes and papers of Edinburgh Town Council, with the records of a number of Edinburgh voluntary societies have also been consulted in the City Archives. These sources are complemented by the extensive Exhibition material held in the Edinburgh and Scottish Collection at Edinburgh Central Library: this includes the unique scrapbook of photographs, Exhibition publications, squibs and other ephemera compiled by William Cowan.⁶ The National Records of Scotland holds the papers of Davidson and Syme W.S. documenting aspects of their client James Gowans's tortuous business affairs; the NRS also holds the scrapbooks of Sir Arthur Mitchell which record the successes of his

5 Cuthbert and Marchbank went on to reprise these roles more than twenty years later at the 1908 Scottish National Exhibition. I would like to thank Richard Hunter, Edinburgh City Archivist, for his advice on and assistance with this project, along with that of James Hogg at the Edinburgh and Scottish Collection of Edinburgh Central Library, and Denise Brace at Edinburgh City Museums; and the staff at these and other collections and libraries consulted in Edinburgh, Glasgow and London. For a full list of archive sources used, see p.285 below.

6 For whom see *Scotsman*, 07 May 1929, p.8.

son Sydney, the architect of Old Edinburgh, and which also contain valuable Exhibition memorabilia. Finally among Edinburgh archive collections the National Library of Scotland holds the proceedings of Edinburgh Trades Council which have been used extensively here, along with their trade and private sources which include the records of T.&A. Constable, printers to the Exhibition. Outside Edinburgh, Glasgow City Archives hold material amassed by the Depute Town Clerk's office relating to Glasgow participation in the Edinburgh event; and in London, the scrapbooks compiled by George Shaw of the Plumbers' Company relating to the Old London exhibit of 1884 have been consulted in the London Metropolitan Archives

Exhibitions by their nature produced a wide range of printed material in the form of catalogues and listings, guidebooks, and commentary and description of all kinds. These have been used extensively here as sources not just the Edinburgh Exhibition but also for the other shows of the period, in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow and further afield. Of equal importance is the range of contemporary periodicals and newspapers which have been consulted. Exhibitions were of abiding interest to the readership of the general reviews; but also to the specialised audience for the technical journals which produced detailed descriptions of the buildings, exhibitors and technical advances on display. First place however goes to the mass of newspaper reports, commentary, criticism and correspondence scrutinised for this study. While the national press and the newspapers of other cities have been used to throw light on the Edinburgh Exhibition, it is naturally through the newspapers of its home city that the Exhibition is read most clearly. The six Edinburgh newspapers in 1886⁷ shared the characteristics of the Victorian press: taking advantage of advances in production and communications technology, with extensive tracts of newsprint to fill, skilled reporters meticulously documented the minutiae of the city's social, associational, municipal and political life. At the same time, their various editorial stances and often vituperative correspondence columns provided a running commentary on these local events and issues. In all this, the local press provided a detailed portrait of a distinctive city, the arena within which the Exhibition as an event took place.

7 These were: the Whiggish *Scotsman*, the Edinburgh newspaper of record; its more populist sister paper the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, launched 01 Jan 1886; the Tory *Edinburgh Courant*, merged 06 Feb 1886 into the *Scottish News*; the radical *Edinburgh Evening News*; the evangelical but failing *Daily Review*, ceased publication 12 Jun 1886; and a freesheet, the *North British Advertiser & Ladies' Journal*. See p.286 below for newspapers and periodicals consulted.

Edinburgh in 1886

Edinburgh was Scotland's metropolis, a historic capital where the modern was contrasted with, and disguised as, the traditional. The promenader in Princes Street could gaze across the landscaped valley up to the ridge of the Old Town, and revel in the dramatic contrast by which 'Old Edinburgh ... is brought ... into startling nearness to the fashionable ease and luxury and security of the nineteenth century'.⁸ The spectator's viewpoint, the New Town, was a product of Enlightenment rationality. Gridded, rectangular, neoclassical, the eighteenth-century residential suburb was designed as an escape for the city's upper classes from the pre-modern conditions of the ancient city. The modern suburb itself rapidly became modernised as a site for commerce.⁹ By the 1880s, the New Town was a location for high-class retailing and the offices of solicitors, accountants, architects and other professionals, and a centre for Edinburgh's thriving financial services industry. Princes Street itself had become a favoured site for up-market shops and 'warehouses', for gentlemen's clubs and luxury hotels. With its spectacular open views it could be hailed as 'the principal street and most fashionable promenade of the city, and ... perhaps the finest street of any city of the world'; the epitome of the modern.¹⁰

The commercial New Town testified to Edinburgh's distinction as a capital city with a consumption-led economy and a social structure that emphasised the professions. The city's status as Scotland's capital—the capital of a 'stateless nation'¹¹—lay in its position as the focus of the Scottish national institutions preserved within the framework of the Union settlement. It was 'a centre of governance if not government'.¹² The three Presbyterian churches were headquartered in Edinburgh. A byword for squabbling and sectarianism after the schisms and regroupings of the 1840s, their competing annual assemblies were nonetheless forums for national debate.¹³ The majesty of Scots law, in the High Courts, the Law Officers and the legal establishment, was enshrined in the city. The University of

8 J.B. Gillies, *Edinburgh Past and Present*. (Edinburgh, 1886), p.186.

9 David Robertson, *The Princes Street Proprietors*. (Edinburgh, 1935), p.8.

10 Francis H. Groome, *Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland*. (Edinburgh, 1885), vol.1 p.483.

11 David McCrone, *Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of a Nation*. (London, 2001), p.6.

12 Graeme Morton and R.J. Morris, 'Civil Society, Governance and Nation, 1832–1914', in R.A. Houston and William Knox (eds.), *New Penguin History of Scotland*. (London, 2001), p.399.

13 For the religious background see Callum G. Brown, *The Social History of Religion in Scotland Since 1730*. (London, 1987). The Free Church had broken away from the Established Church of Scotland in the Disruption of 1843; the United Presbyterian Church had amalgamated dissenting congregations in 1847.

Edinburgh, the largest of the Scottish universities, with its world-famous Medical School was the most prestigious of the educational foundations located there. The Scottish banking system, with its legal branch of accountancy and the academic specialism of actuarial mathematics, underpinned Edinburgh's finance and insurance industry. And central to the institution of Scottish burgh government the Town Council of Edinburgh, like all Victorian municipalities powerful and largely autonomous, hosted the Convention of Royal Burghs, the 'only national representative body now existing in Scotland'.¹⁴

With the nineteenth-century growth of central government functions national administrative bodies, the statutory Boards of Scottish administrations such as the Poor Law, lunacy and prisons, were located in Edinburgh; though the Scotch Education Department and the Scottish Office, established in 1885 only after a national agitation against the remoteness of Westminster governance, were paradoxically based in London. The remaining complex of national institutions nevertheless drew in smaller bodies with a Scotland-wide remit: learned societies, professional bodies, and academic institutes and voluntary associations of all kinds. The city's exhibiting institutions were national in scope and funding: the Royal Scottish Academy, home to the Scottish art establishment, the Royal Institution, the National Gallery of Scotland, and the Museum of Science and Art.

Edinburgh's clerical, legal, educational and administrative institutions had given it the social structure of a capital city. A lingering aristocratic and upper-class presence remained. Edinburgh was a popular retirement destination and middle-class retirees and annuitants formed a notable part of its population.¹⁵ The city was otherwise distinguished by the dominance of the professions: in 1881, fifteen per cent of its male occupied population worked in a professional capacity, with the fields of law, medicine, the arts, the civil service, the armed forces, teaching and the churches all strongly represented.¹⁶

14 John W. Gulland, *How Edinburgh Is Governed. A Handbook for Citizens*. (Edinburgh, 1891), p.83. For Edinburgh University see Robert Anderson, 'Ceremony in Context: The Edinburgh University Tercentenary, 1884', *Scottish Historical Review*, 87:1 (April 2008), pp.121–145; for the financial sector, Charles W. Munn, 'The Emergence of Edinburgh as a Financial Centre', in T.M. Devine and A.J.G. Cummings (eds.), *Industry, Business and Society in Scotland Since 1700*. (Edinburgh, 1994), pp.125–141; and Martin Fransman, *Edinburgh, City of Funds: Investment Management in Scotland's Capital City*. (Edinburgh, 2008).

15 Morton and Morris, 'Civil Society', p.398.

16 Richard Rodger, 'Employment, Wages and Poverty in the Scottish Cities 1841–1914', in George Gordon (ed.), *Perspectives of the Scottish City*. (Aberdeen, 1985), p.29, table 1 and 2. The proportion of professionals in Edinburgh, at 14.9% compares with 5.2% in Glasgow, 4.2% in Dundee, and 8.9% in Aberdeen.

This concentration of middle-class affluence produced another capital city attribute: ‘it was the metropolitan role of Edinburgh which gave the Lothian economy its structural similarity to the South East of England’.¹⁷ This was an economy emphasising consumption, as evidenced by the New Town’s high-class retail establishments; and whose industries included a sector of small workshops in which skilled artisans produced high-value luxury consumer goods such as clothing, furniture, leatherwork, and jewellery. Larger-scale consumption industries were also of a metropolitan character; Edinburgh was well-known for brewing, distilling and baking. Printing, the city’s most distinctive industry, was historically a direct outcome of the needs of its ecclesiastical, legal, and academic institutions. Edinburgh’s range of specialised, and often technologically advanced, engineering enterprises resembled London’s rather than the concentrations on one sector of the more typical industrial city.¹⁸

This industrial diversity and lack of reliance on one main staple gave stability and resilience to the Edinburgh economy, even in the prolonged depression of the late 1870s and early 1880s.¹⁹ Continuing consumption needs and middle-class purchasing patterns offered some protection against cyclical market fluctuations. ‘The general trade of our own district depends to a large extent upon the domestic wants of the people, and is less liable to those changes [in employment] than the rest of the districts in the country’.²⁰ Administration and the law ground on, whatever the economic conditions. Edinburgh printers even felt that they had benefitted from the collapse in 1878 of the City of Glasgow Bank, which had exacerbated the slump in the West of Scotland but ‘whose misfortunes [were] generally productive of great benefits to printers; as where litigation is involved printing necessarily follows’.²¹

17 C.H. Lee, ‘Modern Economic Growth and Structural Change in Scotland: The Service Sector Reconsidered’, *Scottish Economic and Social History*, 3 (1983), p.22, quoted in Richard Rodger, *The Transformation of Edinburgh: Land, Property and Trust in the Nineteenth Century*. (Cambridge, 2001), p.20.

18 Robert Q. Gray, *The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh*. (Oxford, 1976), p.38; for Edinburgh’s nineteenth-century industrial development, see Richard Rodger, ‘Landscapes of Capital: Industry and the Built Environment in Edinburgh, 1750–1920’, in Paul Edwards and Paul Jenkins (eds.), *Edinburgh: The Making of a Capital City*. (Edinburgh, 2005), pp.85–102.

19 Rodger, *Transformation*, p.21.

20 NLS Acc.11177/35: Edinburgh United Trades Council, *Annual Report 1883–84*.

21 Alexander Ross, Secretary of the Edinburgh Branch of the Scottish Typographical Association, evidence to the Royal Commission on the Depression of Trade and Industry, *Second Report [C.4715], Appendix D Part II*. (1886), p.90.

In Edinburgh's bourgeois society the professionals were joined by business, commercial and industrial interests: merchants, shopkeepers large and small, and entrepreneurs on every scale. Sensible of gradations of rank and status, they were divided by 'Edinburgh's notorious snobbery'; 'the attention of the natives is taken up with petty Church squabbles and professional jealousies'.²² They formed the backbone of Edinburgh's civil society, a particularly visible instance of the voluntary and associational culture of the Victorian city. Their attention was directed to charitable organisations, driven by competing visions of evangelical Presbyterianism with their demands of religious and social discipline. Thus Edinburgh's needy citizens could draw on assistance from a much wider range of voluntary charities than in other Scottish cities.²³ Bourgeois associationalism also manifested itself in an array of ornamental male institutions: Masonic lodges, Volunteer regiments, the Incorporated Trades, the High Constables, clubs and societies of all descriptions.²⁴ This activity was defined by a strong sense of local patriotism, of identity with the city and with its place as Scotland's capital.

Rather than deploying imprecise, and possibly anachronistic, concepts of civic or national 'identity'²⁵ to characterise the attachments and affections with which Victorian Scots regarded place and country, it seems preferable to preserve their own usage. 'Local patriotism' was one such term which captured the immediacy of loyalty to city, town or region and reflected the devolved nature of nineteenth-century governance. In the age of laissez-faire '[t]he basic principle was *local provision, for local wants, locally identified*'.²⁶ Rapidly-proceeding urbanisation and the institution of reformed municipal government in the 1830s re-created the Victorian city—outside London—as a largely self-governing entity under the

22 Gray, *Labour Aristocracy*, p.20; A Much-Tried Resident, 'Caste in Edinburgh', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 20 May 1885, p.4, echoing the best-seller of a previous generation: John Heiton, *The Castes of Edinburgh*. (Edinburgh, 1861).

23 Rodger, *Transformation*, p.21. Lord Provost Clark estimated that 130 charitable bodies were active in the city in 1886: *Scotsman*, 19 Feb 1886, p.3.

24 The Incorporated Trades, ceremonial and charitable relics of the medieval city guilds: James Colston, *The Incorporated Trades of Edinburgh*. (Edinburgh, 1891); the High Constables, another ceremonial relic, whose baton-drill perpetuated an antiquarian vision of civic watching and guarding, David Robertson, *A History of the High Constables of Edinburgh*. (Edinburgh, 1924).

25 Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, 'Beyond "Identity"', *Theory and Society*, 29:1 (February 2000), pp.1–47; Peter Mandler, 'What Is "National Identity"? Definitions and Applications in Modern British Historiography', *Modern Intellectual History*, 3:02 (2006), pp.271–97.

26 E.P. Hennock, 'Central/Local Government Relations in England: An Outline 1800–1950', *Urban History Yearbook*, 9 (1982), p.39, original emphasis; see also Graeme Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism: Governing Urban Scotland, 1830–1860*. (East Linton, 1999), chap.2.

control of autonomous local bourgeois élites inviting the loyalty and identification of its citizens. With the extension of the franchise, and the growing complexity of urban administration the municipality became the focus for local pride in the local provision of an increasing range of services, infrastructure and city developments.²⁷

In Scotland this civic localism coexisted with another appeal to territorial loyalties, to another patriotism—this time to the Scottish nation. Scottish national sentiment was once again exercised within a framework of governance, in the ecclesiastical, legal, educational and administrative institutions—including that of burgh government itself—which defined Scottish nationhood and which provided a high degree of autonomy for its middle-class leadership, centred in Edinburgh.²⁸ Thus the claims to local or regional distinction—for example, in customs or dialect²⁹—which characterised English provincial life were in Scotland focussed through the institutional lens to project a keenly-felt identification with nation. This national consciousness however coincided with other loyalties: to the higher-level entities of the Union, into which Scotland was held to have entered as an equal partner with England, and the Empire, in which Scots were believed to play a leading role;³⁰ and on the other hand to a more immediate sense of locality manifested most clearly in the institution of burgh government, whose self-governing Councils embodied the pride of place inherent in the idea of local patriotism.³¹

A considered *Edinburgh Evening News* editorial in August 1885 laid out the connection between local government and local pride in a commemoration of the jubilee of the reform of municipal governance.³² The unreformed Corporations—‘An oligarchy ... of a type

27 For this process in the Scottish burghs see Richard Rodger, ‘L’interventionnisme municipal en Ecosse 1860–1914: civisme local, préoccupations sociales et intérêts des possédants’, *Genèses*, (1993), pp.6–30.

28 Lindsay Paterson, *The Autonomy of Modern Scotland*. (Edinburgh, 1994), chap.4.

29 See, for example, the place of dialect literature in Lancashire ‘popular’ consciousness identified by Patrick Joyce in *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1848–1914*. (Cambridge, 1991).

30 Richard J. Finlay, ‘National Identity, Union, and Empire, c.1850–c.1970’, in John M. MacKenzie and T.M. Devine (eds.), *Scotland and the British Empire*. (Oxford, 2011), pp.280–316. This is the Unionist nationalism diagnosed by Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism*, although see Finlay, p.290, for a critique of Morton’s position.

31 And thus the gamut of self-definitions available to Scotspeople. Often seen as ‘concentric’, these are better described as overlapping, contingent, and tactical. Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A New History*. (London, 1991), p.359; T.C. Smout, ‘Perspectives on the Scottish Identity’, *Scottish Affairs*, 6 (1994), pp.101–13

32 *Edinburgh Evening News*, 22 Aug 1885, p.2: following quotations from this source. The radical

more exclusive in its constitution, more grinding in its tyranny, than even oligarchies usually are’—bore no comparison to the modern Town Council, hailed as an engine of improvement:

In all that affects convenience, health, beauty, order, safety, more advance has been made during the last fifty years than was made during the previous five hundred. Our civic rulers ... have ruled to purpose everywhere, and nowhere to better purpose than in Edinburgh, as its aspect and organisation alike testify.

With the prospect of yet more municipal enterprise on the horizon—‘No instructed political student can harbour any doubt that we are on the eve of a vast enlargement in the scope and activities of local government’—and in the face of the neglect of local affairs by a distant and overburdened imperial parliament, the *News* demanded further reforms in the devolution of more powers:

[A change] would be in accord with sound political theory, which sanctions the establishment of a distinct difference betwixt what is local and what is imperial. Moreover, it would foster that local patriotism which has been wisely and rightly described as ‘the true socialism’.

Thus the (slightly mangled) catchphrase attributed to Joshua Toulmin Smith, the arch-enthusiast of English localism, could be used to argue for greater self-determination for Scottish local government and the reinforcement of local pride in its citizenry.³³

Edinburgh’s Town Council reflected the bourgeois ascendancy in its domination by commerce. For members of this shopocracy public service came as a stage in life made possible by a successful business career.

This caste takes upon itself the management of municipal affairs, and performs its various functions efficiently and well, resting content with the reward to be found in the patronage of the upper crust, and in the honour and dignity which is supposed to attach itself to the name of councillor or bailie. No man of culture aspires to those dignities, the shrewd man of business having the field left entirely to himself.³⁴

Despite the temptations of sectarianism and subject to the constraints of municipal

News argued consistently for Scottish Home Rule during this period. The jubilee was that of the reform of English local government with the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835; the equivalent Scottish legislation, the Burgh Police (Scotland) Act and the Royal Burghs Act, predated it by two years.

33 Ben Weinstein, “Local Self-Government Is True Socialism”: Joshua Toulmin Smith, the State and Character Formation’, *English Historical Review*, CXXIII:504 (October 2008), pp.1193–1228.

34 *Pall Mall Gazette*, 20 May 1885, p.4.

frugality, the shopocrats held the values and political beliefs of Edinburgh's Liberal consensus: progressive, radical if need be, and improving. As the *News* witnessed, urban complexity and public concern for action on public health, housing and other social problems impelled municipalities to intervene in urban development. So Edinburgh, like other Victorian cities, had developed a modern infrastructure. Publicly-owned utilities of water supply and sewerage ran beneath causewayed and cleansed streets; municipal regulation governed markets, abattoirs, gas supply and tramways. In an atmosphere of growth and change, innovation—in telephones, electric lighting, or cable tram haulage—was the norm.³⁵

In the midst of this modernity the visitor was more likely to be attracted by the irregular and picturesque prospect of the Old Town than the planned regularity and artificiality of the New.³⁶ The Old Town may have been abandoned by its upper-class and professional residents after 1767, but the institutions of power, of Edinburgh's status as capital of Scotland, had retained a physical presence. The headquarters of two Presbyterian denominations, the law courts, and the seat of the Town Council itself were all located within the compass of a few hundred feet. The visitor could not fail to notice, however, that this landscape of power shared an urban space with the poorest of Edinburgh's citizens. Pressures of population increase, immigration and impoverishment had accelerated urban decay in the now unfashionable centre. Subdivided dwellings and inadequate services and sanitation in a warren of wynds and closes harboured filth and disease. This concentration of deprivation prompted more municipal intervention: inspection, cleansing, demolition, clearance—the 'civic toilette';³⁷ but despite the best efforts of Edinburgh's public servants these processes of improvement had only limited purchase on the Old Town's romantic squalor.³⁸

35 Institute of Public Administration, *Studies in the Development of Edinburgh*. (London, 1939), series III, for Edinburgh utilities. The city had 3,500 telephone subscribers by 1881, p.48; a cable hauled tramway was authorised in 1884 (and operational from 1888), p.19. For electric light, see on page 124ff. below.

36 Katherine Haldane Grenier, *Tourism and Identity in Scotland, 1770–1914: Creating Caledonia*. (Aldershot, 2005), pp.69–70; cf. John Ruskin on the New Town: 'These square stones are not prisons of the body, but graves of the soul', *Lectures on Architecture and Painting Delivered at Edinburgh in November 1853*. (London, 1854), p.76.

37 Corbin's phrase, quoted Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City*. (London, 2003), p.65.

38 Paul Laxton and Richard Rodger, *Insanitary City: Henry Littlejohn and the Condition of Edinburgh*. (Lancaster, 2013).

These same decaying buildings formed an antiquarian and picturesque backdrop to a historicised re-imagining of the city centre. In an exploration of the concept of urban modernity Simon Gunn sees the late nineteenth century capital city as the locus of a redeveloped monumentality, of ‘the city as visual spectacle’; ‘a newness which harked back to the past as much to the present’.³⁹ In Edinburgh, this process was obvious: ‘the city reconstructed itself as an elaborate symbol for Scotland’.⁴⁰ After centuries of neglect Holyroodhouse was transformed into a true Victorian royal palace with the institution of the Queen’s private suite in 1871. From 1881 restoration of the High Kirk of St Giles was directed and financed by William Chambers, instigator of the most ambitious Improvement Scheme. The Castle had become a monument subject to continuous refurbishment since the 1840s. And in 1885 a recreation of the Mercat Cross erected in the area bounded by St Giles, the High Courts, and the City Chambers was gifted to the city by W.E. Gladstone, a Liberal message sent in an antiquarian wrapping.⁴¹ Re-construction and re-imagining went on in the presence of the institutions of ecclesiastical, legal and political power.

The construction of modernity in nineteenth-century Edinburgh was seen not only in the physical separation of New Town and Old, but in the intrusion of modern processes into the Old:

this profusion of eccentricities, this dream in masonry and living rock, is not a drop-scene in a theatre, but a city in the world of every-day reality, connected by railway and telegraph-wire with all the capitals of Europe, and inhabited by citizens of the familiar type, who keep ledgers, and attend church, and have sold their immortal portion to a daily paper. By all the canons of romance, the place demands to be half deserted and leaning towards decay: birds we might admit in profusion, the play of the sun and winds, and a few gypsies camped in the chief thoroughfare; but these citizens, with their cabs and their tramways, their trains and posters, are altogether out of key.⁴²

The significance of the historically reimagined city lay not just in its architecture, but in its

39 Simon Gunn, *History and Cultural Theory*. (Harlow, 2006), p.123; on monumentality see also his *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority in the English Industrial City, 1840–1914*. (Manchester, 2000), pp.40–43.

40 Morton and Morris, ‘Civil Society’, p.399.

41 Patrick Geddes, *The Civic Survey of Edinburgh*. (Edinburgh, 1911), p.565. For individual buildings, see *BoSE*; Rosalind K. Marshall, ‘Scotland’s Westminster Abbey: The Memorials in St Giles’ Cathedral, Edinburgh’, *Review of Scottish Culture*, 23 (2011), pp.94–117; Robert J. Morris, ‘The Capitalist, the Professor and the Soldier: The Re-Making of Edinburgh Castle, 1850–1900’, *Planning Perspectives*, 22:1 (2007), pp.55–78. For the Cross’s unveiling see p.129 below.

42 Robert Louis Stevenson, ‘Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh’, *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson: Miscellanies, Volume I*. (London, 1894), pp.8–9, first published 1878.

role as a stage for urban spectacle of all kinds: military parades, ceremonials, proclamations from the new Mercat Cross, student torchlight processions, civic decorations and illuminations. Such spectacle was popular with Edinburgh citizens. Large crowds would form at the hint of a show, the sight of a distinguished visitor, or a parade of any sort. Householders and businesses would contribute to the decorations and illuminations displaying loyal and patriotic motifs which accompanied ceremonial events.

This urban spectacle engaged other than native spectators. Edinburgh had become a tourist destination. The stream of professional visitors to the law courts or the annual General Assemblies, and the upper-class participants in what was left of the aristocratic ‘season’⁴³ were increasingly outnumbered by the middle-class tourists first brought to the city by entrepreneurs such as Thomas Cook, and the excursionists encouraged by increasing wages, leisure opportunities, and railway company promotion.⁴⁴ Edinburgh’s attractions for these visitors were based precisely on the modern contrast between new and old: modern comfort and amenity, and the spectacle of history. The reconstructed monuments of Holyroodhouse, St Giles and the Castle were by the 1880s admission-charging visitor attractions wrapped in an aura of popular history, featuring the familiar characters of Mary Queen of Scots and Rizzio, John Knox, Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Jacobites.⁴⁵

The evocation of Edinburgh as the capital of a romantic historic Scotland reinforced the attraction of its spectacular setting and cityscape. Much of these atmospherics were due to the influence of Sir Walter Scott, still an iconic figure whose presence—biographical and anecdotal as much as literary—was felt throughout the city, most obviously in the Gothic bulk of his monument in East Princes Street Gardens and the naming of the nearby ‘Waverley’ railway station.⁴⁶ These were grateful tributes to the author who had created an industry:

Scott discovered that the city was beautiful—he sang its praises over the world—and he has put more coin into the pockets of its inhabitants than if he had established a branch of manufacture of which they had the monopoly. Scott’s novels are to

43 Gray, *Labour Aristocracy*, p.19.

44 Grenier, *Tourism and Identity*, chap.2.

45 See chap.3 ‘Symbols of nationhood’ p.128 below for history and Old Edinburgh. Cf. ‘the debased canon of Scottish history’ discerned in Colin Kidd, ‘The Canon of Patriotic Landmarks in Scottish History’, *Scotlands*, 1 (1994), p.7: ‘Scotland’s historical totems were ideologically muddled. John Knox, Mary, Queen of Scots, the Covenanters and the band of Scottish Jacobite heroes were juxtaposed without any regard to their status as political symbols within different partisan traditions in Scottish political and ecclesiastical history’.

46 Stuart Kelly, *Scott-Land: The Man Who Invented a Nation*. (Edinburgh, 2010).

Edinburgh what the tobacco trade was to Glasgow about the close of the last century.⁴⁷

In 1885 the Town Council approved a scheme of ‘marks on places of historic interest’: Scott figured in three of the first seven suggested locations.⁴⁸ Sir Walter had not only popularised a vision of romanticised Scottish history in his novels; in choreographing the visit of George IV to Edinburgh in 1822 he manufactured the romantic image of Edinburgh as a fashionable destination by the deployment of a Highland tradition invented for the occasion—the part, notoriously, representing the whole of Scottish culture.⁴⁹ More significantly for commercial Edinburgh, Scott was also held to have underpinned the success of the city’s modern finance industry by his advocacy of independent Scottish banking in 1826.⁵⁰

The Town Council’s involvement in the remodelling of the city centre, its patronage of civic ceremonial and urban spectacle, and, in its small way, initiatives such as the commemorative plaque scheme, were evidence of municipal concern for Edinburgh’s development and amenity. This was partnered with Council interventions to promote the city at a national and international level. Visiting dignitaries or delegations were treated to cake and wine receptions in the City Chambers; conferences and professional meetings would be invited to Council-sponsored *conversazioni* or banquets, all provided from the resources of the city’s Common Good fund.⁵¹ Edinburgh’s attractions for corporate event

47 Alexander Smith, *A Summer in Skye*. (London, 1865), vol.I pp.10–11. Cf. ‘Even from a monetary point of view, Edinburgh as a community, and Edinburgh printers in particular, have reason to remember with gratitude Sir Walter’, *North British Advertiser & Ladies’ Journal*, 12 Jun 1886.

48 These were: his birthplace, his house in Castle Street, and his father’s grave in Greyfriars. ECA SL123/1/6: ETC various subcommittees, 19 Feb 1885. The other suggested *lieux de mémoire* memorialised Burns, George Heriot—and the signing of the Covenant and a site of Covenanter incarceration.

49 John Prebble, *The King’s Jaunt: George IV in Scotland, August 1822*. (London, 1988); Caroline McCracken-Flesher, *Possible Scotlands: Walter Scott and the Story of Tomorrow*. (Oxford, 2005), pp.73–110; Ian Duncan, *Scott’s Shadow: The Novel in Romantic Edinburgh*. (Princeton, 2007), pp.3–19.

50 In the ‘Malachi Malagrowther’ letters: S.G. Checkland, *Scottish Banking: A History, 1695–1973*. (Glasgow, 1975), p.437; Duncan, *Scott’s Shadow*, pp.296–297; Despite his reactionary politics Scott can be seen as a figure of modernity in the tradition of Scottish Enlightenment philosophic history, David Brown, *Walter Scott and the Historical Imagination*. (London, 1979), chap.10; *Scott’s Shadow*, chap.4.

51 Richard Rodger, ‘The “Common Good” and Civic Promotion: Edinburgh 1860–1914’, in Robert Colls and Richard Rodger (eds.), *Cities of Ideas*. (Aldershot, 2004), pp.144–77; table p.148 indicates the diversity of organisations entertained.

organisers were evident in its success in attracting the Victorian ‘parliaments of science’, the congresses of learned societies analysed by Louise Miskell. Edinburgh may have had ‘charm of scenery, society, and association, sufficient to allure a good attendance of strangers’; but in the competition to attract such meetings the backing of a supportive local authority was crucial.⁵² This backing, and the mechanisms of and limitations to such support, would be evident in another area, the international exhibitions held in Edinburgh between 1882 and 1886.

Great exhibitions, 1851 and after

At one of the celebratory dinners that punctuated the course of the 1886 Edinburgh Exhibition its leading figure James Gowans entertained the company with a story. While engaged as a contractor on the Bathgate Railway Gowans had chanced upon a deposit of bituminous shale. ‘[H]e brought it to his friend Professor George Wilson, and they melted it in a kail pot [*sic*], and made some black candles and sent them to the Exhibition of 1851’. By Gowans’s account his candles won a medal; the shale-field, at that time valued at £200, had since become part of the booming paraffin industry and was now worth £10,000 a year. ‘That showed’ Gowans concluded triumphantly ‘what an exhibition could do’.⁵³

The anecdote illustrated not just the exuberant personality of its narrator, but also the hold that the idea of exhibitions, and in particular the Great Exhibition of 1851, had on the popular imagination. The competitive display of industrial processes and commodities ‘of all Nations’ in the Crystal Palace, a construction that heralded a new era of iron, glass and mass production, was the landmark nineteenth-century event. ‘Historians have made the Great Exhibition the pre-eminent symbol of the Victorian age’,⁵⁴ but Gowans and his

52 *Newcastle Courant*, 16 Oct 1863, quoted Louise Miskell, *Meeting Places: Scientific Congresses and Urban Identity in Victorian Britain*. (Farnham, 2013), p.36. Edinburgh comes second after Newcastle in Miskell’s count of visits by these congresses, p.68. The organisations counted include the Royal Agricultural Society of England; the addition of its Scottish equivalent the Highland and Agricultural Society (of which much more below) pushes Edinburgh comfortably to the top of the table, with Glasgow in second place.

53 *Scotsman*, 22 May 1886, p.9; *Evening News*, 22 May 1886, p.2. Wilson was director of the then Industrial Museum, P.J. Hartog, ‘Wilson, George (1818–1859)’, rev. R.G.W. Anderson, *ODNB*. Gowans’s recollection was faulty: Great Exhibition, *Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue*. (London, 1851), vol.1 p.135, gives the candles’ origin as Binny quarry; according to *Reports by the Juries*. (London, 1852), p.557, Gowans’s medal was awarded for carved stonework.

54 Jeffrey A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display*. (New Haven, 1999), p.1; see also John R. Davis, *The Great Exhibition*. (Stroud, 1999); James Buzard, Joseph W. Childers,

contemporaries themselves looked back to the first international exhibition with awe and affection. It not only initiated the exhibition phenomenon, ‘the great wave that echoed round the world a generation ago’ in Patrick Geddes’s phrase,⁵⁵ but also in the late-Victorian recollection ushered in a period of stability, free trade and economic prosperity. In the depressed trade conditions of the 1880s, this was a period which could only be regarded with rosy nostalgia.

In his formulation of the concept of the ‘exhibitionary complex’ Tony Bennett places the exhibition phenomenon within an archipelago of modern sites—including, with the art museum, ‘history and natural science museums, dioramas and panoramas, national and, later, international exhibitions, arcades and department stores’⁵⁶—in which, essentially, people assemble to view objects. Processes of modernity created new exhibitionary institutions of a radically different character from their pre-modern analogues: the contrast, for example, between the traditional aristocratic *wunderkammer* and the modern museum, or the private art collection and the public art gallery. Bennett focuses on the exercise of power and discipline within the institutions deploying these ‘new technologies of vision’. Inverting Foucault’s concept of the panoptic, all-seeing gaze of power, Bennett proposes instead an oligoptic, self-observing and self-disciplining view shared by the ‘progressive subjects’ admitted to the exhibitionary spaces.⁵⁷ Bennett’s concern is thus with the problem of public order, with the formation of a tractable audience against the threat of the pre-modern disorder which so preoccupied the administrators of the early public institutions.⁵⁸ In this process the experience of 1851 is a significant moment: the apparent docility of the working-class visitors to the Great Exhibition was a source of relief and patronising

and Eileen Gillooly (eds.), *Victorian Prism: Refractions of the Crystal Palace*. (Charlottesville, 2007). Alexander C.T. Geppert, Jean Coffey, and Tammy Lau, ‘International Exhibitions, Expositions Universelles and World’s Fairs, 1851–2005: A Bibliography’, <http://www.tu-cottbus.de/theoriederarchitektur/wolke/eng/Bibliography/ExpoBibliography3ed.pdf>, accessed 14 Jul 2011, list 112 items on the Great Exhibition alone.

55 Patrick Geddes, *Industrial Exhibitions and Modern Progress*. (Edinburgh, 1887), p.16.

56 Tony Bennett, ‘The Exhibitionary Complex’, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*. (London, 1995), chap.2, p.59; article first published in *New Formations*, 4 (1988).

57 Bennett, *Birth*, p.47; see also Chris Otter on oligoptic space, *The Victorian Eye: A Political History of Light and Vision in Britain, 1800–1910*. (Chicago, 2008), pp.73–75; cf Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City*, (London, 2003), p.133: ‘The creation of the liberal subject in its new and increasingly democratic forms involved the many viewing the many, rather than the one viewing the many’.

58 This will be returned to in Ch.5 below.

wonderment to its élite liberal organisers.⁵⁹

Bennett clearly lays out the shared features of the exhibitionary institutions, amongst them their organising principles and their common architectural and structural language.⁶⁰ However, within Bennett's complex there were salient differences between these institutions. They had different characteristics and purposes; their visitors had differing expectations and experiences; and the things within them—the objects of the viewers' oligoptic gaze—followed different careers. The international exhibitions enjoyed a distinctive position, within which the visitor was invited to examine the latest technological advances and industrial products, and where producers competed for recognition and the resulting commercial advantage. Paul Greenhalgh discerns their four ruling 'moral justifications': Peace, Education, Trade and Progress.⁶¹ The rhetorical appeals to Peace and Progress placed the exhibitions firmly within the sphere of Victorian public liberalism in which the exhibitionary complex was located. The aim of Education, both technical and mass, was shared with, amongst others, the burgeoning museums: managers and administrators moved between the two sectors. Concern with Trade, on the other hand, positioned the exhibition closer to the department store: the commercial imperatives of exhibitors, the display of their merchandise, created an underlying tension with the organisers' universalistic rhetoric. The great exhibitions occupied a space—increasingly uncomfortably in a background of growing competition, marketing and advertising—between the rarefied atmosphere of the museum and the commercialism of the store, the fashionable 'bazaar'.⁶²

The transient nature of the exhibitions corresponded with another pre-modern institution, the fair: a site of commerce but also of popular entertainment. The characterisation of the Great Exhibition as the 'World's Fair', and the adoption of the phrase as a label for subsequent international exhibitions further pointed up the analogy.

59 For fear of working-class visitors, admission policies, and good behaviour in 1851 see Auerbach, *Great Exhibition*, pp.147–58; although Peter Gurney argues that the working-class presence in 1851 has been exaggerated, 'An Appropriated Space: The Great Exhibition, the Crystal Palace and the Working Classes', in Louise Purbrick (ed.), *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary Essays*. (Manchester, 2001), pp.114–45.

60 Bennett, *Birth*, pp.50–55, cf. Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition*, (Cambridge, Mass, 1956), pp.227–72. See also discussion of exhibition construction p.103ff below.

61 Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: the Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs*, (Manchester, 1988), pp.16–17.

62 And thus the exhibition as a locus for commodification, and the exhibitors' strategies described in chap.4 below.

This was an analogy once again between pre-modern and modern institutions: between the carnivalesque misrule of the traditional fair and the rational contemplation prescribed within the space of the exhibition hall.⁶³ However, the competition between succeeding great exhibitions, their increasing scale and spectacle, and the calling into being of a mass audience could only place more and more emphasis on their role as venues of popular entertainment. After official proscription of the disreputable pleasures of the traditional fair it was as if their entertainment functions continued in new and transformed guises: in a version, albeit more respectable, of the pleasure garden and later of the modern mechanised funfair.⁶⁴

In Britain the progress of Geddes's great wave of exhibitions was less than straightforward. After the successful Exposition of 1855 inaugurated the spectacular series of Parisian events, the second London International Exhibition held at South Kensington in 1862 was something of a disappointment. A wider range of exhibits and exhibitors could not compensate for a much-criticised building with none of the verve of the Crystal Palace.⁶⁵ The death of Prince Albert, so closely identified with the success of 1851, in December 1861 further depressed the undertaking. The Great Exhibition's surplus of £186,000, which had endowed the South Kensington exhibition site, was not repeated in 1862: the contractor Kelk rescued the project from insolvency by settling the deficit of £11,000. Most tellingly, attendance figures showed only a slight increase over those of 1851. This represented failure in an arena where success was measured by spectacular and prodigious increase.⁶⁶

63 Greenhalgh dismisses 'the idea that the exhibitions were a continuing phenomenon beginning with Roman markets of mediaeval fairs. Such suggestions fundamentally misunderstand how and why they came into being', *Ephemeral Vistas*, n.1, p.50. For the fair, see Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, (Ithaca, 1986), chap.1.

64 For the suppression of traditional fairs as a mechanism of social control see Hugh Cunningham, 'The Metropolitan Fairs: A Case Study in the Social Control of Leisure', in A.P. Donajgrodzki (ed.), *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain*, (London, 1977), pp.163–84; for later exhibitions and entertainment, Paul Greenhalgh, 'Education, Entertainment and Politics: Lessons from the Great International Exhibitions', in Peter Vergo (ed.), *The New Museology*, (London, 1989), pp.74–98; Bennett, *Birth*, pp.53-58, 223-26. For entertainment at the Edinburgh Exhibition see chap.5 below.

65 For the influence of the 1862 building on the Edinburgh designers see p.107 below.

66 From 6,039,195 to 6,211,103. For the 1862 Exhibition see John Allwood, *The Great Exhibitions*. (London, 1977), pp.36–41 and chaps. 2–7 for the sequence of nineteenth-century exhibitions. For a general account of the exhibition phenomenon, see Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, expanded edition published as *Fair World: A History of World's Fairs and Expositions from London to*

So, while universal international exhibitions of increasing scale and spectacle were held in Paris in 1867 and 1878, in Vienna in 1873 and in Philadelphia in 1876, the ambitions of London organisers were more modest. Henry Cole, the leading organiser of both the 1851 and 1862 exhibitions, proposed a turn to annual smaller-scale, more comprehensible specialised events featuring different industries in turn. The result was disastrous. Cole's South Kensington series of 1871–74 failed to excite public enthusiasm: the projected run of ten annual exhibitions closed after four, having attracted sparse audiences and run up a deficit of £150,000.⁶⁷ Despite this setback, the idea of specialised exhibitions remained South Kensington orthodoxy. Sir Philip Cunliffe-Owen, Cole's protégé and his successor as Director of the South Kensington Museum, adopted a more visitor-friendly approach influenced by his experience as a Commissioner for the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial and the Paris Exposition of 1878. Cunliffe-Owen took the unassuming project of an International Fisheries Exhibition scheduled for 1883 and transformed it into a fashionable success, broadening its scope—"The Fisheries", to all intents and purposes, became an exhibition of things in general "from a fishy point of view"—and adding outdoor attractions: promenades under electric light, illuminated fountains and visual effects and musical entertainments.⁶⁸ This popular success was taken up by Edward Prince of Wales, in an echo of his father Prince Albert's achievement of 1851. A programme of three subsequent annual events was projected under the Prince's patronage and directed by Cunliffe-Owen: Health in 1884; Inventions in 1885, and the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886; all with the same formula of broadly-interpreted themes and added spectacle.⁶⁹

The international exhibition, even in its attenuated South Kensington form, was seen by definition as an attribute of capital cities. Inasmuch as the capital embodied the nation, these were affairs of national importance where a representation of the nation could be

Shanghai 1851–2010. (Winterbourne, 2011).

67 Kenneth Luckhurst, *The Story of Exhibitions*. (London, 1951), pp.130–35; Paul Greenhalgh, 'The Art and Industry of Mammon: International Exhibitions, 1851–1901', in John M. MacKenzie (ed.), *The Victorian Vision*. (London, 2001), pp.265–79; H. Trueman Wood, 'Memorandum on Exhibitions Held in Great Britain and Ireland', *Journal of the Society of Arts*, 37 (November 1889), p.903.

68 *Glasgow Herald*, 31 October 1884, p.6.

69 H.T. Wood, 'Owen, Sir Francis Philip Cunliffe- (1828–1894)', rev. R.C. Denis, *ODNB*. For an informed contemporary view see H. Trueman Wood, 'Exhibitions', *Nineteenth Century*, 20:17 (November 1886), pp.633–47.

displayed before its own citizens and an international audience.⁷⁰ The Antwerp *Exposition universelle* of 1885 was only the first major Continental European universal international exhibition to be staged in a provincial city. In the absence of any certifying body, ‘international’ status could be asserted by local projectors with the confidence to do so: the number and quality of foreign exhibitors who attended might be a secondary consideration.⁷¹ To the largely autonomous, self-confident bourgeois élites of the British provincial cities, with increasing resources and a driving sense of local patriotism, there seemed no reason why they should not claim for their communities the perceived advantages a large-scale exhibition could bring. A pamphlet issued by the Manchester businessman Ellis Lever gives a flavour of the local pride that animated such proposals, and the benefits foreseen. After a breathless history of exhibitions of all types and scale from local exhibitions, working men’s exhibitions, agricultural and trade shows, to the great international exhibitions, the pamphlet comes down on the side of scale and ambition:

International Exhibitions—those organised on a scale of great magnitude—have nearly always been a gigantic success; the ratio of that success has been generally proportionate to the vastness of the undertaking, and to the diversified exhibits brought together. Where much is shown, many will congregate; and where vast crowds assemble exhibitors are sure to be well repaid for their pains.⁷²

The project of a great exhibition would demonstrate the self-confidence and ambition that formed one side of local patriotism; it would also animate the striving for local superiority generated in competition between urban élites; and enthusiastically supported by loyal citizenries. This competition took a distinctive form: ‘It was in the public display of cultural and civic assets that inter-town rivalries were most commonly expressed in urban

70 Wolfram Kaiser, ‘Vive la France! Vive la République? The Cultural Construction of French Identity at the World Exhibitions in Paris 1855–1900’, *National Identities*, 1:3 (1999), pp.227–43; see also for example George Augustus Sala, *Paris Herself Again in 1878–9*. (London, 1879) where the 1878 Exposition is examined as an index of Paris—and France’s—recovery from the débâcle of 1871.

71 Allwood, *Great Exhibitions*, p.179. Though Paul Dupays, *Vie prestigieuse des expositions: Historique*. (Paris, 1939), p.45, cites an international exhibition in Lyons in 1872. The situation in the New World was different: in the USA international events in regional cities, such as the Philadelphia Centennial, the New Orleans Cotton Exposition of 1884–85 and later the Chicago Columbian of 1893, had Federal recognition and, crucially, loan funding.

72 Ellis Lever, *Suggestions for a Grand International Exhibition ... to Be Held in Manchester, in the Year 1882* (Manchester, 1881), p.68. This pamphlet was researched by George Howell, the working-class Liberal politician and journalist. Lever became a promoter of the Manchester Jubilee Exhibition of 1887, *Manchester Guardian*, 03 May 1911, p.7.

Britain'.⁷³ Assets might materialise as buildings: the town halls, museums, and libraries proudly erected by municipal authority or the subscriptions of bourgeois civil society.⁷⁴ Or they might take a transient form in events such as the congresses of Miskell's parliaments of science—and, increasingly, the celebration of culture or industry through exhibition. The Manchester Art-Treasures Exhibition of 1857 was the most ambitious provincial venture before 1886, a response to the metropolitan success of 1851;⁷⁵ and as Lever's pamphlet demonstrated, the exhibition form was a well-understood and pervasive mechanism for presenting and publicising objects of worth—whether art, handicrafts, produce, machinery or merchandise—before a popular audience at local, regional or national level. The transient exhibition joined the more permanent museum and art gallery as municipal embodiments of Bennett's exhibitionary complex.⁷⁶

The exhibition of industry and manufactures was however expected to deliver more tangible benefits than the museum or gallery. Local businesses might already be experienced exhibitors either at a national, or increasingly, an international level; they were aware of the business opportunities in advertising and access to new markets that the display of their goods might present. A home exhibition, inviting outside scrutiny of local specialisms, could maximise these effects and encourage local trade: 'it is the way of contracts to follow exhibits'.⁷⁷ Moreover, like the parliaments of science the exhibition would also attract visitors to the host city and generate spending in the local economy: the excursion traffic

73 Miskell, *Meeting Places*, p.9; see pp.160–61 for exhibitions as a continuation of the competition to attract 'parliaments of science'; Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities*. (Berkeley, 1993), p.85; 'The Un-Britishness of Boosterism', Stephen V. Ward, *Selling Places: The Marketing and Promotion of Towns and Cities, 1850–2000*. (London, 1998), pp.25–27.

74 Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, chap.4, a case study on Leeds–Bradford rivalries and Leeds Town Hall, the opening of which in 1858 was accompanied by an exhibition of local manufactures, p.170. On town halls and municipal governmentality see Joyce, *Rule of Freedom*, pp.159–71; on museums, Kate Hill, *Culture and Class in English Public Museums, 1850–1914*. (Aldershot, 2005); and more generally, her "'Thoroughly Embued with the Spirit of Ancient Greece": Symbolism and Space in Victorian Civic Culture', in Alan J. Kidd and David Nicholls (eds.), *Gender, Civic Culture, and Consumerism: Middle-Class Identity in Britain, 1800–1940*. (Manchester, 1999), pp.99–111.

75 Elizabeth A. Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857: Entrepreneurs, Connoisseurs and the Public*. (Farnham, 2011). There were two Dublin International Exhibitions, in 1853 and 1865: Allwood, *Great Exhibitions*, pp.25–27, 51. A distinct Irish exhibition tradition developed, focussed on the encouragement of national industries and handicrafts; this was manifested at the Edinburgh Women's Industries Section in 1886, p.184 below.

76 p.27ff above.

77 *North British Daily Mail*, 28 Oct 1884.

produced by the London exhibitions of 1851 and 1862 was evidence of the exhibitions' contribution to the growth of mass leisure transport.

The potential benefits of the great exhibition were as evident in Scotland as in provincial England. Glasgow, the self-styled Second City of Empire, the commercial and industrial centre of the West of Scotland, had its own traditions of rivalry with its neighbour Edinburgh. The city's élites, entrepreneurial, competitive and outward-looking, however, naturally compared themselves to their counterparts in the great English provincial cities as much as the Scottish capital.⁷⁸ Officiating at a Glasgow charity event in August 1878, Lord Rosebery, the rising star of Scottish Liberalism, played to this local pride with an announcement that plans were afoot for a Glasgow exhibition. 'I believe that no greater service could be rendered to the working classes of this great city than placing before them, within convenient compass, all that has been done by their brethren in other lands'. The revelation was greeted with enthusiasm: 'now being tired of looking at the great industrial shows of other cities and other nations we want to hold a show of our own' proclaimed the *Glasgow Herald*:

If we have a palace of industry attracting vast crowds of strangers to the city every day, it will be the means of making a stirring trade ... [W]e take it for granted ... that the opening of a great exhibition in the Second City of the Empire is only a work of time.⁷⁹

An organising committee was convened; Glasgow Green was earmarked as a site; financial backers and Town Council support were sought. The project however ground spectacularly to a halt, a victim of the cataclysm that befell Glasgow's commercial life: 'A few days after a further meeting was held, but the day fixed was the one on which the City of Glasgow Bank collapsed, so the proposal was abandoned'.⁸⁰ Abandoned for the moment, but to resurface after progress had been made in Edinburgh.

78 W. Hamish Fraser, 'Introduction: "Let Glasgow Flourish"', in W. Hamish Fraser and Irene Maver (eds.), *Glasgow, Volume II: 1830 to 1912*. (Manchester, 1996), p.2. 'A Treasured Rivalry', Robert Crawford, *On Glasgow and Edinburgh*. (Cambridge, Mass, 2013), pp.1–40. The 'Second City' title was also claimed for Liverpool—and for Dublin.

79 *Herald*, 24 Aug 1878, p.3; 02 Sep 1878, p.4. Cf. *NBDM*, 24 Aug 1878: 'The idea is too good to be dropped'.

80 *Progress, Herald*, 12 Nov 1884, p.10.

A sort of Scotch Kensington: exhibiting Fisheries and Forestry

Local commentators were keen to locate Edinburgh's international exhibitions of the 1880s—Fisheries in 1882, Forestry in 1884, and the 1886 Exhibition itself—within a native Scottish tradition. Modernity had to be provided with a historical provenance. Thus 'Scotland [could] claim to have been among the earliest pioneers of industrial exhibitions. For a century and a quarter she has, through various channels, done much to stimulate different branches of industry and art'.⁸¹ In London the Society of Arts, originators of the Great Exhibition project, promoted industrial exhibitions from 1761; Edinburgh publicists could trace their lineage back to a marginally older Enlightenment institution, the Edinburgh Society for Encouraging Arts, Sciences, Manufactures and Agriculture in Scotland. Established in 1755 as an offshoot of the Select Society, the Edinburgh Society's ten-year programme of annual exhibitions, medals and premiums rewarded improvement in Scottish industry and agriculture.⁸²

The Edinburgh Society's shows ceased after 1765. Thereafter the task of encouraging improvement passed to two organisations: to the Board of Trustees for Manufactures, a government-backed industrial promotion body set up in 1727 as a direct result of the Union settlement;⁸³ and to nineteenth-century Scotland's most prominent exhibiting body, the Highland and Agricultural Society. Founded in 1784 as the Highland Society of Edinburgh, this association initially placed as much emphasis on the preservation of Celtic culture as on agricultural improvement. However '[t]he offices of bard and professor of Gaelic were discontinued in 1799, and that of piper abolished in 1817',⁸⁴ and the Society developed as an association of aristocratic and landed interests throughout Scotland. From its inception

81 *Scotsman*, 13 May 1886, p.5; this narrative was repeated in the International Exhibition of Industry, Science, and Art, *Official Guide to the Exhibition, with Notes of What to See in Edinburgh*. (Edinburgh, 1886), and other Exhibition guides.

82 The Select Society numbered David Hume, Adam Smith, William Robertson and Adam Fergusson among its members. The subsidiary Edinburgh Society 'became the practical arm of the debaters, and a source of increasing prestige for the members of the flourishing parent body', Roger L. Emerson, 'The Social Composition of Enlightened Scotland: The Select Society of Edinburgh, 1754–1764', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 114 (1973), p.298.

83 Brian Bonnyman, 'Agrarian Patriotism and the Landed Interest: The Scottish "Society of Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture", 1723–1746', in Koen Stapelbroek and Jani Marjanen (eds.), *The Rise of Economic Societies in the Eighteenth Century*. (Basingstoke, 2012), pp.44–45. The Board was still extant in the 1880s; its most visible activity was its Edinburgh art school, the Trustees' Academy.

84 *Scotsman*, 19 Jul 1884, p.7.

in 1822, the Society's annual show dedicated to agricultural modernisation and improvement became the most important event in the Scottish farming year.⁸⁵ By the 1880s, with its headquarters and secretariat in Edinburgh the Highland Society was one of the city's network of interlocking learned and scientific societies conveniently located to interact with the Commissions and Departments of Scottish public administration.

It therefore fell naturally to the Society to sponsor an event aimed at the encouragement of another Scottish primary industry. The International Fisheries Exhibition held in Edinburgh between 12 and 29 April 1882 was the first international exhibition of any kind presented in Scotland, and claimed to be the first international show of fisheries anywhere; it predated by a year the fashionable South Kensington Fisheries exhibition. The development of national fishing industries was a European preoccupation, spawning a succession of exhibitions, most recently at Berlin in 1880 and Norwich in 1881. The prospect of an event to encourage the Scottish industry was welcomed enthusiastically.

It is impossible to doubt that exhibitions of this kind must tend to foster and develop the fisheries, by stimulating thought and enterprise, and by concentrating in one spot ... all the improvements of modern science which have any bearing on one of our national industries.⁸⁶

At the same time, its Edinburgh chroniclers could locate the event in a history in which the institutions of agricultural improvement and the modern industrial exhibition could be conflated; and in which Scottish primacy could once again be asserted.

The Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, the Royal [Agricultural] Society of England, and the Great Exhibition of 1851, have been, *in the order of time in which they are given*, the three leading agencies in this country in infusing modern life into an ancient institution and new meaning into an old name.⁸⁷

This narrative could itself be incorporated into a view of Enlightened progress from 'ancient' to modern:

85 Heather Holmes, 'The Character of the Royal Highland Show, 1870–1900', *Review of Scottish Culture*, 22 (2010), p.122; James D.G. Davidson, *The Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland: A Short History, 1784–1984*. (Edinburgh, 1984).

86 *Scotsman*, 08 Feb 1881, p.4.

87 David Herbert (ed.), *Fish and Fisheries: A Selection from the Prize Essays of the International Fisheries Exhibition, Edinburgh, 1882*. (Edinburgh, 1883), p.x, original emphasis. Page numbers in parentheses in the following paragraphs refer to this source. For the Exhibition see also Geoffrey N. Swinney, 'From Herrings to the Atom Bomb: The Legacy of the Edinburgh International Fisheries Exhibition, 1882', *History Scotland*, 4:3 (2004), pp.35–42.

It is distinctly a modern enterprise, the show on a large scale of the materials, methods, and results of industry, with the view of stimulating industry ... Ancient and modern ideas of the requirements of social order could not easily be put in more vivid contrast (p.x).

Social order was apparent in landed and establishment interest in the undertaking. Under the presidency of the Duke of Edinburgh six dukes, twenty-three other assorted noblemen, eighteen baronets and sixteen M.P.s lent their names as patrons (pp.xix–xxi).

Despite this landed interest there was little doubt that the Exhibition would be held in Edinburgh, home of the Highland Society and the Scottish fisheries administrations. The capital's locational advantages were reinforced by the Town Council, intent as ever on encouraging incoming events to the city. A municipal pledge of a hundred guineas enhanced the Exhibition's guarantee fund,⁸⁸ Town Clerk William Skinner became one of its honorary secretaries, and the Council supplied a well-positioned and capacious venue in the Waverley Market. Completed by City Architect Robert Morham in 1876 as a base for fruit and flower dealers, the Market rapidly emerged as a popular venue for musical concerts and public entertainments.⁸⁹ Its suitability for the proposed venture was obvious: 'No city in Great Britain could have a more central or spacious place for such an exhibition than the Waverley Market presents'.⁹⁰

Thus endowed, the Edinburgh Fisheries Exhibition could welcome five hundred exhibitors, significantly more than the three hundred at the previous year's Norwich show.⁹¹ The exhibits encompassed fishing equipment and technology, fish specimens and products, and natural history displays and illustrations. They came from British sources—a substantial Loan Collection was contributed by the South Kensington Museum—but also from Continental Europe: 'France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Greece, Denmark, Norway and Sweden were all represented' (p.xxxii). To confirm the undertaking's scientific and improving objectives, the precedents set by the parliaments of science were followed: medals, diplomas and prizes were awarded, subsidised by a £150 Government grant, and a commemorative volume of prize-winning essays was later published.

88 See p.66 below for the guarantee fund mechanism.

89 James Middlemass & Co, *Albert Memorial Guide Book to Edinburgh and Its Environs*. (Edinburgh, 1880); *BoSE*, pp.290–91.

90 *Scotsman*, 08 Feb 1881, p.4. Aggrieved traders took legal action against the Town Council's usurpation of the Market's primary purpose, *Scotsman*, 20 Feb 1882, p.4. The case was only resolved in the Council's favour in February 1883, *Scotsman*, 21 Feb 1883, p.9.

91 *Scotsman*, 10 Apr 1882, p.4.



Illus 1-1 The Fisheries Exhibition in the Waverley Market, *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 22 Apr 1882, p.136

The Exhibition also had its sociable side. The Liberal hero Rosebery turned out, as a local grandee, to perform its opening ‘with imposing ceremonial’ before ‘a large and fashionable assembly’ (p.xxxii). The Town Council, once again pursuing the project of city promotion and alert to the presence of ‘a large number of distinguished strangers, many of them from foreign countries’, sponsored a *conversazione* in the Museum of Science and Industry, ‘a most brilliant gathering’ for 2,500 guests. In Lord Provost Boyd’s estimation ‘it would be becoming, on the part of the Council, to show hospitality to the promoters and visitors on the occasion of the opening of the Exhibition, having regard to its importance and international character’ (p.xxv–xxvi).⁹²

⁹² See also *Scotsman*, 14 Apr 1882, p.5.

The Edinburgh Fisheries Exhibition also proved a popular attraction for a more general audience. Despite the show's specialised and technical subject matter, its management went some way to meet the public demand for entertainment. Music featured prominently: 'There was always a band in attendance' (p.xxxv).⁹³ Costumed Newhaven fisher lasses engaged as programme sellers provided local colour.⁹⁴ The Market 'was often crowded to excess'; 138,000 entry tickets, and several hundred season tickets were sold over the show's sixteen-day run. The visitors included a substantial proportion of excursionists—some themselves from fishing ports—encouraged by reduced railway fares. This popularity brought a gratifying financial reward; the Exhibition recorded a surplus of £1,400 on a total income of £5,844.⁹⁵

The success of the Fisheries Exhibition was an encouraging precedent for the city's second, and much more ambitious, international event staged two years later. The International Forestry Exhibition held between 1 July and 11 October 1884 was once again dedicated to one of Scotland's primary industries. The project originated with the Scottish Arboricultural Society, another technical association based in Edinburgh again representing the landed and proprietorial interests that had supported the Fisheries Exhibition. And behind the Arboricultural Society stood the Highland and Agricultural Society, lending its considerable weight to the undertaking in the shape of financial backing, staff, and office space at its George IV Bridge headquarters.⁹⁶

The Forestry Exhibition's leading figures emerged from this background. The prime mover in the venture was a wealthy Leith wine merchant, Robert Hutchison of Carlowrie, who had retired to play 'the part of a minor country gentleman with a keen interest in forestry' on his West Lothian estate.⁹⁷ An early Arboricultural Society member, he had served as its president from 1864 to 1871. The presidency of the Exhibition was assumed by the Marquis of Lothian, Tory magnate, ex-diplomat and intellectual, and another

93 Cf. Holmes, 'Royal Highland Show', pp.129–130 on music at the Highland Shows.

94 *Scotsman*, 13 Apr 1882, p.3. For Newhaven fishwives at South Kensington, see *Fishwives' and Fishgirls' Costumes: A Souvenir of the Fisheries Exhibition, 1883*. (London, 1883). Fishwife costumes would be worn by servers in the Fish Dining Room at the 1886 Exhibition.

95 *Scotsman*, 04 May 1882, p.4; 02 Mar 1883, p.2.

96 Hugh Robert Mill and John Rattray (eds.), *Forestry and Forest Products: Prize Essays of the Edinburgh International Forestry Exhibition, 1884*. (Edinburgh, 1885), pp.xi–xiii.

97 Alan Moncrieff, 'Hutchison, Sir Robert, first baronet (1871–1960)' [Hutchison's son], rev. Elizabeth Baigent, *ODNB*. See also Groome, *Ordnance Gazetteer*, vol.1 p.237.

Arboricultural Society ex-president.⁹⁸ Lothian convened an Executive Committee whose members included the current Lord Provost of Edinburgh George Harrison, John Methven a prominent local nurseryman, and James D. Park, the Edinburgh-based Engineer to the Highland Society.⁹⁹ Hutchison was joined as honorary secretary by Town Clerk Skinner, by F.N. Menzies, Highland Society Secretary, and by Hugh Cleghorn, a veteran of the Indian Forestry Service and another Arboricultural Society past president.¹⁰⁰

Thus constituted, the Exhibition organisers amassed an even more impressive complement of aristocratic, landed, and otherwise distinguished patrons than had graced the Edinburgh Fisheries show. Headed by the Queen and the Prince of Wales, the list included over 250 individual aristocrats, M.P.s and other, mostly propertied, notables, with Government departments, learned societies, corporate bodies, and the councils of thirteen Scottish burghs. A scattering of foreign dignitaries, and figures such as the Maharajahs of Travancore and Jahore and Rajah Brooke of Sarawak, reflected the geographical reach and imperial presence that would distinguish the event.¹⁰¹

With the revived South Kensington series in full swing, the Edinburgh promoters were at pains to echo the prevailing orthodoxy of the themed exhibition:

The age of Universal Exhibitions ... is past; and it is now recognised as more important to encourage such specialising tendencies as contribute to the rapid advancement of a small group of allied industries, than to hold Exhibitions where more interests are represented in a more general, and consequently in a more limited and less instructive, manner.¹⁰²

In opening the show, Lord Provost Harrison testified to the lethargy provoked by the great universal events:

the public had ... begun to tire of these general exhibitions which confused as much as they interested. He had attended nearly all of them that had taken place since

98 J.M. Rigg, 'Kerr, Schomberg Henry, ninth marquess of Lothian (1833–1900)', rev. H.C.G. Matthew, *ODNB*. 'He holds 4547 acres in Edinburghshire and 19,740 in Roxburghshire, valued at £18,194 and £26,684 per annum', Groome, *Ordnance Gazetteer*, vol.3 p.105.

99 Park had assisted in the Fisheries Exhibition.

100 For Cleghorn see Jan Oosthoek, 'The Colonial Origins of Scientific Forestry in Britain', *Environmental History Resources*. (2007), http://www.eh-resources.org/colonial_forestry.html, accessed 14 Nov 2012; Stana Nenadic, 'Exhibiting India in Nineteenth-Century Scotland and the Impact on Commerce, Industry and Popular Culture', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 34:1 (April 2014), p.78.

101 International Forestry Exhibition, *Official Catalogue*. (Edinburgh, 1884), pp.xi–xv.

102 Mill and Rattray (eds.), *Forestry*, p.xi.

1851 ... and he confessed they seemed always too much for his limited intellect ... He got confused and wearied of them, and he had no doubt many of his friends were in the same position.¹⁰³

In contrast, the specialised Forestry project was directed towards a specific goal. The neglect of arboricultural education in Scotland—‘so that young men desirous of qualifying themselves as scientific foresters are obliged to resort to the Continent for the necessary instruction’¹⁰⁴—was a matter of national concern. Scientific training would conserve Scotland’s forests, husband a national resource, and of course develop the estates of the Exhibition’s supporters. There was also an imperial dimension: the forests of the Empire, in particular the valuable hardwoods of British India, formed a resource of huge potential. Well-trained foresters would assist an enlightened colonial administration to conserve and exploit imperial timber, in turn providing job opportunities for enterprising Scots.¹⁰⁵

The Arboricultural Society accordingly saw the Exhibition as a means of raising funds to establish a Scottish School of Forestry, with a professorial Chair and an attached Museum. The Highland Society, ‘represent[ing] the nobility, landed proprietors, and all who are interested in the management of landed property in Scotland’ and who already awarded forestry qualifications, concurred.¹⁰⁶ The third partner in this enterprise, Harrison’s Town Council, wished to ensure that the proposed Forestry School would be located in Edinburgh to add to the city’s portfolio of higher education establishments. The Council had already spent £20,000 in purchasing land for an Arboretum, and looked forward to a tangible return on this investment.

Despite this clear aim, its sponsoring organisations’ enthusiasm, and its roster of illustrious patrons, the Exhibition project faced practical difficulties. Financial support was slow to materialise. Even after resorting to direct advertisement for subscribers the guarantee fund stalled at less than £7,000; the want of visible backing could only diminish

103 *Scotsman*, 02 Jul 1884, p.7. For ‘exhibition fatigue’ see chap.5, p.250. Cf. Rosebery’s 1878 Glasgow speech: ‘We who have seen very many exhibitions are apt to feel that we do see at them pretty much the same thing—the same machinery, the same jewellery, the same pictures—whether it be in Philadelphia or in Paris’, *Herald*, 24 Aug 1878, p.3.

104 *Scotsman*, 30 Jun 84, p.5; see also John Croumbie Brown, *The Schools of Forestry in Europe: A Plea for the Creation of a School of Forestry in Connection with the Arboretum at Edinburgh*. (Edinburgh, 1877).

105 For the Scottish role in Indian forestry see Jan Oosthoek, ‘Worlds Apart? The Scottish Forestry Tradition and the Development of Forestry in India’, *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies*, 3:1 (2009), pp.69–82; and his ‘Colonial Origins’.

106 Mill and Rattray (eds.), *Forestry*, p.xiii.



Illus 1-2 The Forestry Exhibition. *Illustrated London News*, 12 Jul 1884, p.36

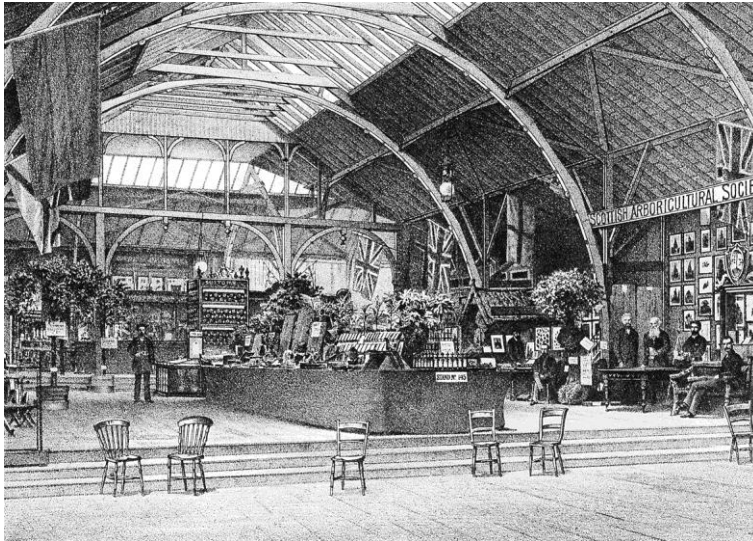
the enterprise.¹⁰⁷ Having outgrown the Waverley Market and constrained in their choice of site, the organisers were forced to settle on the grounds of Donaldson's Hospital to the west of the city. The 'suburban' nature of this location was compensated by good transport links: the Edinburgh Street Tramway Company's Coltbridge Extension terminated close by.¹⁰⁸ This circumstance was no doubt pleasing to Hutchison, who in his business role of ESTC Chairman was made keenly aware of the potential of the Exhibition—and future Exhibitions—for his firm's revenue.¹⁰⁹

107 Advertisement, *Scotsman*, 12 Jan 1884, p.1. Lothian himself bemoaned the scarcity of guarantors, *Scotsman*, 02 Jul 1884, p.7.

108 W. Kinnaird Rose, *A Hand Guide to the International Forestry Exhibition and to Forestry*. (Edinburgh, 1884). Descriptive quotes below are from this source. See p.80 below for the search for a Forestry site.

109 Hutchison reported increased ESTC earnings of £800 in Forestry Exhibition traffic over a four-week period, *Scotsman*, 01 Aug 1884, p.3.

Perched incongruously on the terrace fronting the Hospital's Playfair building a substantial though hardly beautiful timber construction, 'somewhat on the lines of that at South Kensington',¹¹⁰ was erected by City Architect Morham to house the Exhibition. The 630ft nave was cut by three 200ft transepts; Morham's utilitarian construction kept the top-lit galleries free of obstruction by supporting the roof, with its dome and pavilions, on 'circular ribbed couples'. The landscaped Exhibition grounds were appropriately laid out in demonstration plots by local nurserymen.



Illus 1-3 Forestry Exhibition interior. Scottish Arboricultural Society, *Transactions*, Vol.XI (1885-87), pl.3

The Forestry exhibits ranged from timber samples and products, to hand tools, to woodworking machinery. Geographical coverage was wider even than that of the Fisheries: Government support had been secured by Lothian, and an official Foreign Office circular had invited overseas participation. In response, exhibits arrived not only from Continental Europe and also from further afield. From the Empire, the Indian display was the largest in the show but contributions were also received from Burma, the Andaman Islands, New South Wales, New Zealand, Canada, the West Indies, and Sierra Leone. The United States and South America were represented, while a large and much-admired collection arrived from Japan, 'the new and wonderful Western civilisation in the East'.¹¹¹ In a now-familiar display tactic some offerings emphasised the gigantic and the spectacular: massive samples of tropical timber, a room-size hollow Californian redwood trunk. Others, such as the

110 That is., the design for cheap temporary buildings described p.108 below.

111 Mill and Rattray (eds.), *Forestry*, p.xxi.

trophées de chasse displayed by the Prince of Wales and other mighty hunters, seemed to have little connection with forestry *per se*. The Exhibition grounds displayed outdoor timber structures: a Swiss chalet; Queen Victoria's gift of a hut built from fallen timber from the Balmoral estate; or the Manitoba cottage, depicting life on the Canadian prairies for prospective emigrants.¹¹²

In order to attract the ticket-buying public the Forestry Exhibition organisers once again leavened the lump of educative worthiness with entertainments for their largely middle-class visitors. Music was provided, with performances from military, Volunteer and police bands. The novelty of electric light from arc and incandescent lamps in the buildings, enhanced by illuminations by Pain of London in the grounds, encouraged a 'delightful evening promenade'; 'the effect of thousands of tiny coloured lamps and Chinese lanterns dispersed among the shrubbery, or clustered in artistic designs, was charming in the extreme'.¹¹³ The 700 feet of electric railway laid in the grounds by H.B. Binko proved a popular attraction. Most spectacularly, the Executive engaged William Dale, a London balloonist, to undertake demonstration ascents, 'a novel and exciting form of amusement which has not yet been introduced into Scotland'.¹¹⁴

Celebrity visits to the Exhibition provided further pleasures for an appreciative audience. The Prince and Princess of Wales attended with their children. Despite the 'informal' nature of the visit, it brought forth the customary civic pageantry to accompany the presence of royalty: 'the home of the ancient Scottish kings did itself honour by the manner in which it received the sons and daughter of a gracious Queen'.¹¹⁵ In the midst of the campaign for the Third Reform Bill and on the eve of a triumphant Corn Exchange meeting W.E. Gladstone himself put in an impromptu appearance, accompanied by Rosebery. The adoring crowds that mobbed the Prime Minister as he progressed through the Exhibition were evidence of Edinburgh's commitment to Liberalism and to the personal standing of Gladstone with the Edinburgh crowd: 'at every turn the building rang with fervid cheers'.¹¹⁶

112 International Forestry Exhibition, *Catalogue*; Rose, *Hand Guide*; Mill and Rattray (eds.), *Forestry*.

113 *Scotsman*, 10 Oct 1884, p.5.

114 *Scotsman*, 27 Aug 1884, p.6. Dale's inaugural flight was intended (unsuccessfully) to mark the centenary of James Tytler's pioneering Edinburgh ascent, Meg Russell, 'Tytler, James (1745–1804)', *ODNB*.

115 *Scotsman*, 23 Aug 1884, p.7.

116 *Scotsman*, 30 Aug 1884, p.7; for the political background see Ewen A. Cameron, *Impaled Upon a Thistle: Scotland since 1880*. (Edinburgh, 2010), chap.3; Michael Kyle Thompson, 'The Effects of

The Forestry Exhibition became one of Edinburgh's summer attractions and something of a fashionable resort. 'Being the first of its kind, it has drawn together people from all parts of our own kingdom, from America, and from many Continental and colonial countries'.¹¹⁷ Visitor numbers were nevertheless lower than expected, and lower than necessary to achieve the aim of the undertaking. An optimistic total of 'almost' 500,000 admissions over the eighty-nine days of the event gave a daily average well below that of the Edinburgh Fisheries Exhibition.¹¹⁸ The accounts, when finally published, showed a small profit of £292 on a total income of just under £23,000: better than a financial loss, but nowhere near the surplus necessary to finance the projected Edinburgh School of Forestry.¹¹⁹

This limited success could be partly attributed to the perceived remoteness of the Exhibition site. Deficiencies in management were also identified, particularly on the part of the Highland Society officials: 'the business methods followed have been ... of a somewhat antiquated nature'.¹²⁰ Delays in setting up some exhibits, including the Japanese contribution, were held to have discouraged visitors at the beginning of the Exhibition's run.¹²¹ There were complaints of 'a penny-wise and pound-foolish economy' with regard to entertainments.¹²² Officials were criticised for rudeness and pig-headedness towards exhibitors. And, finally, strife broke out over the competence of the selected jurors: 'there was too much heather in some of those appointed'. A revolt by exhibitors forced the

the Third Reform Act and the Irish Home Rule Debate on Edinburgh Politics, 1885–6'. (PhD, University of Edinburgh, 2013). The Forestry exhibits included a silver axe presented by Gladstone, with chippings from his signature tree-felling activities, *Builder*, 19 Jul 1884, p.81. See also Peter Sewter, 'Gladstone as Woodsman', in Roland Quinault, Roger Swift, and Ruth Clayton Windscheffel (eds.), *William Gladstone: New Studies and Perspectives*. (Farnham, 2012), pp.155–75.

117 *Scotsman* 10 Oct 1884, p.5. The summer's other events included the Centennial Highland Show, and a loan exhibition of Scottish National Portraits in the Royal Institution which drew over 18,000 visits.

118 5,618 visits per day compared with 8,625 tickets sold per day for the Fisheries. Though covering a much more concentrated time frame of sixteen days, the Fisheries figure excludes season ticket visits and so significantly underestimates actual attendance.

119 *Scotsman*, 01 May 1885, p.4.

120 *Scotsman*, 10 Oct 1884, p.5.

121 Although lack of preparedness was a common feature of Victorian exhibitions.

122 *NBDM*, 23 Oct 1884. This Glasgow view claimed that financial disaster had been averted by a run of good weather, and a cholera scare which kept English and American tourists from the Continent: the Exhibition saved by tourism, rather than generating it.

Executive to re-run the process and issue an augmented list of award winners.¹²³

On the other hand, the Forestry Exhibition like its predecessor found room for the apparatus of scholarship. Nine popular lectures were given. Forty-two essays were submitted for a prize competition, the winners of which, as with the Fisheries, would be published in book form. Finally, a conference on arboricultural education and the proposed Edinburgh Forestry School was held—though the attenuated Exhibition proceeds could not contribute materially to the project, which would have to be advanced by other means.¹²⁴

Despite this disappointing outcome Robert Hutchison revealed that in the excitement and animation of the Forestry Exhibition he had developed a taste for exhibitions in general. For Hutchison the Forestry show, whatever its defects, could serve as a model for a series of yearly Edinburgh industrial exhibitions ‘in order to promote culture and education, and to furnish a source of attraction and pleasure to the thousands of their annual visitors’. Hutchison’s proposal was intended not only to demonstrate the progress of Scottish industry, but also to celebrate the place of Edinburgh as Scotland’s capital and the focus of Scottish national consciousness, as opposed to the centralising pull of London. His rhetorical flourish caught the sentiment: ‘His idea was that they might be able to make Edinburgh a sort of Scotch Kensington’.¹²⁵

Hutchison’s *bon mot* succeeded on a number of levels. Although his proposal’s narrow focus on individual industries recalled nothing so much as the failed South Kensington exhibition series of the 1870s, Edinburgh as ‘Scotch Kensington’’s two events invited comparison with the contemporary fashionable London shows. The Edinburgh Fisheries predated its South Kensington equivalent; in its subject matter and upper-class ambience the Forestry Exhibition would have fitted well into the London series.¹²⁶ Edinburgh efforts, on this reading, could aspire to rival those of London. At the same time, ‘Scotch Kensington’ revealed that the perception of the remoteness and uncaring nature of the organs of imperial governance was shared by landed Tories as well as by municipal liberals. The resulting combativeness is captured in Hutchison’s note to Lothian on the prospects for the 1886 Exhibition: ‘the advantages to Scotland generally, & Edinburgh in particular accruing

123 *Scotsman*, 08 Oct 1884, p.6. See chap.5, p.203ff. for jurying and its discontents.

124 See Oosthoek, ‘Colonial Origins’ for developments leading to William Sommerville’s Lectureship in Forestry at Edinburgh University in 1889, ‘the first of its kind in Britain’.

125 *Scotsman*, 09 Oct 1884, p.7.

126 In fact, it was claimed that a South Kensington International Exhibition of Horticulture, Floriculture, and Forestry proposed for 1884 was abandoned at the request of the Edinburgh organisers, Mill and Rattray (eds.), *Forestry*, pp.xiii–xiv.

from such an Exhibition are quite apparent, & besides it will tend to check the centralization of the whole kingdom in “Kensington”—as in setting up Forestry Exh. [*sic*].¹²⁷

For his part Lothian had already stressed the Forestry Exhibition’s national dimension, and its demonstration of a Scottish place in the imperial project. His remarks at the event’s opening ceremony traversed the conventional range of fervid identifications with nation, Union and Empire:

all he had done in connection with the Exhibition he had felt first as a Scotsman, and next as a native of Great Britain ... He put Scotland first; he always in his heart put Scotland first ... Though Scotch, he was also a Briton, if he might use the word; and if anything he did conduced to the advantage of Scotland, it strengthened his desire to do it fourfold if he thought it might be to the advantage of the Empire as well.¹²⁸

Lothian’s Scottish loyalties had led him to accept the chair of the Great National Meeting held by the Convention of Royal Burghs in Edinburgh in January 1884, the most prominent event in their campaign for the institution of a Scottish Secretaryship. Despite his Tory politics and political diffidence Lothian’s views on Scottish governance and Whitehall administration made him an acceptable figure to liberal, municipal Scotland, on this issue at least.

Those under whose auspices the meeting was convened naturally and usually differed from him in their view of political questions ... and he thought that their having asked him, a Conservative, to preside ... proved that they looked upon the question, not as a party question, but as a national question!¹²⁹

Hutchison’s vision of Edinburgh as ‘Scotch Kensington’ revealed that exhibitions, too, could be part of the national question.

The pleasantry therefore neatly encapsulates the themes of this chapter. Edinburgh was defined as a national capital by its social and economic actualities as a professional and administrative centre, the home of Scotland’s institutions of governance, and the locus of a metropolitan-style economy. This self-definition as a capital was a special and distinctive case of the local patriotism which characterised the autonomous bourgeois rule of

127 NRS GD40/9/492/1: Hutchison to Lothian, 01 Apr 1885, offering him the Presidency of the Exhibition (see also n.41, p.60 below). The note was written from the Scottish Club, Piccadilly.

128 *Scotsman*, 02 Jul 1884, p.7. For these territorial identifications see n.31, p.20 above..

129 *Scotsman*, 17 Jan 1884, p.5, reprinted in *The National Meeting in Favour of the Creation of a Separate Department of State for Scotland*. (Edinburgh, 1884); see also H.J. Hanham, ‘The Creation of the Scottish Office 1881–87’, *Juridical Review*, 10 (1965), pp.210–11. Lothian himself assumed the Scottish Secretaryship in 1887, n.57, p.273 below.

Victorian cities. To this the Scottish context added the dimension of nationhood, in which Edinburgh's distinctive topography and urban form reinforced a romantic image of national history and uniqueness. It was London, the imperial capital, which drew to itself metropolitan functions such as the mounting of international exhibitions. 'South Kensington' for Hutchinson therefore stood not only for a fashionable and successful exhibition centre, but also for the remoteness and aloofness of London power.

In a period where the patriotic localism of the great provincial cities brought forth monumental projects, plans for great provincial exhibitions were hatched. But Edinburgh was the site for two successful, if small-scale, international shows which their promoters could locate within a distinctively Scottish tradition of modernity: a tradition of landed improvement. Scotch Kensington had therefore rather different social origins, and a different character, from the projects being promoted in commercial and industrial circles in other cities. It was these circles in Edinburgh which at this point came to the fore to advance the project of a universal international exhibition. The prosecution of this venture, the 1886 Exhibition, is the subject of the next chapter.

2. The acorn and the oak: organising the Exhibition

The promoters of the Edinburgh International Exhibition of 1886 plotted their story as a struggle through adversity, overcoming formidable obstacles to reach a successful goal.

Thomas Clark, by this point Lord Provost and vice-president of the Exhibition Executive, could in February 1886 look back at the previous achievements and forward to future prospects:

There never was, he said, a more fitting illustration of the old story of the acorn and the oak than the rise and progress of that Exhibition ... It had originated with very few, and everything at first seemed to be in a maze ... but they were now on the eve of success ... He had no doubt their efforts would soon reach a successful issue, and they would be able to lay off their armour and say the battle was won.¹

This chapter will position this struggle, and the success of the Exhibition organisers in winning their battle, within Edinburgh's voluntary middle-class associational society. Before Clark's involvement the 'very few' originators consisted of the Edinburgh Merchants' Association, a group of small businessmen seeking to establish a reputation within these associational circles. The E.M.A.'s agitation for the Exhibition idea led to the Dobie's Saloon meeting of February 1885. The meeting marked a turning point with the involvement of influential figures from Edinburgh commerce and industry, and the participation of municipal notables such as Clark, elected Lord Provost in November 1885, and the charismatic Dean of Guild James Gowans who rapidly assumed leadership of the undertaking.

Like all such projectors the newly-constituted organisers attempted to engage the support of eminent patrons. The search for support from the Scottish municipalities was more specific to Edinburgh and the city's claim to leadership as a national capital. First the home city's Town Council was formally enlisted; then, and not without a bad-tempered display of opposition, support was granted by Glasgow Corporation. A campaign then ensued to enrol the other Scottish burgh authorities in what had emerged as a national enterprise. Fundraising, in the mechanism of the guarantee fund, was the crucial element in the struggle. Pledges from Edinburgh and Glasgow councils formed the largest contributions to the fund total; analysis of the remaining subscriptions reveals that, despite the project's asserted national status, the fund was very largely a product of Edinburgh

1 *Scotsman*, 17 Feb 1886, p.8.

commerce and industry with the special interest of the hotel and hospitality trade particularly prominent.

The achievement of the guarantee fund target in September 1885, together with the Town Council grant of the West Meadows as the Exhibition site, marked a second decisive date for the project. With an assured future a new management structure could be elaborated. Experienced exhibition professionals were recruited. A range of functional committees was established to provide an arena for voluntary participation by, and the deployment of the knowledge and expertise of, members of Edinburgh's male middle-class professional and commercial networks. Two otherwise excluded groups, the working-class contributors to the Artisan Section and the women activists of the Women's Industries Section, were nevertheless invited to participate in the show: Clark's acorn had grown into a tree with many branches.

The E.M.A. initiative and Dobie's Saloon

The struggle began two years before Clark's celebratory speech. In the climate of enthusiasm for exhibitions, with the successful example of the Fisheries to hand and with the Forestry show under way, it was apparent that the idea of a large-scale industrial exhibition was being discussed at more than one node of Edinburgh's bourgeois networks of influence. Certainly, more than one claimant to have planted Clark's acorn emerged once the 1886 Exhibition was an accomplished success.² The spark that set the Exhibition project in motion however originated within Edinburgh's small-business community, in an organisation that had recently appeared to public view as the Edinburgh Merchants' Association. The Association had a venerable history: it was founded in 1836 as the 'B.B.' or Black-Book Society and claimed to be Edinburgh's, and perhaps Scotland's, first trade protection organisation. By early 1884 it had evolved from its secretive credit-rating and blacklisting role—'those who originally constituted the Society were gentlemen who met privately, and who took notes of other people's affairs'³—to seek a more visible position in Edinburgh's bourgeois public sphere, with all the apparatus of sociability, the excursions and formal dinners, that that entailed.

The officers of the Association exemplified the organisation's small-business origins.

2 For example George Ferguson's claims in *Pall Mall Gazette*, 10 May 1886, p.13; and John Davidson's in *Scottish News*, 08 May 1886, p.7.

3 ('"Oh, oh" and laughter'): E.M.A. jubilee dinner, *Scotsman*, 15 Jan 1886, p.7.

Its secretary James Marchbank was a solicitor, S.S.C. rather than the more prestigious W.S., in partnership with his brother-in-law David Cuthbert. R.H. Eagle, E.M.A. president, ‘designer and lithographic artist’ was a partner in the printing firm of White & Eagle; W.R. Bilsland owned Bilsland & Co, rubber manufacturers; and Archibald Orrock ran his family firm of high-class bookbinders and stationers. All were proprietors of established businesses with good New Town premises, living at modest middle-class addresses, active in male middle-class associations. Marchbank, with his brother-in-law, was an enthusiastic freemason; Eagle was a captain, and Bilsland a member, of the largely ceremonial confraternity of the High Constables.⁴ These leading figures in the Association lighted on the idea of a large-scale exhibition as the project that would demonstrate their commitment to voluntary action and project them onto the public stage: an undertaking ‘which would benefit not only the society, but likewise prove advantageous to the community at large’.⁵

As a first step in the campaign the enthusiastic but inexperienced exhibition organisers took informed advice. In February 1884 a Merchants’ Association delegation interviewed Professor T.C. Archer, Director of the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art. Archer was an acknowledged expert: he had participated in the Great Exhibition of 1851 and served as a juror for the 1862 London Exhibition and for the exhibitions in Vienna in 1873 and Paris in 1878, and had been a Commissioner at the Philadelphia Centennial in 1876.⁶ As the Museum’s Director he had contributed to the Edinburgh Fisheries and Forestry Exhibitions. Archer was apparently enthusiastic about the new proposal and supportive of the Association’s efforts: ‘[he] expressed surprise that the citizens of Edinburgh had never moved in this matter before. He mentioned that no city was better suited than Edinburgh for an International Exhibition’.⁷

Archer’s advice to the novice organisers was nonetheless daunting: an enterprise of this scale would require a guarantee fund of £100,000 and a fifty acre site with good rail

4 For the High Constables, see also p.19 above. Orrock also later became a member and office-holder, ECA ED11/2/1/16: Records of the Society of High Constables, Roll of Members. For Marchbank, Cuthbert and Orrock see *Scotsman*, 01 Dec 1931, p.8; 02 Jul 1928, p.8; 13 Jun 1905, p.4, respectively; addresses in *Post-Office Edinburgh and Leith Directory, 1886–87*. E.M.A. membership lists have not survived; other individuals active in the early organisation of the Exhibition were almost certainly members. The Association lingered on until 1949, when it was absorbed into the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, ECA ED5/4/27: E.M.A. Minute Book, 24 Aug 1949.

5 *Scotsman*, 15 Jan 1886, p.7.

6 *Scotsman*, 20 Feb 1885, p.4.

7 ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 20 Feb 1885; *Scotsman*, 21 Feb 1885, p.9.

communications. He advised the deputation to begin their campaign by approaching the Town Council and the city's other public bodies, the institutions whose engagement would be essential to any voluntary project of this ambition. The Association at once began lobbying. The office-holders of the powerful Merchant Company under their Master, none other than Bailie Thomas Clark, cordially received the Association's deputation in April and a letter of support was forthcoming.⁸ The E.M.A. lobbyists were less successful in gaining official backing from Edinburgh Town Council. Receiving the Association deputation in March 1884, Lord Provost George Harrison was less than enthusiastic.⁹ He advised caution and declined Council support pending the outcome of the International Forestry Exhibition, to the more refined aims and upper-class supporters of which he had been a good deal more sympathetic.

Thus chastened, the Association hung fire. Meanwhile another exhibition champion emerged in the shape of Councillor Andrew Ritchie, a confectioner and restaurateur. On 15 July, with the Forestry Exhibition barely under way, Ritchie moved that, since 'Edinburgh had been very slow of entering the lists of towns holding exhibitions', the Town Council should sponsor a purely Scottish exhibition of 'Arts, Produce and Manufactures'. Once again the idea was rebuffed by Harrison as premature while the financial results of the Forestry Exhibition were unclear. With Thomas Clark's support Ritchie's motion was remitted to the Committee; though, in the face of Harrison's disapproval, nothing further would be heard of it.¹⁰

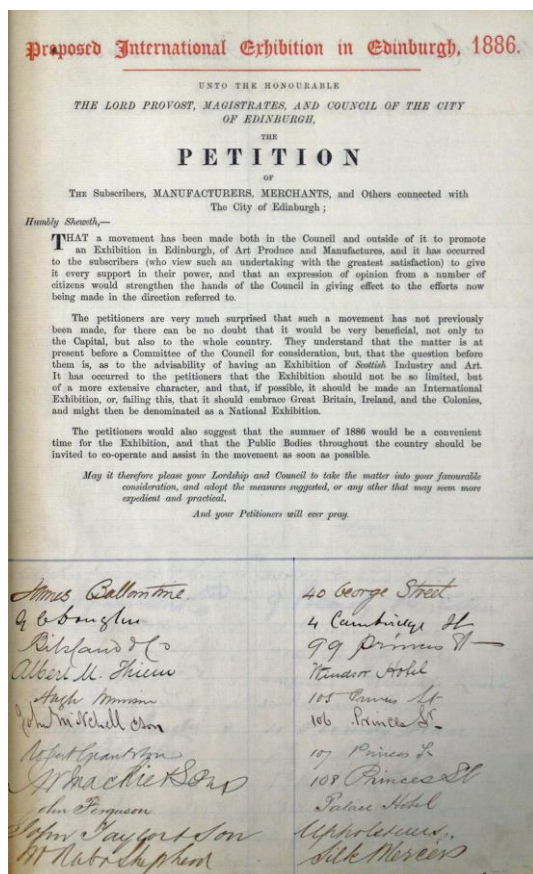
With the close of the Forestry Exhibition the enthusiasts of the Edinburgh Merchants' Association could recommence their campaign. In October 1884 signatures were invited to a petition sponsored by the Association diplomatically 'proposing to strengthen the hands of the Council' in the organisation of an exhibition: an exhibition not only Scottish but international in coverage, or, if this proved impossible 'that it should at least embrace the

8 For a contemporary account of the Company of Merchants of Edinburgh see Gillies, *Edinburgh Past and Present*, pp.148–151. Clark was a wealthy businessman, a religious publisher and devout Free Churchman, and the coming man on Edinburgh Town Council, John A.H. Dempster, *The T.&T. Clark Story: A Victorian Publisher and the New Theology*. (Edinburgh, 1992), pp.5–7; James Harvey, *In Memoriam Sir Thomas Clark, Baronet*. (Edinburgh, 1901).

9 Harrison, a self-made clothier and a lofty Whig of firm Liberal convictions, was City Treasurer during the Fisheries Exhibition and Lord Provost 1882–85, *Scotsman* 24 Dec 1885, p.5; William Hole, *Quasi Cursors: Portraits of the High Officers and Professors of the University of Edinburgh at Its Tercentenary Festival*. (Edinburgh, 1884), pp.xiv–xvi.

10 *Scotsman*, 16 Jul 1884, p.10.

colonies as well as Great Britain and Ireland'.¹¹ The forthcoming document 'signed by over 500 merchants, manufacturers, etc.' encompassed the variety of commercial and industrial Edinburgh, from high-class Princes Street stores, through ironworks, engineering works, breweries and distilleries, to Grassmarket traders: a contrast to the landed and aristocratic sponsors of the Fisheries and the Forestry Exhibitions.¹² Harrison's caution was still evident



Illus 2-1 E.M.A. Petition Form, ECA Acc.423/14

when the petition was remitted to a subcommittee of the Lord Provost's Committee on 28 January 1885. Municipal backing for the project was again withheld until some measure of financial security could be demonstrated.

At the present stage the subcommittee are of the opinion that the movement should be organised from outside the Council in such a manner as that the Town Council can practically take it up and determine on the subject, the scheme being accompanied by a

11 *Scotsman*, 27 Oct 1884, p.4; advertisement *Scotsman* 08 Nov 1884, p.1.

12 ECA Acc.423/14: bound volume of petition forms.

list of guarantors for the expence [*sic*] of the Exhibition.¹³

For the time being at least, the organisation of the proposed industrial exhibition would have to depend on the voluntary resources of Edinburgh civil society.

On the afternoon of 20 February 1885, ‘about forty gentlemen’ met in the George Street premises of the high-class decorating firm of William Dobie & Son.¹⁴ In response to Harrison’s stonewalling, influential figures from Edinburgh commerce and industry assembled to take the first steps in building a practical organisation and mobilising resources to move the exhibition project forward. After a scrappy discussion, the Dobie’s Saloon meeting formally endorsed three resolutions.¹⁵ Settling the geographical scope left open by the E.M.A. petition it confirmed that this was to be an international exhibition, and set its date for the summer of 1886 only some fifteen months away. Secondly, in response to the Council subcommittee’s strictures on finance, the meeting voted to establish a guarantee fund of £25,000; and third, it appointed a Committee to carry the project forward.

A number of constituencies were brought together at the Dobie’s meeting. The Merchants’ Association, original proponents of the exhibition idea, provided the new Committee’s administration. Marchbank was appointed secretary, the accountant Thomas Gaff became its treasurer, and Cuthbertson its law agent. They were joined by other Association members or allies: together with the E.M.A. officers Bilsland and Eagle, these included David Taylor, an umbrella manufacturer; William Martin, manager of the Royal Blind Asylum; Walter Brodie, a master plumber and a Liberal activist; and W.J. Kinloch Anderson, a clothier, currently Moderator of the High Constables and a man with further ambitions in public life.¹⁶

Veterans of the Forestry Exhibition also took places on the Committee. Pursuing his new-found enthusiasm for exhibitions, Robert Hutchison of Carlowrie was appointed one of its Vice-Chairmen. James D. Park, Engineer to the Highland and Agricultural Society,

13 ECA SL123/1/6: ETC various subcommittees, 28 Jan 1885.

14 *Scotsman*, 21 Feb 1885, p.9; *Edinburgh Courant*, 21 Feb 1885, p.3; ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 20 Feb 1885. W.F. Dobie, son of the firm, became an enthusiastic Exhibition supporter.

15 After recording their condolences on the sudden death of Professor Archer the previous day. Archer had intended to attend the meeting.

16 Association of these figures with the E.M.A. are confirmed by, *inter alia*, their promotion of the petition, advertisement, *Scotsman*, 08 Nov 1884, p.1. For Kinloch Anderson see *Scotsman*, 15 Nov 1901, p.4. He joined the Town Council in November 1885, defeating Brodie in the Newington seat left vacant by (now ex-) Lord Provost Harrison’s election as M.P. for Edinburgh South. Harrison died suddenly in December, before taking his seat.

and John Methven, of the family firm of Princes Street nurserymen also joined: both had been members of the Forestry Executive Committee.¹⁷ These arboricultural figures were matched by two leaders in Edinburgh's advanced technology engineering sector, William Bertram, of G.&W. Bertram of Sciennes, engineers and manufacturers of papermaking machinery, and Andrew Betts Brown, whose firm Brown Brothers was a world leader in marine control gear and whose subsidiary King, Brown was establishing itself in the new field of electrical engineering. Both would devote time and resources to the new Committee and to the Exhibition itself.¹⁸

Although official Town Council support was as yet withheld, leadership of the new Committee was firmly located within Edinburgh's municipal circles. Bailie Thomas Clark, who had heard the E.M.A. deputation to the Merchant Company sympathetically in April and who had supported Ritchie's pro-Exhibition motion in July, chaired the Dobie's Saloon meeting. Clark's accession to the Lord Provostship in succession to Harrison in November would put the Exhibition at the centre of municipal power. But the other leading voice at Dobie's Saloon belonged to the man who would become the Exhibition's most energetic protagonist, who more than anyone else would be identified with its success, and whose affairs and reputation would become inextricably linked to it: the newly-elected Lord Dean of Guild, James Gowans.

James Gowans

Gowans was a big personality in Victorian Edinburgh.¹⁹ His activities as a builder, architect, property developer and contractor left a physical mark on the growing city. As a developer he had shown an early interest in improved working-class housing in the construction of Rosebank Cottages, an influential scheme of low-rise model dwellings, in 1853. As an architect he developed an idiosyncratic and florid style based on self-discovered modular and geometric principles, embodied in the design of his own villa, Rockville, in 1858.²⁰ From 1866, these principles were further demonstrated in his Castle Terrace development,

17 Park had also helped organise the Fisheries Exhibition.

18 Institute of Public Administration, *Studies in the Development of Edinburgh*. (London, 1939), series II pp.23, 25–27; for Bertrams, *Within a Mile of Edinburgh Town: The History of Bertrams Limited*. (Edinburgh, 1956); for A.B. Brown, *Scotsman*, 15 May 1906, p.4.

19 Duncan McAra, *Sir James Gowans, Romantic Rationalist*. (Edinburgh, 1975), focussing on his architecture; *DSA*; *Scotsman*, 27 Jun 1890, p.6.

20 McAra, *Gowans*, pp.13–25.

‘a silhouette of hardly believable picturesqueness’.²¹ Another Gowans Castle Terrace project had a less happy outcome. The extravagantly designed and furnished New Edinburgh Theatre crashed into bankruptcy in 1877, less than eighteen months after its opening, ‘an unfortunate speculation for him and for many others’.²² The failed theatre was purchased for a fraction of its building costs by the United Presbyterian Church and reborn as its Synod Hall.



Illus 2-2 James Gowans, ‘Men You Know’. *The Bailie*, 18 Aug 1886

In parallel with these architectural developments Gowans brought his experience as a railway contractor to bear on the construction of Edinburgh’s tramway system, a key element of the city’s emerging infrastructure. In 1871 he completed the first Edinburgh Street Tramways Company line from Haymarket to Bernard Street in Leith in less than six months.²³ Gowans became the favoured contractor for the ESTC system, a total network of

21 *BoSE*, p.263.

22 *Scotsman*, 27 Jun 1890, p.6; see also 13 Apr 1877, p.2.

23 A.D. Ochojna, ‘Lines of Class Distinction: An Economic and Social History of the British Tramcar with Special Reference to Edinburgh and Glasgow’. (PhD, University of Edinburgh, 1974), p.165.

eighteen miles after the 1881 Extension Act.²⁴ In his tramway laying, as in his architectural design, Gowans showed a streak of originality and innovation. He held several patents for improvements to tramway track, including a widely-used version of the modern girder rail.²⁵

Alongside his business career, Gowans had experience in local government. His appointment as Lord Dean of Guild on 2 February 1885, less than three weeks before the Dobie's Saloon meeting, marked a return to municipal office after his ejection in 1881 from the Council seat that he had held since 1869. It was a return, too, to a position as an advocate of progress in public health. Gowans was a founding member of the Town Council's powerful Public Health Committee in 1873, and served as its Convener until he left the Council—at which point the post was assumed by his fellow Committee member Thomas Clark. Gowans's authority on sanitary matters was confirmed by his membership of the Board of Fleeming Jenkin's Sanitary Protection Association from its inception in 1878, and in his lectures and writings.²⁶

In local politics Gowans initially embraced the progressive liberal views consonant with his Rosebank Cottages project and his concern for public health. Besides his Council membership he sat on the newly-created Edinburgh School Board as the non-Catechist nominee of an Advanced Liberal and Citizen's Committee, a secular member of a body riven by religious sectarianism.²⁷ However, his growing inclination to Conservatism made his electoral position less secure; after exhausting the patience of his St Cuthbert's Ward Committee he was effectively deselected before the 1881 municipal elections. Gowans's obstinacy revealed his own self-regard, but also expressed the conventional rhetoric of public service: the personal qualities of a Councillor were more important than party affiliation.²⁸ His ward committee's response in turn demonstrated the limits of this rhetoric.

As a high-profile Tory in a Liberal city, Gowans's prospects of re-election to the Town Council were slight. The death of the incumbent Lord Dean of Guild in January 1885 provided a fortuitous alternative path to public office. The resulting vacancy as chair and final arbiter of the Dean of Guild Court, the body enforcing the Town Council's powers of

24 Ochojna, 'Lines', pp.171–77.

25 *Scotsman*, 25 Jun 1872, p.4; 'Tramways', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edn. (Cambridge, 1910), vol.27 p.29.

26 See p.141 below.

27 For School Boards and sectarianism, particularly virulent amongst the Presbyterian denominations, see, Callum G. Brown, *The Social History of Religion in Scotland Since 1730*. (London, 1987), p.197.

28 *Scotsman*, 18 Oct 1881, p.7.

building control, chimed with Gowans's professional expertise as an architect and developer and with his experience in public health matters. The Deanship was, in addition, not held by an elected Councillor, but by the nominee of the Guildry, a relic of medieval craft organisation open, on payment, to burgesses of the city. Gowans was duly returned unopposed by this self-selecting electorate.²⁹ He would hold the position, unchallenged, until his death in 1890.

The new Dean clearly had substantial business, technical and administrative experience to bring to the Exhibition project. An inventor and innovator, he had participated in the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the London International Exhibition of 1862 and, as his 'black candles' story illustrated, had an eager estimation of the economic benefits they brought. 'They all remembered the spurt that was given to trade by the Exhibition of 1851'.³⁰ He was a public figure with a record in the provision of workers' housing and for sanitary reform: these concerns would find a material expression in his design of the Exhibition's Model Tenement. But there was also a flamboyant, sociable, and theatrical side to Gowans's temperament. His father-in-law William Brodie was one of the foremost sculptors in contemporary Edinburgh and a well-known figure in the city's artistic community.³¹ Gowans's enthusiasm for the playhouse, suspect to many in presbyterian Edinburgh, was manifest not only in the New Edinburgh Theatre débâcle but also in his connection with the Lyceum Theatre, erected in 1883.³² His sociability was evident in his freemasonry and in his participation in bodies as varied as the Edinburgh Architectural Association, the Edinburgh Conservative Working Men's Association, or even the Edinburgh Football Association of which he was for a time president.³³ For an actor accustomed to a position in the public gaze, the Exhibition offered Gowans a new arena in which to perform.

There was however a tension between Gowans's amiable public persona and his

29 *Courant*, 03 Feb 1885, p.4; for Dean of Guild Court powers see John W. Gulland, *How Edinburgh Is Governed. A Handbook for Citizens*. (Edinburgh, 1891), p.45.

30 Gowans at Dobie's Saloon, quoted *Scotsman*, 21 Feb 1885, p.9. See p.26 above for Gowans's 'black candles' story; London International Exhibition (1862), *Illustrated Catalogue of the Industrial Department*. (London, 1862), vol.I p.29, for his 1862 medal for innovations in the family quarrying business. See also David Bremner, *The Industries of Scotland. Their Rise, Progress, and Present Condition*. (Edinburgh, 1869), pp.412–13.

31 *Scotsman*, 31 Oct 1881, p.4.

32 See for example the Lyceum opening dinner, *Scotsman*, 08 Sep 1883, p.6; ECA SL12/40: Lady Gowans cuttings book.

33 *Scotsman*, 06 Mar 1880, p.6.

business dealings: ‘it would be mere affectation to say that his judgement was always influenced with a sole regard to the interests of the city’.³⁴ His ability to distinguish his own benefit from that of the public was questioned at various points in his career. He was challenged in the Council chamber, during one of the debates on the St Mary’s Loch water supply, over an undisclosed shareholding in the rival Manor scheme.³⁵ Concern was raised by his dealings with the ESTC, as a member of the ‘Tramway Ring’ of councillors who had benefitted from company largesse in return for lobbying support, and in the 1881 tramway extension scheme that embroiled the ESTC directors, the Town Council, and the Merchant Company in alleged land speculation—to Gowans’s benefit as contractor.³⁶ Even his apparently civic-minded landscaping of an unused plot in Castle Terrace could be held to have ulterior motives.³⁷

In early 1885 Gowans’s business fortunes were in any case in a precarious condition. While building was proceeding fitfully at his latest Craiglockhart development, progress in the current depressed market conditions was slow. Gowans had incurred large losses on the New Edinburgh Theatre; his quarries at Redhall and Plean were becoming exhausted; and his dealings with the tramway company had ended in 1884 with the cancellation of a lucrative maintenance contract. Under pressure from creditors, Gowans attempted to liquidate his extensive property portfolio. Even his showpiece Rockville had been exposed for sale, unsuccessfully, in January 1885; it was leased as a private school while Gowans and his family moved to rented property in nearby Blantyre Terrace.³⁸

Conventionally, Victorian Edinburgh’s business caste pursued municipal office when their financial security was assured and once their day-to-day affairs could be delegated to others. Gowans was returning to public life at a time when his business dealings were unravelling; and moreover involving himself in a project which would consume his resources of time and energy. Between March 1885 and December 1886, he attended no fewer than 113 formal Exhibition committee meetings besides associated social,

34 *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, 26 Jun 1890, p.2.

35 *Scotsman*, 08 Nov 1873, p.9: ‘Mr Gowans said he gave the assurance in question for the good of Edinburgh, and not for his own pocket. (Ironical laughter.) He asserted that again, whether they believed him or not’.

36 *Scotsman*, 15 May 1873, p.6; 26 Jun 1882, p.4; Ochojna, ‘Lines’, p.177.

37 Richard Rodger, *The Transformation of Edinburgh: Land, Property and Trust in the Nineteenth Century*. (Cambridge, 2001), pp.469–70; J.G. Denham, *Scotsman*, 15 Jun 1888, p.7.

38 This reading of Gowans’s finances is based on material in NRS GD282/13: Davidson & Syme W.S, Gowans sequestration papers.

administrative and ceremonial engagements,³⁹ while officiating at weekly Dean of Guild Court sessions and attending meetings of the Town Council and its related committees. If Gowans's flamboyant style and chaotic entrepreneurialism marked him as a risk-taker, this level of involvement could only increase his own personal exposure. The Exhibition venture would take him high, to public acclaim and a knighthood; and it would bring him low, damaging his finances, his health, and in some eyes at least, his reputation. Heedless of the future, Gowans was prepared to throw his considerable weight behind the new undertaking.

Patronage: aristocratic, municipal and financial

The Dobie's Saloon meeting had brought the small businessmen of the E.M.A., the Forestry Exhibition organisers, assorted industrialists and Town Council members into the Exhibition's orbit. It was a resolutely middle-class affair, an embodiment of the bourgeois activism of Edinburgh civil society. The conventions of Victorian voluntary organisation demanded a ceremonial space above this level reserved for more elevated figures: the patronage of royalty, the aristocracy, and other élite notables would bestow legitimacy and prestige upon the undertaking.⁴⁰ The office of president of the Exhibition was accepted by the Marquis of Lothian, reprising his role in the Forestry event; the appointment was arranged through Hutchison as intermediary.⁴¹ His previous experience ensured that Lothian, 'a pattern nobleman' in Gowans's estimation, would play a more active part in the new project than simply that of a figurehead.⁴²

The all-important grant of royal patronage was facilitated by Lothian. The Queen herself condescended to become a patron in September 1885 and royal support was buttressed by the immediately following acceptance by the Prince of Wales.⁴³ Three aristocratic vice-presidents joined Lothian at the head of the Exhibition table: the Conservative Duke of Richmond and Gordon, first holder of revived office of Scottish Secretary,⁴⁴ and two popular Liberal peers. Lord Aberdeen was a familiar figure in

39 Analysis of sederunts in ECA Acc.423/17 and Acc.423/16: Minute Books 1 and 2.

40 Cf. Graeme Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism: Governing Urban Scotland, 1830–1860*. (East Linton, 1999), pp.69–70 for earlier Edinburgh philanthropic voluntarism.

41 NRS GD40/9/492/1: Hutchison to Lothian, 04 Apr 1885.

42 *Scottish News*, 28 Oct 1886, p.3.

43 *Scotsman*, 14 Sep 1885, p.4; 28 Oct 1885, p.7. Patronage involved neither royal effort nor expense at this stage.

44 Richmond held office from August 1885 to January 1886 and the fall of the Salisbury government.

Edinburgh in his role of Lord High Commissioner, the Queen's representative to the General Assembly of the Established Church; he was granted the freedom of the City in August 1885.⁴⁵ Lord Rosebery was even more feted as the coming Liberal hero, 'Gladstone's Dalmeny fixer' responsible for his Midlothian by-election victory of 1880, and whose influence had been decisive in the re-creation of the Scottish Office.⁴⁶

Despite the co-option of these leading political aristocrats, the search for further high-value Exhibition patrons proved less than completely successful. Marchbank's circular inviting support from 'all the Scottish Nobility, Members of Parliament and a number of leading Manufacturers and Merchants throughout Scotland'⁴⁷ drew a less impressive response than that enjoyed by the previous Fisheries and Forestry Exhibitions. A further sixty-three notables made up the roster of 1886 Exhibition patrons, compared with more than 250 individual patrons of the Forestry Exhibition and even the 130-plus lending their names to the Edinburgh Fisheries in 1882.⁴⁸ Compared to the starry patronage of these events the 1886 Exhibition listing could only muster nine additional noblemen, twelve baronets, and seven M.P.s; these were accompanied by a sprinkling of minor Scottish landowners. It was evident that few of the canvassed 'Manufacturers and Merchants' had responded to Marchbank's call.⁴⁹ The proposed industrial exhibition had been much less attractive as an object of patronage than Edinburgh's previous international exhibitions, focussed as they were on the specialised subject areas represented by networks of technical and learned societies with the support of their underlying landed interests.

This upper-class reluctance to come forward as patrons of the new Exhibition was no doubt symptomatic of an undercurrent of disdain for a venture that, in contrast to the elevated Fisheries and Forestry Exhibitions, was plainly a product of Edinburgh commercial society. The Exhibition's questionable status was revealed in the derogatory 'bazaar' descriptor which was to cling to the undertaking. Its emergence in the bourgeois forum of

45 *Courant*, 06 Aug 1885, p.3.

46 Ewen A. Cameron, *Impaled Upon a Thistle: Scotland since 1880*. (Edinburgh, 2010), p.61; H.J. Hanham, 'The Creation of the Scottish Office 1881–87', *Juridical Review*, 10 (1965), pp.143–79. G.F. Barbour and Matthew Urie Baird, 'Gordon, John Campbell, first marquess of Aberdeen and Temair (1847–1934)', rev. H.C.G. Matthew, *ODNB*; John Davis, 'Primrose, Archibald Philip, fifth earl of Rosebery and first earl of Midlothian (1847–1929)', *ODNB*.

47 ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 12 Aug 1885.

48 See p.39 above.

49 Though these who did included Sir Charles Tennant M.P., the chemicals magnate; Sir William Collins, the publisher; Sir Michael Connal, Glasgow merchant, and Sir William Thomson, the future Lord Kelvin.

Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce showed that such imputations were widely shared: ‘MR HARRIS wondered whether it was an exhibition or a bazaar that it was proposed to hold. It appeared to him beneath the dignity of the Chamber to patronise such a paltry affair’.⁵⁰ For the Exhibition organisers this was one more challenge in the struggle against adversity. As Gowans later recalled ‘[t]he hill was steep, and one of the big stones put in the way was that we were to create a big bazaar, ... a something that you might see on the North Bridge or in Princes Street’.⁵¹ These tensions between commercialism and the high-minded aspirations of the Exhibition promoters emerged in concrete form during the event’s run.

From the outset the Exhibition organisers were at pains to enlist the support of the Scottish municipalities. There was an element of financial calculation in this: burgh councils might be persuaded to contribute generously to the Exhibition guarantee fund, and this support might in turn generate other local subscriptions.⁵² Municipal backing could also encourage prospective exhibitors; to put together a show of the scale envisaged it would be necessary to attract a wide range of entries from other centres, in particular from the industrial West of Scotland. But surmounting these practicalities lay a national dimension, the assertion of Scottish nationhood and Edinburgh’s place in it. The Dobie’s Saloon meeting had decided that the Exhibition should be an international event, with the scale and resulting prestige that this implied. Having offered an invitation to the world, the organisers needed to present Scotland in the best possible light.

While it is proposed that the Exhibition will be open to the products and Industries of all Nations, a prominent feature will be to illustrate the Material Resources, Manufactures, and Art Treasures of Scotland. / Such an Exhibition has never been held in Scotland, and while the industrial capacity of the Country will be for the first time prominently demonstrated, it is also confidently anticipated that the undertaking will prove most beneficial in stimulating the development of the various Manufactures and Industries of the Kingdom.⁵³

These ambitious aims demanded the support and participation of the other Scottish burghs.

50 *Scotsman*, 03 Apr 1885, p.3; the Chamber did later contribute to the Exhibition guarantee fund. For the ‘bazaar’ epithet and its overtones see Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840–1930*. (Cambridge, 2008), p.301.

51 *Scottish News*, 28 Oct 1886, p.3.

52 Such guarantees were *ultra vires* for English municipalities: for Liverpool see Murray Steele and Mike Benbough-Jackson, ‘Civic Pride on an International Stage: The Liverpool “Shipperies”, 1886’, *Local Historian*, 42:3 (August 2012), p.181. Any call on public funds would presumably be made up from Scottish Burghs’ Common Good resources.

53 ECA Acc.423/12: Circular, September 1885.

Once again Edinburgh's claims to national leadership were on show. The Forestry Exhibition had already provoked Hutchison's 'Scotch Kensington' opposition to London centralisation. An assertive sense of nationhood had been similarly evident at the Dobie's Saloon meeting. For Archibald Munro '[t]his would be a capital opportunity of re-asserting the position of Scotland as a nation among the other nations of the world'.⁵⁴ A *Scotsman* correspondent reinforced the point:

Hitherto we have been content to sink our individuality in the masses of the sister country. Our individuality and influence ought to bear some proportion to our importance as an integral part of the British Empire. Surely Scotland ought to be something more than a mere tributary? ... Well, here is a fitting opportunity for striking a practical blow to that system of centralisation by having an exhibition worthy of Scotland and the Scottish people.⁵⁵

To this end, the support of the distinctively Scottish institutions of municipal government, the organs of local patriotism, would once again be vital to the project.

Edinburgh Town Council was quickly won over. The organisational commitments made at Dobie's Saloon together with the involvement of Clark, Gowans and the other high-profile Committee members overcame Harrison's previous reluctance and elicited the Council's formal backing. A substantial pledge of £2,500 to the guarantee fund was extracted by a deputation to the Lord Provost's Committee on 15 April.⁵⁶ Official Town Council endorsement brought formal representation in the Exhibition's organisation: Bailie John Walcott, City Treasurer John Boyd, Parks Committee Convener John Clapperton and Andrew Ritchie, who had first raised the exhibition idea in Council, were added to the organising Sub-Committee.⁵⁷ Lord Provost Harrison himself now chaired meetings of the General Committee.⁵⁸

After Edinburgh, the Exhibition organisers set their sights on Glasgow Town Council, the ruling body for the city whose support, in terms of finance and potential exhibitors, was held to be crucial to the enterprise. However, the prospects for a home-grown Glasgow Exhibition dashed by the crash of 1878 had revived in recent years. A motion advocating

54 *Scotsman*, 21 Feb 1885, p.9. Munro was the proprietor of a private school in Newington.

55 F.A.G., *Scotsman*, 23 Feb 1885, p.7.

56 *Scotsman*, 16 Apr 1885, p.4; 22 Apr 1885, p.10 for ratification by full Council.

57 ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 19 Jun 1885.

58 In this organisational incarnation open General Committee meetings were held 14 May 1885 (chaired by Hutchison), 12 Aug 1885 and 23 Sep 1885 (for which see below); detailed organisation was otherwise left to the Sub-Committee.

such a project was adopted by Glasgow Town Council in February 1884, though no action resulted.⁵⁹ In October a proposal from the locomotive builder W. Montgomerie Neilson for an international steamship exhibition provoked another flurry of public interest.⁶⁰ In this debate it was clear that not only events at South Kensington, but also the recent Edinburgh Forestry Exhibition provided models for a Glasgow venture in which the city's industrial primacy could be stressed: 'A great industrial exhibition would be of benefit not only to the city but to the whole country, Glasgow being by a long way the best centre for the display of Scottish industries'.⁶¹ On the other hand the momentum developing in Edinburgh might endanger this leadership:

If some forward movement is not made soon, we may find 'the wind taken out of our sail,' and hear that our neighbour has claimed a monopoly in exhibitions in Scotland. If such should unfortunately be the case, the time has arrived for us to give up all pretence, and candidly admit that our city, in some ways at least, is not the second city in the Empire.⁶²

Winning Glasgow support for an Edinburgh Exhibition was therefore far from straightforward. In an initial approach in March 1885, Gowans and Marchbank were given 'a Cordial Reception' by Lord Provost McOnie and two Bailies, who 'kindly offered the use of circulars and other papers they had prepared in connection with their proposed Exhibition'.⁶³ However, Marchbank's formal request for patronage and a guarantee fund subscription was met with cries of 'Bury it' at the Glasgow Town Council meeting of 2 April. Despite the intervention of T.R. Buchanan, Edinburgh West M.P., the Magistrates Committee to whom the matter was referred remained unsympathetic. The issue was only resolved at the full Council meeting of 4 June. Supporters of the guarantee deferred to

59 *North British Daily Mail*, 08 Feb 1884. Stanley K. Hunter, *Kelvingrove and the 1888 Exhibition*. (Glasgow, 1990), chap.4, mentions earlier attempts in 1882.

60 *Glasgow Herald*, 22 Oct 1884, p.9; 26 Nov 1884, p.11. Murdoch Nicolson, *Glasgow: Locomotive Builder to Britain*. (Glasgow, 1998), pp.7–9, 22; John Mavor, 'Neilson, Walter Montgomerie (1819–1889)', *ODNB*.

61 *NBDM* 28 Oct 1884; see also *Herald*, 31 Oct 1884, p.6. The Forestry Exhibition also set a precedent for exhibitions further afield: 'If only last year Edinburgh, in a somewhat remote part of the city, could get up a forestry exhibition which interested every visitor from royalty downwards, Liverpool may be expected to produce a shipping, travelling, and industrial exhibition without the slightest fear of failure', *Liverpool Mercury*, 26 Feb 1885, p.5.

62 A.H., *Herald*, 13 Nov 1884, p.6.

63 ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 12 Mar 1885. One of the interviewees, Parks and Galleries Convener Bailie George Jackson, turned out to be the latest organiser of an attempted Glasgow Exhibition.

Edinburgh's status as Scotland's capital and its leadership of the nation's affairs: in Councillor Smith's view '[w]e could not have such an exhibition in Glasgow. It was a place of manufactures and workshops, but it had no old historic associations such as were connected with Edinburgh'. Opponents of the Edinburgh project countered with strident claims for Glasgow's superiority as a centre of industry, and bemoaned their own unsuccessful attempts at a large-scale exhibition. After a spirited debate the Council resolved to match the Edinburgh guarantee of £2,500; the twenty votes in favour overcame a significant minority of eleven which included the Lord Provost and three of the Bailies.⁶⁴

The Glasgow Council subscription established an element of Glasgow ownership of the project. A large and ornamental Glasgow Committee of some 106 local notables was formed with the aim of encouraging subscriptions to the guarantee fund and the participation of prospective exhibitors. The Committee included a number of prominent Glasgow industrialists whose firms, like those of the shipbuilder Peter Denny, locomotive builders Charles Dubs and James Reid, and the carpetmaker J.S. Templeton, would themselves exhibit in 1886.⁶⁵ A smaller organising subcommittee was established on 28 July, and a paid Glasgow secretary, the solicitor W.G. Black, was appointed on 18 September.⁶⁶ Lord Provost McOnie joined his Edinburgh counterpart Thomas Clark as an Exhibition vice-president, and space was made for eleven Glasgow representatives on its new Executive Council.⁶⁷ Inclusion in the organisation of the Exhibition and, in due time, its prestigious ceremonials, could be celebrated as a *rapprochement* in the traditional enmity between Glasgow and Edinburgh:

there was a tradition that the relations between Glasgow and Edinburgh used to be very much strained indeed; but he was reminded that courting in the old days was said to have been done not so much by kissing as by scratching ... But the scratching days had passed away; the loving courting days had now come, and indeed he was not sure if the ceremony of marriage was not performed last Thursday in the Exhibition

64 *Herald*, 08 May 1885, p.9, 05 Jun 1885, p.9. 'The tortuous result would have been more creditable if straightforward', *Quiz*, 12 Jun 1885, p.134.

65 Glasgow Committee membership, International Exhibition of Industry, Science, and Art, *Official Catalogue*. (Edinburgh, 1886), pp.28–29.

66 GCA DTC6/201: Depute Town Clerk file includes Glasgow subcommittee minutes.

67 Black is recorded as attending thirty-two Executive Council meetings as Glasgow Secretary. G.W. Clark, a Glasgow corn merchant who was also a member of the Building and Construction Committee, attended twenty-three; another member was present at nine, but the other Glasgow Executive Council members attended six meetings or fewer.

buildings.⁶⁸

But the very success of the Edinburgh Exhibition would in due course lead to the revival of plans for a Glasgow International Exhibition; in fact, to a resurgence of the rivalry that the protagonists were at pains to deny.

With the guarantees of financial and organisational support for the Exhibition project secured from the two major institutions of Scottish urban government, the organisers now began a campaign to enlist other Scottish municipalities in the enterprise. Delegations waited on the Councils of the other major Scottish towns: Greenock on 24 July, Dundee on 26 August, Aberdeen on the 27th. Subscriptions were solicited, participation from local industries and potential exhibitors was urged, the setting up of local Committees encouraged, and contact made with local enthusiasts for the Exhibition who themselves could be added to the Exhibition Executive.⁶⁹ This was an attempt to mobilise municipal Scotland in an enterprise that was intended not only to benefit their own industries, but to include them in a representation of the Scottish nation of whose governance they formed a distinctive part.

The guarantee fund authorised by the Dobie's Salon meeting invited subscriptions from the Exhibition's patrons, the Scottish municipalities and the general public. Such guarantees were a common funding mechanism for voluntary projects; they became the standard method for raising capital for the large-scale exhibitions of late Victorian Britain.⁷⁰ The mechanism applied joint-stock principles to not-for-profit enterprise. Subscribers were invited to submit formal—and legally-binding—pledges for their chosen amount. Participation was thus restricted to individuals and corporate entities with access to, and who were comfortable with, banking and legal services: the bourgeois society from which the Exhibition's promoters had emerged. This pledge, while a more formal commitment

68 Bailie James McFarlane of Glasgow on the Exhibition opening ceremony, *Scotsman*, 22 May 1886, p.9. See also 'Ephraim! Manassah! Embro! Glesca!', *Bailie*, 12 May 1886, p.2.

69 Such local champions included Provost Ballingall in Dundee, Provost Donald in Dunfermline, Councillor Maconachie in Aberdeen and Bailie Duff in Greenock. See *Dundee Courier*, 28 Aug 1885, p.3, for the Exhibition deputation to Dundee Council.

70 For a local example of smaller-scale guarantee funding see James Waddell, *History of the Edinburgh Choral Union*. (Edinburgh, 1908), p.191. Largely undiscussed in the literature of exhibitions, the guarantee fund mechanism was enabled by the joint-stock legislation of the 1850s analysed in Henry Atmore, 'Utopia Limited: The Crystal Palace Company and Joint-Stock Politics, 1854–1856', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 9:2 (September 2004), pp.189–215. Amongst early examples, the 1857 Manchester Art-Treasures Exhibition raised a guarantee of £74,000, the 1862 London International Exhibition one of £446,850.

than a signature on a petition, was simply a pledge; no money changed hands at this point. Contributions would only be called in if the project made a loss, in which case the deficit would be settled on a basis proportional to the amounts subscribed.

FORM OF GUARANTEE SUBSCRIPTION.

To the Secretary of
THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF INDUSTRY, SCIENCE, AND ART,
18 Frederick Street, Edinburgh.

Sir, I authorise the Committee to place my name on the List of
Subscribers to the GUARANTEE FUND OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF INDUSTRY,
SCIENCE, AND ART, Edinburgh, 1886, for the sum of £ 25-0-0

Your obedient Servant,

Signature, James Gowans

Address, 31 Castle Street

Date, 23 Sept. 1885 Edinburgh

Illus 2-3 Gowans's £25 guarantee form. ECA Acc.423/10

Once legally constituted, the principle of limited liability applied: subscribers could never pay more than the value of their guarantees. Needless to say, exhibition organisers were at pains to stress the improbability of any such outcome. Marchbank announced confidently that

In no case have the Guarantors of any Exhibition in this Country been called upon to pay any portion of the Sums generously guaranteed by them, all previous experience having proved that when prudently and carefully conducted by a competent executive such Exhibitions have invariably resulted in a financial success.⁷¹

The guarantee fund subscribers joined a community of support for the undertaking at no immediate expense to themselves: extravagant gestures like Rosebery's £1,000 pledge joined the more modest contributions of Edinburgh professionals, shopkeepers and businesses in underwriting the Exhibition project, and at the same time identifying with the local and national patriotism that animated it. Financially, the fund constituted a source of virtual

71 ECA Acc.423/12: James Marchbank, circular. The Secretary of the prospective Liverpool Exhibition reached similar conclusions: 'you will, perhaps, permit me to mention that in no single case that I am aware of has a Provincial Exhibition resulted in a loss to the guarantors', *The International Exhibition of Navigation, Etc. Pt. 1. [A Prospectus.]*. (Liverpool, 1885), p.41: over-optimistically, since a deficit of over £19,000 ensued.

capital, of security for the enterprise's credit. It had to be sufficient to back loans to provide actual working capital to construct and fit out the exhibition; equally, from the subscribers' point of view a large guarantee fund would spread the risk and cushion any losses should they occur. The organisers' task was therefore to build confidence and momentum by asserting their own ability and the soundness of the enterprise; a well-subscribed guarantee would in turn demonstrate public support for the venture.⁷²

These considerations were thrashed out at the Dobic's Saloon meeting. The Forestry Exhibition had provided an example of the guarantee fund in action, though less than £7,000 had been subscribed and that with difficulty. Hutchison recalled that he had been 'grievously disappointed' at the lack of Edinburgh support, 'the greater part of the money coming from the country gentry'.⁷³ This fund had nevertheless supported a turnover of almost £23,000. At the other extreme, the recently deceased Professor Archer's desideratum of a guarantee fund of £100,000 was seen as simply unattainable. After an impetuous but unrealistic suggestion of £10,000 from Gowans, the meeting settled on a figure of £25,000 as an appropriate guarantee for the scale of the proposed enterprise.⁷⁴

This £25,000 assumed a totemic significance as the goal whose achievement would prove the Exhibition's viability. The magnitude of the task and the short time-scale involved was one more element in the organisers' battle with adversity. Lord Provost Harrison, previously less than enthusiastic, now urged them on to greater effort:

The Lord Provost impressed upon those present the absolute necessity of ... pressing forward at once to obtain the requisite guarantee fund; for unless that were speedily got it was clear the time would be so short that they would be materially crippled in the work that was to be done.⁷⁵

The campaign to secure the virtual contributions of Edinburgh civil society, trade, commerce and industry went on. Members of the organising committee visited and re-visited prospective guarantors;⁷⁶ the total pledged was reported back at Sub-Committee meetings and in subsequent press reports. By 14 September, the goal had been reached with

72 See chap.6, Table 6-1, for comparative guarantee fund totals.

73 *Courant*, 21 Feb 1885, p.3.

74 *Scotsman*, 21 Feb 1885, p.9.

75 At the General Committee meeting of 12 August, when the guarantee fund stood at £14,000 and Harrison suggested a year's delay, *Scotsman*, 13 Aug 1885, p.3.

76 See for example efforts to extract a £25 guarantee from the publisher William Blackwood, NLS Ms.30049/9, 35, 377: Blackwood correspondence. (My thanks to Kyle Thompson for this reference.)

category	guarantee	%	number	median
dignitaries: President, Vice-Presidents, Patrons	£3,058.50	8	45	£25.00
municipal				
Edinburgh and Glasgow	£5,000.00		2	£2,500.00
Other Burghs etc.	£1,595.50		16	£25.00
total municipal	£6,595.50	18		
other guarantors outside Edinburgh				
Glasgow	£1,665.00			
Dundee	£486.00			
Rest of Scotland	£1,344.25			
England	£370.10			
total non-Edinburgh guarantors	£3,865.35	10		
Edinburgh guarantors				
Professions	£1,099.35		54	£20.00
Hotels, restaurateurs	£2,332.75		22	£37.50
Drinks trade, wine merchants etc	£2,055.00		34	£23.00
Printing etc	£1,975.25		36	£22.50
Engineering etc	£1,702.00		24	£50.00
Brewers, distillers	£1,675.00		11	£100.00
Clothing	£1,273.50		39	£25.00
Building trades	£820.00		25	£20.00
Food wholesale and retail	£640.75		27	£15.75
Jewellers, goldsmiths	£556.00		13	£25.00
Shipping	£530.50		8	£37.50
Bakers, confectioners	£483.85		16	£20.00
Chemists	£402.00		6	£20.00
Photographers	£295.50		7	£50.00
Leather trades	£294.35		14	£13.13
Wood, furniture	£292.50		12	£20.00
Other trade/occupation	£6,259.00			
Trade/occupation unknown	£346.75			
total Edinburgh guarantors	£23,034.05	62		
Unidentified	£342.85			
total guarantees listed	£36,896.25			

Table 2-1 Analysis of guarantors. Source: ECA Acc.423/6, Scotsman

City of Edinburgh	£2,500
City of Glasgow	£2,500
John Grieve, Balmoral Hotel	£1,000
John Mather & Son, Wine Merchants	£1,000
John Waddell & Sons, Railway Contractors	£1,000
The Earl of Rosebery, Vice-President	£1,000
William Younger Esq, Brewer	£1,000
City of Aberdeen	£500
City of Dundee	£500
Messrs. Cowan & Co, Papermakers and Stationers	£500
Edinburgh Street Tramway Co	£500
Donald MacGregor, Royal Hotel	£500
Brown Bros & Co, Hydraulic Engineers	£250
King, Brown & Co, Electrical Engineers	£250
J.&P. Coats, Thread Manufacturers, Paisley	£250
Duncan, Flockhart & Co, Chemist	£250
The Merchant Company of Edinburgh	£250
Thomas Nelson & Son, Publishers	£250
Burgh of Paisley	£200
G.&W. Bertram, Engineers	£200
Messrs. T.&A. Constable, Printers	£200
Messrs. John Ford & Co, Holyrood Glass Works	£200
A.D. Jenkinson, China Merchant and Glass Manufacturer	£200
London & Edinburgh Shipping Co	£200
Marquis of Lothian, President	£200
Thornton & Co, India Rubber Manufacturers, Export & Wholesale Department	£200

Table 2-2 Guarantees of £200 and over. Source: ECA Acc.423/6, *Scotsman*

a fund of £25,175; the final total, reached in February 1886, was just short of £37,000.⁷⁷

The list of guarantee fund subscribers reveals the sources of support for the Edinburgh Exhibition.⁷⁸ The ornamental patrons were hardly generous, contributing eight per cent of its value; this included Rosebery's £1,000. Besides the major contributions from Edinburgh and Glasgow Town Councils, the sixteen other contributing local authorities guaranteed only another four per cent between them. Other subscriptions from outside

⁷⁷ ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 14 Sep 1885, 18 Feb 1886.

⁷⁸ ECA Acc.423/6: Guarantee Fund ms. listing to January 1886; Hutchison's ESTC made a subsequent pledge of £500, *Scotsman*, 30 Jan 1886, p.9.

Edinburgh were also thin: despite its starry Committee less than £1,700, or five per cent, was raised in Glasgow. This was an overwhelmingly local response, within which Edinburgh's professional and administrative classes were under-represented. The core of the list lay in the city's varied mix of commerce, trade and industry. The specialisms of printing, engineering, brewing and distilling and the clothing trades had a strong presence; but the largest single share, and some of the largest individual contributions, came from Edinburgh hotels and restaurateurs plainly looking forward to an increase in business from the event. Together with the related drink and hospitality sector they made up no less than twelve per cent of the total fund.

Additional sources of advance income were grasped where available. Concessions for catering, printing and the sale of publications, and photography were let.⁷⁹ As the Exhibition became a more tangible prospect, the advance sale of season tickets—another means of demonstrating middle-class support for the project for a relatively modest, but actual, outlay—provided more funds. By opening day 6,000 season tickets had been sold, another 6,000 guineas of income realised.⁸⁰

But the Exhibition organisers had seized on a further, more elementary revenue-raising device: prospective exhibitors would be charged rental for the space they were to occupy. This practice was at odds with the traditions and theory of international exhibitions, certainly as they had developed in Paris and South Kensington. Although exhibitors had to meet the costs of fitting up their increasingly elaborate displays, inclusion in these great exhibitions was free: the prestige of exhibiting lay in the selection, rather than in payment.⁸¹ While the other British exhibitions of 1886 followed the South Kensington model, the Edinburgh organisers rented out their space at two shillings per square foot. This decision, arrived at without much apparent discussion, reflected the commercial orientation of the organisers and local precedent: the Forestry Exhibition had charged for space, like the agricultural shows with which its management was familiar.⁸² The intrusion of the cash

79 Principally: Catering, A.M. Ross, and Councillor Ritchie (Temperance), ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 15 Feb 1886; Printing, T.&A. Constable; Photography, Marshall Wane.

80 *Scotsman*, 05 May 1886, p.6; total sales exceeded 13,000.

81 See for example 'The "Healtheries" and the "Inventories": An Interview with Mr. E. Cunliffe Owen', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 30 Oct 1884, p.11, on this point.

82 ECA Acc.423/9: Exhibition correspondence, for Marchbank's later communications on this topic. The Antwerp Exhibition, similarly commercial in focus, broke with Parisian tradition by charging fr70/m² (5s.2d./ft²), René Corneli and Pierre Mussely, *Anvers et l'Exposition universelle, 1885*. (Brussels, 1885), pp.L–M. Subsequent British exhibitions—Manchester and Newcastle in

nexus into the world of the exhibition shifted the position of the exhibitor. A charge was now made for participation; selection of meritorious entries was replaced by acceptance on a first-come, first-pay basis. Payment in turn raised expectations that could be at odds with those of the Exhibition administration.

In one respect the Edinburgh organisers had moved even further in the direction of commercialisation. Taking up the idea of Old London, an attraction first shown at the South Kensington Health Exhibition in 1884, the centrepiece of the Edinburgh Exhibition was Old Edinburgh, a reproduced historic street. In contrast to Old London's worthy display of crafts and antiquities, Old Edinburgh was intended as a themed retail space, with premium rentals of three or four shillings per square foot correspondence charged for its shop units. The intrusion of the bazaar so derided by the Exhibition's critics had, in this space at least, been engineered by the project's organisers themselves.⁸³

The West Meadows

The success of the undertaking plainly depended on the acquisition of a suitable Exhibition site. By August 1885 the organising Sub-Committee had investigated locations at Newington, Blackford, Morningside, Merchiston, Coltbridge, and the Forestry Exhibition's Donaldson's Hospital site, without success.⁸⁴ The issue had become pressing. A change of tack was announced at the Sub-Committee meeting of 2 September. Of the possible but apparently unobtainable sites considered 'none appeared so well adapted for the purposes of the Exhibition as the West Meadows', and a deputation had been organised to seek Town Council permission for the use of this municipally-owned parkland.⁸⁵

As an exhibition site the West Meadows failed to meet the specification that Professor Archer had set out to the Merchant Association delegates in February 1884. At twenty-five acres the park was half his recommended extent, and it was remote from any rail facilities

1887, Glasgow in 1888—also introduced space charges.

83 ECA Acc.423/10: Old Edinburgh leases. The resulting income of less than £1,850 failed to cover Old Edinburgh's costs of £4,500, Exhibition Accounts, ECA Acc.423/13: Exhibition Association Minutes, 28 Dec 1887. But compare this with the profligacy of Old London: £15,000 expenditure, no income, *St James's Gazette*, 13 Nov 1886, p.13. Rents elsewhere in the Edinburgh Exhibition generated income of £11,500.

84 ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 14 May 1885; 06 Aug 1885; 13 Aug 1885; *Courant*, 20 Apr 1885, p.4. There is no indication of any approach to the Commissioners of Woods and Forests for use of the Queen's Park: its Parade Ground was a possible site, though one disruptive of the Royal peace—it abutted the Palace of Holyroodhouse.

85 ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 02 Sep 1885.

that would allow easy delivery of building materials and heavy exhibits. On the other hand it was accessible to visitors: the location was within walking distance of the city centre and the cars of Hutchison's ESTC ran close by. In any case the attractions of the site transcended these practicalities. The Exhibition organisers were bidding for the use of a distinctive space with its own *genius loci*, an 'identity of place';⁸⁶ a space that had evolved through an uncertain history into a municipal asset and a popular amenity. This identity of place would in turn help to identify the Exhibition as 'The Show in the Meadows'.⁸⁷ However, in the background of a protracted public debate about the ownership and use of urban open space in Edinburgh the intrusion of the Exhibition dispossessed the West Meadows' users and would provoke controversy over reinstatement of the ground at the end of the event's run.

The Meadows had emerged as a marginal space and continued as a problematic one. Like Princes Street Gardens the site was the bed of a former lake, the Burgh Loch to the south of the ancient city.⁸⁸ After the efforts of eighteenth-century improvers this part of the Town Council's Common Good patrimony enjoyed an existence as a much-frequented, if 'damp and melancholy', public walk.⁸⁹ In Edinburgh's southward expansion the tract offered a tempting, if waterlogged, opportunity for development. With an early instance of amenity legislation the Meadows was granted protection against encroachment in 1827, after a botched attempt by the unreformed and almost bankrupt Town Council to raise funds by feuing the ground.⁹⁰ Further legislation provided an idiosyncratic enforcement mechanism: an objection by 'one or other of the proprietors or householder within the bounds of Police of the City' would be enough to compel removal of any offending structure.⁹¹ The

86 For an exploration of this concept see Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*. (London, 1980).

87 For example George Stronach, *Our Own-eries, or, the Show in the Meadows*. (Edinburgh, 1886). 'The Show in the Meadows' was the title of a centenary exhibition in Huntly House Museum, 1986.

88 William Moir Bryce, 'The Burgh Muir of Edinburgh', *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, 10 (1918), chap.XVII; For the origins of many Scottish public parks—including the Meadows and Princes Street Gardens—in problematic sites see Ian H. Adams, *The Making of Urban Scotland*. (London, 1978), p.148.

89 James Grant, *Cassell's Old and New Edinburgh*. (London, 1883), vol.1 p.348.

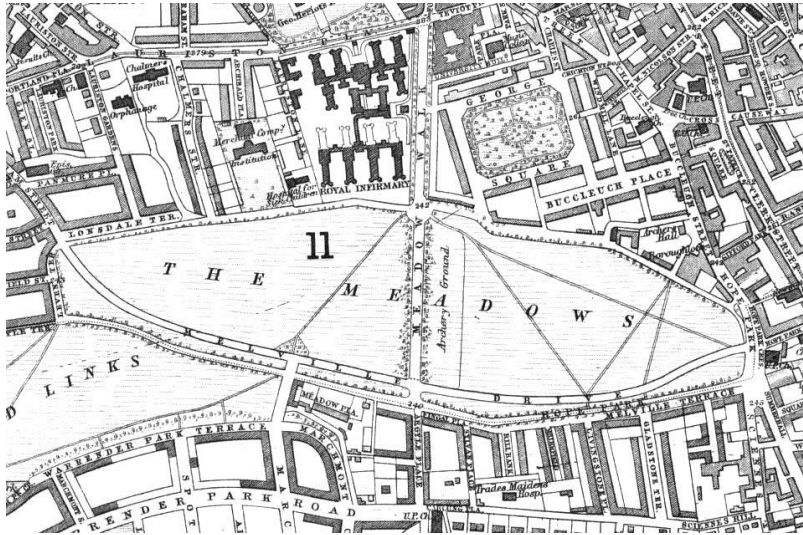
90 For the 1827 Improvement Scheme see A.J. Youngson, *The Making of Classical Edinburgh, 1750–1840*. (Edinburgh, 1966), pp.166–81; Rodger, *Transformation*, pp.94–96; Resistance to the Council's proposals (which also involved building on the south side of Princes Street) was led by Henry Cockburn and the Faculty of Advocates, Cockburn, *Memorials of His Time*. (Edinburgh, 1856), p.426.

91 Thomas Hunter and Robert Paton, *Report on the Common Good of the City of Edinburgh*.

law could not protect against Council parsimony or lack of commitment.

The subsequent history of the Meadows [after 1827] forms a chapter by itself in the record of Municipal controversy on the one hand, and on the other, of Civic neglect on a scale which, to the existing generation, will appear as truly stupendous.⁹²

After further, only partially successful, attempts at drainage and more than a decade of enclosure—and public exclusion—as grazing land,⁹³ the Meadows found its modern form, designated a public park under Duncan McLaren's 1854 Improvement Act.⁹⁴



Illus 2-4 The Meadows encircled. Bartholomew, *Plan of Edinburgh and Leith*, 1882

This progress from marginality to incorporation was attended by the park's encirclement by the expanding city. By the early 1880s 'the once sequestered Meadows' was almost completely surrounded by urban development.⁹⁵ The park's northern border was dominated by the blocks of the new Royal Infirmary, completed in 1879.⁹⁶ By 1885 the

(Edinburgh, 1905), p.32, for the text of both Acts (7&8 George IV Cap.76 and 1&2 William IV Cap.45).

92 *Scotsman*, 02 Nov 1886, p.5.

93 The *Scotsman*, 02 Nov 1886, could not resist a contemporary comparison: the enclosure 'shut the people off the Meadows almost as completely as the hoarding today shuts the crowd out of the International Exhibition'.

94 For the public parks movement see Hazel Conway, *People's Parks: The Design and Development of Victorian Parks in Britain*. (Cambridge, 1991), chap.4. East Princes Street Gardens was the precursor, opened in 1851, *Caledonian Mercury*, 18 Aug 1851, p.3, Connie Byrom, *The Edinburgh New Town Gardens: 'Blessings as Well as Beauties'*. (Edinburgh, 2005), pp.94–98.

95 Grant, *Old and New Edinburgh*, vol.1 p.318.

96 A. Logan Turner, *Story of a Great Hospital: The Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, 1729–1929*.

baronial piles of Warrender Park were rising to form a wall to the south as Sir George Warrender's Bruntsfield Estate was feued for the construction of modern tenement housing for the new white-collar middle class.⁹⁷ The processes of urban development provided a solution to the continuing drainage problems caused by the torpid hydrology of the old Burgh Loch: the ground level of the park was raised by infilling and levelling, primarily with builders' waste. The Meadows' artificial flatness and its lush greensward was established 'upon a substratum composed of shingle, old lime, torn paperhangings, and household refuse of every description'.⁹⁸

This defining physical characteristic, the all-abiding flatness of the filled-in lake, resisted the picturesque or ornamental; its very featurelessness opposed any attempt at decoration or municipalised regimentation. To the rhetorical question: was the park to be 'converted into a landscape garden, or reserved as an expansive green?' the answer seemed clear, to the *Scotsman* at least.

Nothing else [than the trees in the Meadow Walk] should be permitted to intrude upon the eye ranging over this fine area of verdure—an open space such as few cities can boast, and the airy expanse of which ought to be sedulously preserved.⁹⁹

But attempts to develop the parkland as a conventional Victorian pleasure ground were frustrated by cost as much as the aesthetics of place. In 1873 the Town Council went so far as to engage Edward Kemp, once Sir Joseph Paxton's deputy at Birkenhead, to produce a comprehensive design.¹⁰⁰ His report met with the customary objections from the *Scotsman*:

what seems to us the main objection of Mr Kemp's design is its tendency to break up and fritter away in bits of shrubbery and otherwise the ground which should, to the utmost possible extent be preserved as an expanse of greensward.¹⁰¹

Kemp's estimate of £15,775 4s. 6d. was a more immediate difficulty. The plan was abruptly dropped and the matter turned over to the new City Superintendent and the Curator of the

(Edinburgh, 1937), pp.253–59. The Meadows' 'imperfect drainage' and therefore unhealthy reputation initially told against the site, p.228.

97 Malcolm Cant, *Marchmont in Edinburgh*. (Edinburgh, 1984), chap.1.

98 Bailie James Marshall, quoted *Scotsman*, 07 Oct 1874, p.8.

99 *Scotsman*, 02 Nov 1886, p.5; the question was Bailie Marshall's, 07 Oct 1874, p.8.

100 Janet Waymark, 'Kemp, Edward (1817–1891)', *ODNB*. Paxton (d.1865) laid out Kelvingrove Park (1854) and Queen's Park (1862) in Glasgow: Conway, *People's Parks*, pp.57–58.

101 *Scotsman*, 06 Apr 1874, p.4.



Illus 2-5 The Meadows, improved. Plate from the Kemp Report, 1873. ECA U140G

Royal Botanic Garden, to do what they could within a budget of £3,000:

the best plan they [the Streets and Buildings Committee] could adopt would be to leave the matter in the hands of Mr Morham and Mr McNab; and by laying out and altering some of the walks, and by planting here and there, the whole thing could be preserved as it was, and the interest of the city conserved.¹⁰²

The public health rationale for the municipal provision of open space saw parks like the Meadows as the ‘lungs of the city’, offering working-class residents in congested neighbourhoods healthier, more moral and more rational pursuits than the temptations of the public-house or worse.¹⁰³ The Meadows completed a trajectory from boggy polder to ‘the most popular playground for the youths of the city’ and a locus for the working-class sporting activity enabled by shorter working hours and changing leisure patterns.¹⁰⁴ Team sports like cricket and football developed as a focus for artisan associationalism as leisure became increasingly distanced from traditional workplace relationships to centre round the family and home.¹⁰⁵ The ideal of rational, improving recreation taught that ‘leisure gained legitimacy through action’ and that healthy exercise, re-creating the body for labour, was an appropriate use of the new opportunities for respectable, self-confident, self-organising

102 Lord Provost Cowan, *Scotsman*, 10 Jun 1874, p.6. See above, p.41 for Morham’s Forestry Exhibition building; for McNab see Byrom, *New Town Gardens*, pp.20–22.

103 Cf. Rev. James Begg: ‘These gardens and parks have been called the “lungs” of the city, and the public health will never be sound until the whole body corporate is allowed freely to breathe through them’, *How to Promote and Preserve the True Beauty of Edinburgh*. (Edinburgh, 1849); for the 18thC origins of this much-used organic metaphor, see Richard Sennett, *Flesh and stone: the body and the city in Western civilization*. (New York, 1994), p.325.

104 *Courant*, 22 Sep 1885, p.4; a generous area was commandeered by the upper-class Royal Company of Archers as a practice ground; this was also used for women’s archery contests, for example *Edinburgh Evening News*, 30 May 1885, p.3.

105 Robert Q. Gray, *The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh*. (Oxford, 1976), chap.5.

working men.¹⁰⁶

Now we have plenty of barriers separating class from class, and most who wish well to their fellows will desire to see them removed, especially on such places as the cricket-field. Some of us are rough enough, Heaven knows, but in the main we are pretty much other folk; and one thing *gentlemen* may almost always make sure of when playing working men at cricket is that they will find *gentlemen* among them.¹⁰⁷

By 1882, it was claimed that thirty-one clubs with an estimated 1,000 players used the park on Saturday afternoons and weekday evenings.¹⁰⁸ Artisan cricket could rely on upper-class support from enthusiasts such as C.C. Cotterill, Assistant Master at Fettes College and an advocate of the public school model of sport as a key moral and spiritual good.¹⁰⁹

Football was another matter. After attending at the birth of the organised game in Edinburgh the East Meadows continued as a venue for club matches, and for the informal mêlées that provoked particular criticism: ‘The damage is caused not so much by the respectable football clubs as by the swarms of ragamuffins who imitate them in all weathers, using language in their horseplay which is a public nuisance’.¹¹⁰ Football was developing a reputation as a rougher game both on and off the pitch, one that posed particular problems of discipline and social control; it was banned completely from the Meadows by edict of the Parks Committee in 1881, when ‘a strong force of police’ had to face down angry players.¹¹¹ The class nature of the issue was underlined by Trades Council support for the campaign for the game’s reinstatement.¹¹²

106 Trevor Griffiths, ‘Work, Leisure and Time in the Nineteenth Century’, in Graeme Morton and Trevor Griffiths (eds.), *History of Everyday Life in Scotland, 1800 to 1900*. (Edinburgh, 2010), p.170. For rational recreation see Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830–1885*. (London, 1978), chap.5.

107 A.C. Chesney, Secretary of the artisan Brunswick Cricket Club, *Scotsman*, 30 Sep 1873, p.3. Original emphasis.

108 *Scotsman*, 07 Mar 1882, p.4.

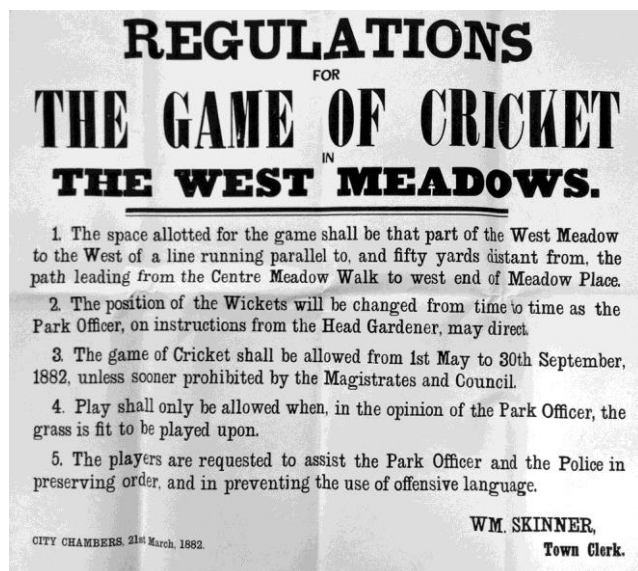
109 Cotterill, a disciple of the sports-obsessed H.H. Almond of Loretto School, was president of the Brunswick Club. See *Scotsman*, 17 Mar 1886, p.6, for his talk ‘The Value of Exercise and National Sports’. For his subsequent career see Donald Leinster-Mackay, *The Rise of the English Prep School*. (London, 1984), pp.172–73.

110 H.McL., *Scotsman*, 22 May 1879, p.2. For early football see William Reid, *The Story of ‘The Hearts’*. (Edinburgh, 1925), p.16, quoted Robert Q. Gray, *The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh*. (Oxford, 1976), p.116; see also Albert Mackie, *The Hearts: The Story of the Heart of Midlothian F.C.* (London, 1959) for the first Hearts–Hibs match, in the Meadows in 1875.

111 *Scotsman*, 12 Oct 1881, p.9.

112 NLS Acc.11177/35: Edinburgh United Trades Council, *Annual Report, 1881–82*. Assistance was also sought from the current president of the Edinburgh Football Association: ‘However, we

The ban on football was ostensibly intended to protect the still-delicate surface of the Meadows against the ravages inflicted by over-enthusiastic players; the same concerns led to the transfer of cricket to the West Meadows in 1882.¹¹³ Larger issues of the control over public space by the municipal authorities were involved. Codes of respectable behaviour had to be enforced, in the first instance by the familiar Victorian disciplinary figure, the



Illus 2-6 Regulations for Meadows cricketers. ECA U140G

park-keeper.¹¹⁴ More generally, constant surveillance was required to guard against transgression: ‘The strict police supervision exercised in the Meadows and other public parks ... combined with better lighting arrangements, have been the means of minimising the infamous practices which at one time were so rife’.¹¹⁵ And the legitimate demands of the different users of the space had to be reconciled: the sportsmen had to co-exist with promenaders, the aged and infirm, including the vulnerable patients of the new Royal Infirmary, and the residents of the newly-surrounding streets. All this resulted in a régime of municipal space management where different activities were in theory prescribed and regulated and assigned to different zones and periods.¹¹⁶

have a good friend in the Council—Councillor Gowans, who, we know, will do his utmost to get us our rights’, A Disappointed Football Player, *Scotsman* 03 Oct 1881, p.9.

113 *Scotsman*, 07 Mar 1882, p.4.

114 Conway, *People's Parks*, pp.203–207; cf. Byrom, *New Town Gardens*, p.98, on the imposition of the first rules for East Princes Street Gardens: ‘Edinburgh citizens were now on trial’.

115 *Courant*, 28 Sep 1885, p.5.

116 Fencing was one way of delineating these zones: the Meadows contained as much as 5½ miles

Disputes over the uses of the Meadows became easily entangled with arguments over circulation routes through the protected parkland, matters that reflected the spatial logic and social geography of the developing surrounding areas. The east to west line of the Melville Drive hugging the park's southern margin proved relatively uncontroversial; the question of a north to south connection, opening up the Meadow Walk to wheeled traffic, was much more controversial. '[I]n no city in the world was there such a gap as the Meadows, with houses all around, in which there was no through communication'.¹¹⁷ In the highly charged debate over access to open space in Edinburgh, the issue could only acquire class overtones—'like too many other questions [it] has been made a pretext for stirring up rancorous feeling between different classes of the community'¹¹⁸—and be portrayed as a contest between the convenience of privileged carriage-owners and cab-users and the integrity of a popular recreation space and the rights of its working-class users.

After twenty years of discussion the question resurfaced in 1885, sparking a public debate in which the conflicting demands of suburban circulation and working-class amenity were once again counterposed. In March, a petition to the Town Council from residents of the Grange emphasised the claims of property to a clear route to the city centre:

In the Grange district the rental of the streets represented by the petition was £27,572, a very considerable proportion of the rental of the city; while since last the question was before the Council Warrender Park population had sprung into existence, and that formed a new element in the case.¹¹⁹

In April, Neil McLean, Trades Council secretary, presented a counter-petition restating long-standing opposition to the proposal.¹²⁰ On 10 July at a public meeting convened in the East Meadows an audience of over 5,000, mostly working men, heard pleas for the preservation of popular amenity. Four days later, the Town Council decisively rejected the opening up of the Walk on the motion of Councillor James Colston:

They were now going to desecrate this time-honoured avenue for the convenience of the few—namely, those who could afford the luxury of paying for a cab ... A Prime Minister described this class as 'the proud ones who have their carriages rolling along

of iron railings in 1885 (Calculated from the painting contract details given *Scotsman*, 09 Sep 1885, p.9).

117 Councillor Adam W. Black, reported *Scotsman*, 07 Oct 1874, p.8.

118 *Scotsman*, 06 Apr 1874, p.4.

119 *Evening News*, 10 Mar 1885, p.3.

120 *Evening News*, 21 Apr 1885, p.3.

the turnpike road'.¹²¹

Not for the only time, Liberal Councillors acted in support of popular rights.

The flatness and regularity of the Meadows made the location tempting for one occasional purpose. In 1869 and again in 1877 the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society was granted use of the West Meadows for its annual show. Though lasting only a few days, these events were ambitious undertakings.¹²² The entirety of the park was fenced off for stockyards, livestock display and the exhibition of implements and agricultural technology. Packed excursion trains brought visitors from rural areas to Edinburgh to crowd into the animated showground. More than 105,000 paying admissions were counted in the four days of the 1877 event, 53,160 on the Friday alone.¹²³ Concern at the effects of this press of equipment, animals and people on the surface of the still poorly-drained park was inevitable, and lasting. When the Highland and Agricultural Society returned to the Town Council in July 1883, its request for use of the West Meadows for the next year's Centennial Show was politely refused:

[Lord Provost Harrison] said that all the members of the Council had a very warm affection for the Highland Society; but the Meadows were not very well adapted for the show. It cut the Meadows up very much, and it was difficult to restore them to their old condition.

The Council suggested the Society apply for use of the nearby Warrender Park instead.¹²⁴

The rejection of the Highland Society's application was clearly in the minds of the Executive Committee of the 1884 Forestry Exhibition, with the Highland Society as its main sponsor, when seeking a site for their event. Robert Hutchison led a delegation to the Lord Provost's Committee in late November 1883 to apply not for the contentious space of the West Meadows but instead for the recently-municipalised West Princes Street Gardens:

He conceived that the appropriation of the West Meadows, which were recreation grounds, for three or four months of the year, and the erection round them of a huge hoarding such as was put up on the occasion of the Highland Society's Show, would be

121 *Evening News*, 14 Jul 1885, p.3; for the Meadows meeting see *Evening News*, 11 Jul 1885, p.2. The *Courant* estimated the meeting's attendance as 'fully fifteen thousand', 11 Jul 1885, p.5.

122 Holmes, 'Royal Highland Show'.

123 *Scotsman*, 28 Jul 1877, p.5. Only two days of the 1886 Exhibition recorded higher admissions. For the 1869 show, see *Scotsman*, 27 Jul 1869, p.6.

124 *Scotsman*, 01 Aug 1883, p.5. It was Edinburgh's year to host the 1884 Show, eventually held in the Dean Park; so the Town Council was not jeopardising business to the city by their refusal of the Meadows site.

open to greater objections than could be urged against Princes' Street Gardens, which were only used for walking in. The West Meadows for a site would not, he was afraid, either render the Exhibition attractive or remunerative; or enable them to carry out the Exhibition in the way best calculated to interest the public.¹²⁵

The West Princes Street Gardens application proved a serious miscalculation. It provoked a storm of protest, in which president of the Royal Scottish Academy Sir William Fettes Douglas was to the fore, at the threat to the amenity of the Gardens and their high-status promenade from this proposed intrusion, no matter how well-connected its promoters.¹²⁶ The Forestry Executive had to settle for the suburban location of Donaldson's Hospital.

Almost two years later, on 8 September 1885, Hutchison once again found himself at the head of a deputation to the Town Council pleading the case for the grant of an exhibition site: this time for the same West Meadows that he had rejected so forthrightly as a venue for the Forestry Exhibition. Conditions were now considerably more favourable to such a grant for the International Exhibition. The Town Council had committed its £2,500 guarantee. Despite his initial lukewarm support Lord Provost Harrison was once again concerned to hurry the project along: 'If people had more energy it [the matter of the site] might have been settled by now'.¹²⁷ Two of the Exhibition's leading promoters, Dean of Guild Gowans and Bailie Clark, were prominent Town Council members: Gowans in particular spoke up for the proposal. Letters from Trades Council president and secretary A.C. Telfer and Neil McLean, by this point co-opted into the organisation of the Exhibition's Artisan Section, supported the grant and allowed Gowans to claim that '[t]hey always pleaded the working men as the people who used the Meadows; but the working men had no objection'.¹²⁸ He was even more brazen on the prospect of material damage to the park itself, given the violence that would be visited on it over the next few months: 'It was not an agricultural show, such as they had, and which destroyed the Meadows greatly'.

The proposal was not unopposed. Despite their positions as Town Council representations on the Exhibition Sub-Committee, Parks Convener Clapperton and Treasurer Boyd spoke strongly against. Boyd's prediction was sour but accurate: 'They

125 *Scotsman*, 22 Nov 1883, p.6.

126 Fettes Douglas, *Scotsman*, 23 Nov 1883, p.3. The Gardens had been wrested from their private owners only in 1876, Robertson, *Princes Street Proprietors*, pp.52–61.

127 *Courant*, 09 Sep 1885, p.3, from which come subsequent quotes from the proceedings.

128 In fact the decision prompted a flurry of letters to the press, both for and against: Telfer wrote, *Scotsman* 12 Sep 1885, p.8, in defence of his support for the West Meadows site and the Exhibition project itself.

would find that when these tramways and these buildings were removed there would not be a particle of grass'. The deputation's request was agreed by twenty-six to nine, subject to firm provisos. The organisers were required to preserve the existing trees, to remove all buildings and structures at the close of the Exhibition, and to restore the surface and make good any damage.¹²⁹ On these conditions, and on the understanding that they would provide alternative facilities for the displaced sportsmen, the Exhibition organisers had found their site.

Organisation, structure, networks

When the guarantee fund objective of £25,000 was reached in mid-September 1885 the Exhibition entered a new stage in its progress. Despite the obstacles in their path, in a matter of seven months the organisers had secured the financial underpinning for the undertaking. With the Town Council grant of the West Meadows they had obtained a suitable site. Although little over six months remained to the planned opening day, the Exhibition's prospects, at one time doubtful, had been transformed. A crowded and enthusiastic General Meeting held in the Council Chamber on 23 September, with Harrison again in the chair, set in train the changes in the project's organisational structure and its legal and financial status that followed from the attainment of the fund target.¹³⁰ The organising Sub-Committee was now reconstituted as an Executive Council with representation from Glasgow and other burghs and with the addition of prominent Edinburgh citizens such as James Tod, Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, and Ralph Richardson, the city's Commissary Clerk.¹³¹ Marchbank and Gaff were confirmed as salaried secretary and treasurer, forming the nucleus of the administrative apparatus that would direct the running of the Exhibition.

Thus constituted, the Executive could apply for formal recognition from the Board of Trade. Certification that the Exhibition was international in scope and therefore that unpatented exhibits were protected under the recent Patents Act was obtained in October.¹³² Board of Trade registration as a not-for-profit company in February 1886

129 ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 14 Sep 1885.

130 ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 23 Sep 1885; *Scotsman*, 24 Sep 1885, p.7; *Herald*, 24 Sep 1885, p.7. Lothian would have chaired the meeting but for confusion over its timing.

131 For Richardson, who was Gladstone's agent during the 1880 Midlothian campaign, see *Scotsman*, 27 Jun 1933, p.11; 28 Jun 1933, p.13.

132 ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 19 Oct 1885.

formalised the ad-hoc financial and legal arrangements under which the organisers had been operating, and confirmed the guarantors' limited liability. The Exhibition's new legal personality was embodied in the Exhibition Association, notionally composed of the Exhibition guarantors; its Memorandum and Articles of Association were signed on 4 February 1886, but the first, largely token, meeting was not held until 31 May when the Exhibition was under way.¹³³ Regularisation of the project's governance arrangements, however perfunctory, was a prerequisite for a corresponding firming up of its finances. The assignment of major contracts for buildings and infrastructure necessitated the transmutation of the virtual capital of the guarantee fund into usable working capital. The Commercial Bank of Scotland was appointed as the Exhibition's bankers, with its General Manager Andrew Aikman seated on the Executive as honorary treasurer. A loan of £20,000 secured directly on the guarantee forms with additional short term credit was duly made available in December, in time to meet incoming construction bills.¹³⁴

The ruling Executive Council was underpinned by a structure of sixteen specialised subcommittees to carry forward the detailed organisation of the Exhibition project, each presided over by conveners who were also members of the Executive. The subcommittees were charged with functional responsibilities such as Finance, Building and Construction, Decoration and Lighting, and Entertainment. Three of the separate Sections planned for the Exhibition—Fine Art, the Artisans, and Old Edinburgh—were also represented in this way.¹³⁵ Division into functions and sections allowed the organisational load of a formidable undertaking on a daunting scale to be split into manageable tasks. At the same time it deployed the knowledge and expertise of a growing band of volunteers emerging from

133 ECA Acc.423/13: Exhibition Association Minutes. NRS BT2/1509: Dissolved Companies file, B.O.T. Certificate and Licence, Memorandum and Articles of Association. Few guarantors initially signed up to the Association, though it later became a channel of complaint for exhibitors who were also guarantors.

134 ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 03 Dec 1885, 24 Dec 1885. For the Commercial Bank—'All along it has taken utility as its motto, and it discards pedantry, red tape and mere conventionality when they stand in its way and impede its course'—and Aikman, see Moneta, *Scottish Banks and Bankers*. (Edinburgh, 1904), pp.27–35. Cuthbert & Marchbank later characterised the Exhibition Association as a requirement of the Bank: 'The Association was formed mainly to satisfy the Bank who had engaged to advance the money required to carry on the undertaking, and expressed a desire to have an incorporated Body to deal with'. ECA Acc.423/13: Exhibition Association Minutes, 16 Dec 1886.

135 *Official Catalogue*, pp.26–28, for listing of subcommittees and their members. Size ranged from four to 26 members (median=9). This bureaucratic model was familiar from public administration, including the Town Council, but also from the organisation of voluntary philanthropic societies—and the Presbyterian churches.

bourgeois Edinburgh's civil society. Practical knowledge, business skills, and social accomplishments could be put at the Exhibition's disposal.

Subcommittees composed themselves as communities of expertise. The Machinery Committee with Park as joint-convenor included both William Bertram and A.B. Brown, along with four other engineers and the architect John McLachlan. The four-man Grounds Committee convened by the nurseryman John Methven included the Town Council Parks Committee Convenor John Clapperton and Angus McLeod, the City Gardener. The Fine Art Section Committee included two architects, four members of the R.S.A., J.M. Gray, curator of the recently-formed Scottish National Portrait Gallery, and R.T. Hamilton-Bruce whose contacts and connoisseurship brought together the successful and influential loan exhibition of French and Dutch paintings. Most convivially, the Refreshments Committee under the convenership of Dr William Greenlees, manager of the Summerhall Brewery and 'a very genial citizen',¹³⁶ attracted four hoteliers and two wine merchants.

Widening participation presented opportunities for involvement in, and identification with, an undertaking whose gathering momentum was accruing social value and prestige. As Gowans himself put it, '[t]hey had now a machine consisting of a hundred earnest men working steadily together for the success of the Exhibition'.¹³⁷ For these middle-class male participants the Exhibition offered the prospect of the personal satisfaction, public visibility, and introduction into wider social networks that association with a successful project would bring.¹³⁸ Many, like Gowans himself, were prepared to devote considerable time and energy to the undertaking: Kinloch Anderson and Park were members of four subcommittees, as was Major George Grahame, a retired army officer from Portobello. Another nine Executive members sat on three subcommittees each.¹³⁹

The institution of the Executive Council also marked another stage in James Gowans's emergence as the Exhibition's leading figure. Having joined the undertaking 'from the desire to do good not only to his native city but to every other place that wished to show them what they could do', in his own assessment '[s]ince he had become connected with it the

136 *Scotsman*, 09 May 1891, p.8.

137 *Scotsman*, 17 Feb 1886, p.8; 122 individuals are listed in *Official Catalogue*.

138 Thomas Clark stressed the opportunities for young men on Exhibition committees: *Scottish News*, 13 Feb 1886, p.7; 17 Feb 1886, p.7.

139 These were Brodie, Clapperton, Dobie, Eagle, Martin, Methven, the engineer W. Allan Carter, and Christopher Veitch, Edinburgh Agricultural Association Secretary.

undertaking had got on well'.¹⁴⁰ At the Dobie's Saloon Meeting Robert Hutchison was nominated deputy chairman of the organising Sub-Committee, and he presided regularly over its early meetings in Clark's frequent absence. However, he was increasingly supplanted by Gowans. After the General Committee meeting of 23 September with Clark confirmed as Chairman of the Executive Council and Gowans, Hutchison and Ritchie appointed as its Vice-Chairmen, Gowans effectively took over direction of the project. His *de facto* leadership was regularised on Clark's elevation to the Lord Provostship in November, when Gowans became Chairman of the Executive Council.¹⁴¹ Gowans's assumption of leadership heralded a more energetic management style than the somewhat lack-lustre prosecution of the Forestry Exhibition under Hutchison. As a punning Glasgow satirist had it, 'the Embro folks' had decided that 'Hutchison of (Tram)Carlowrie wasn't a "patch" on Gowans'.¹⁴²

The Artisan Section and the Women's Industries Section stood out amongst the Exhibition's proposed departments, not least because they represented social groupings apart from the middle-class male associationalism of the subcommittee networks. Both were hailed as innovations by Exhibition organisers and commentators alike. Their presence represented social progress; the space granted to artisan and women exhibitors demonstrated a philanthropic intent that countered the commercialism that prevailed in other parts of the Exhibition. They embodied the spirit of improvement held to be central to the exhibitionary ethos. On the other hand, their very novelty would allow both Sections to be publicised as notable attractions for Exhibition visitors.¹⁴³

The idea of the Artisan Section originated at an early point within the organising Sub-Committee. In Gowans's recollection 'the artisan's section [*sic*] was something quite new in the history of exhibitions; it was a very happy thought on the part of a member of committee to introduce that novel feature'.¹⁴⁴ By August 1885 the Sub-Committee had met with A.C. Telfer and Neil McLean, respectively president and secretary of Edinburgh

140 *Scotsman*, 15 Jan 1886, p.7; see also *Courant*, 15 Jan 1886, p.2.

141 ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 12 Nov 1885.

142 *Bailie*, 12 May 1886, p.10. Gowans's removal from the ESTC maintenance contract—documented in NRS GD282/13/248: Davidson & Syme W.S, Gowans ESTC correspondence etc—could only have added piquancy to his relationship with Hutchison. His own assessment of his management skills was typically robust: 'having had to command men, about 2000, perhaps, at a time, ... he had the experience with which to push this matter to a successful issue', *Scotsman*, 19 Aug 1886, p.7.

143 For example, advertisement, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 01 May 1886, p.14: '... Special Section for Women's Industries, with several in operation—Exhibits by 400 Artisans ...'

144 *Herald*, 01 Nov 1886, p.4.

United Trades Council, in order to secure their participation in a Section ‘set apart for displaying the skill and ingenuity of the artisans of Scotland’.¹⁴⁵ At this stage at least, the Trades Council officers were impressed by this gesture of inclusion, reporting back that ‘the Sub-Committee appeared to look upon the matter in a liberal light and would do all in their power to make the Section attractive’; the Council resolved in turn ‘to take such steps as may be necessary to ascertain the feeling of the Industrial Classes in reference to the proposal’.¹⁴⁶

The great exhibitions of the nineteenth century functioned as spectacles of alienated labour. In their celebration of the achievements of modern industrial production, the exhibitions evaded questions of ownership, of power relations or of management structures: the display of industry and its commodities unquestioningly represented the rule of capital. A series of industrial and handicraft exhibitions presented by working-class organisations and drawing on co-operative traditions developed as an alternative—though a small-scale and understated one—to the great exhibition tradition. International Working Man’s Exhibitions associated with the radical cabinetmaker Benjamin Lucraft were held in London in the 1860s and 1870s; they continued into the 1890s as the National Workmen’s Exhibitions sponsored by the London Trades Council.¹⁴⁷

However, there is no evidence that this activist tradition influenced any of the Artisan Section organisers or participants. Local precedents for artisan exhibitions were organised for, rather than by, their invited working-class participants within a framework of middle-class patronage. The Forestry Exhibition had included a display of models produced by forestry workers.¹⁴⁸ In Glasgow, the Town Council-sponsored South Side Exhibition of December 1884 to March 1885 included an Artizans’ Section [*sic*] featuring ‘Models, Designs, Inventions, Pieces of Apparatus, and Examples of Work generally executed by working people during their leisure’.¹⁴⁹ At the same time in Edinburgh the Causewayside Industrial Exhibition organised by the Newington U.P. Church Home Mission opened on

145 *Courant*, 26 Aug 1885, p.3.

146 NLS Acc.11177/5: Edinburgh United Trades Council, Minutes, 25 Aug 1885.

147 Peter H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian, and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War*. (Berkeley, 2001), p.184; Lara Kriegel, *Grand Designs: Labor, Empire, and the Museum in Victorian Culture*. (Durham, N.C., 2007), p.179; ‘North London Working Classes Industrial Exhibition’, *Journal of the Society of Arts*, XII:622 (October 1864), pp.759–760. For Lucraft see Paul Thomas Murphy, ‘Lucraft, Benjamin (1809–1897)’, *ODNB*. G.S. Lucraft & Son, his son’s firm for which he worked, were exhibitors at Edinburgh in 1886 (#887).

148 *Scotsman*, 02 Jul 1884, p.7.

149 GCA DTC14/1/12/499: South Side Exhibition prospectus. See also *Herald*, 27 Dec 1884, p.4.

11 December 1884. This ‘attempt to encourage the people to make their homes more comfortable and beautiful by stimulating and giving aim to their industry in their leisure hours’ included the architectural models, fern cases and intricate cabinet work typical of the handicraft that later graced the Artisan Section.¹⁵⁰ The show sat firmly within the traditions of presbyterian philanthropy: ‘The good results of this special effort were seen in fewer visits to the public house, improved tastes, and the desire to make home attractive’.¹⁵¹ The patronage and publicity given to this small event make it a likely inspiration for the Artisan Section. Andrew Ritchie, soon to become a champion of the Exhibition project, was one of the dignitaries who presided over its closing ceremony.¹⁵²

In approaching the Trades Council the Exhibition Sub-Committee enlisted the help of an institution that represented the voice of skilled and organised labour in the city.¹⁵³ Edinburgh’s characteristically metropolitan economic structure, reflected in the Exhibition’s list of guarantors, contained within it the city’s specialised and distinctive industries: printing and publishing; technically advanced niche engineering by firms like Brown’s and Bertram’s; and the array of small-scale, high-quality consumer industries catering to its upper-class and professional residents. This distinctive industrial structure produced, and required, a distinctive artisan stratum of skilled male workers. Edinburgh artisans’ pay was better and their employment more secure than that of their labouring fellow-workers, though in the depression of the early 1880s both were relative; and this relative security depended on the possession of trade skills, and was maintained by adherence to the values of thrift, self-reliance and self-help.¹⁵⁴

The Trades Council embodied this artisan culture. With representation from twenty-four trades union branches—though many of them were small craft societies—in 1886 it claimed ‘a constituency of 14,000’; its affiliated branches had paid out more than £41,000 in benefits the previous year.¹⁵⁵ Enfranchised by the Second Reform Act of 1867–68, artisan

150 *Scotsman*, 12 Dec 1884, p.4

151 James Goodfellow, *The Print of His Shoe: Forty Years’ Missionary Experience in the Southside of Edinburgh*. (Edinburgh, 1906), p.87. In another anticipation of the 1886 Exhibition, the Causewayside event also included native artifacts and Bible translations from African Missions.

152 Goodfellow, *Print of His Shoe*.

153 W. Hamish Fraser, ‘Trades Councils in the Labour Movement in Nineteenth Century Scotland’, in Ian MacDougall (ed.), *Essays in Scottish Labour History*. (Edinburgh, 1978), pp.1–28.

154 See p.18ff for the Edinburgh economy; Gray, *Labour Aristocracy, passim*; for the trade union background, W.H. Marwick, *A Short History of Labour in Scotland*. (Edinburgh, 1967), chap.IV.

155 *Dispatch*, 22 Sep 1886, p.2. See NLS Acc.11177/35: Edinburgh United Trades Council, *Annual*

organisations were active in Gladstonian politics; the Trades Council played a very public role in the demonstrations in support of the Third Reform Act of 1884. The co-option of the Council into the Exhibition project reflected this increasing visibility in urban civil society; respectable labour was an estate to be included in the Exhibition Executive's depiction of their city. As in the real city, however, leadership would be provided by the ruling liberal shopocracy 'which identified with many of the problems of the working class, and which for a brief period provided a kind of leadership for the working class':¹⁵⁶ men like W.J. Kinloch Anderson, Town Councillor, Exhibition champion and master clothier.

Invited to preside, as a prominent employer, over the March 1886 soirée of Neil McLean's Edinburgh branch of the Operative Tailors, Kinloch Anderson saluted McLean's part in organising the Artisan Section. He went on to present a consensual image of the Trade that united the interests of operative tailors and responsible masters in the 'harmonious relations that existed between ... employers and employed'. Progress held out the prospect of social mobility within Edinburgh tailoring:

He had no doubt there were some present who would become employers of labour; they had the advantages of education which their forefathers did not possess, and he hoped they would remember that the future of the trade was in their hands.¹⁵⁷

However, Kinloch Anderson had also a radical message for the Tailors on a topic of the day: he advocated an active role for the Town Council in the provision of workers' housing, adopting a more interventionist position than most Trades Council members were prepared to endorse. In proposing a modern, consensual view of the traditional community of the Trade under the political leadership of progressive employers, Kinloch Anderson's address to the Tailors embodied the principle of inclusion that underpinned the Artisan Section.

Once included in the Exhibition project, the Trades Council representatives undertook the organisation of the Artisan Section. By September 1885 Telfer and McLean had issued a national circular inviting workers' participation: 'the opportunity ... will be the means of stimulating the genius and skill of the artisans in their individual capacity'.¹⁵⁸ At the General

Report, 1885–86, for branches affiliated.

156 David McCrone and Brian Elliott, *Property and Power in a City: The Sociological Significance of Landlordism*. (Basingstoke, 1989), p.79; though Conservatives like Gowans also courted the working-class vote, *Courant*, 25 Jun 1885, p.3.

157 *Dispatch*, 27 Mar 1886, p.2; for McLean's view of the Edinburgh tailoring trade see House of Lords. Select Committee on the Sweating System, *Fourth Report [331], Minutes of Evidence*. (1889), qq.26508–78.

158 *Scotsman*, 14 Sep 1885, p.4.

Meeting of 23 September this energy was noted. 'It may be mentioned that the Trades Council have taken considerable trouble with regard to this section, and have sent a circular to all the Trades Councils and similar bodies throughout the country inviting the members to send exhibits'.¹⁵⁹ With the September re-organisation the Artisan Section merited its own Committee; Telfer was appointed as one of three joint-conveners, with a place on the Exhibition Executive.¹⁶⁰ The eleven other Committee members 'consist[ed] mainly of members of the Trades Council'.¹⁶¹ Organisation of the Section under Trades Council auspices became integrated into the Exhibition's Committee structure. The limits of inclusion would however become apparent as the Exhibition progressed.

The genesis and organisation of the Women's Industries Section of the Exhibition offered telling contrasts to that of the Artisans. Inclusion of a Section displaying the products of women's labour in an exhibition setting reflected Edinburgh's traditions of women's activism in religious, philanthropic and social and political issues. The city's social composition, its predominantly middle-class and professional makeup and the salience of philanthropic and educational institutions made it both a microcosm of, and a key element in, the universe of Victorian women's movements. Networks of committed women activists linked by family and social ties formed an interlocking membership of related organisations. The evangelical Christian philanthropic associations conspicuous in Edinburgh public life that had introduced women to organisational and activist roles were linked with local offshoots of the international temperance movement and the campaigns for university education for women and for the extension of the parliamentary franchise.¹⁶² In this the emancipatory power of employment, 'that wave of desire for a personal working life' played

159 ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 23 Sep 1885.

160 For Telfer, a working joiner and later the 'first artisan representative on Edinburgh Town Council' see *Scotsman*, 22 Apr 1916, p.6. The other vice-conveners were Bailie Robert Turnbull, who played no visible part in further proceedings, and William Martin, the Blind Asylum Manager.

161 *Daily Review*, 29 Apr 1886, p.2. Neil McLean joined the Traffic and Excursion Committee rather than the Artisan Committee; though he exhibited in the Artisan Section.

162 Lesley Orr Macdonald, *A Unique and Glorious Mission: Women and Presbyterianism in Scotland 1830–1930*. (Edinburgh, 2000), chap.5; Megan Smitley, *The Feminine Public Sphere: Middle-Class Women in Civic Life in Scotland, c.1870–1914*. (Manchester, 2009); Leah Leneman, *A Guid Cause: The Women's Suffrage Movement in Scotland*. (Aberdeen, 1991); Elizabeth Crawford, *Enterprising Women: The Garretts and Their Circle*. (London, 2002) for Edinburgh links to UK-wide family and social networks.

a role.¹⁶³ The Edinburgh Society for Promoting the Employment of Women, an offshoot of the London SPEW, had been founded by Phoebe Blyth in 1860, though by the 1880s it seems to have survived only as a high-class employment agency for domestic servants.¹⁶⁴

Women activists had achieved a measure of visibility in the Edinburgh public sphere and a degree of participation in the city's public life. While the campaign for medical education for women was for the time being blocked by the intransigence of the Medical School establishment, the Edinburgh Association for the University Education of Women provided accredited University classes taken by sympathetic lecturers.¹⁶⁵ The wide participation in EAUEW classes and its influential membership allowed the Association to act as a central linkage into other areas of activism. Foremost amongst these was the suffrage movement: the Edinburgh National Society for Women's Suffrage founded in 1867 campaigned vigorously in support of an unsuccessful franchise amendment to the 1884 Reform Act and the subsequent Woodall Bill voted down in 1886.¹⁶⁶

Some women were, however, already able to vote in some, non-Parliamentary, elections. The School Board franchise of 1872 as in England and Wales included female ratepayers; uniquely, qualifying women were able to stand for election, and thus hold public office as Board members. The Scottish municipal ratepayer franchise was in addition extended to women in 1881.¹⁶⁷ Although applying only to unmarried women and widows who were householders in their own right, this extension increased the Edinburgh municipal roll by a fifth and created a very visible constituency whose support was explicitly sought by male candidates for Council office.¹⁶⁸

163 Clementina Black, quoted José Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: Britain, 1870–1914*. (London, 1994), p.25.

164 *Scotsman*, 07 Nov 1860, p.2; Siân Reynolds, *Britannica's Typesetters: Women Compositors in Edwardian Edinburgh*. (Edinburgh, 1989), pp.31–32.

165 Foremost amongst them David Masson, Professor of English Literature, a strong supporter of women's emancipation and a conspicuous member of these networks of advocacy and activism; see his impassioned contribution in favour of women's employment at the ESPEW 1868 annual meeting, *Scotsman*, 16 Dec 1868, p.6. For the Medical School controversy see Sophia Jex-Blake, *Medical Women, A Thesis and a History*. (Edinburgh, 1886).

166 The Edinburgh Scottish National Demonstration of Women was held in the Synod Hall, March 1884; reported, unsympathetically, *Scotsman*, 25 Mar 1884, p.7.

167 Though women had held this right in England and Wales since 1869. Smitley, *Feminine Public Sphere*, p.136 for Scottish franchise legislation.

168 *Scotsman*, 18 Oct 1882, p.2; 08 Nov 1882, p.9. Exhibition Executive members Brodie and Kinloch Anderson competed for the endorsement of suffrage organisations as candidates in the Newington ward in the November 1885 municipal election. Brodie won the endorsement

Support for an equivalent Parliamentary franchise for women was given in Edinburgh's liberal political culture. The Town Council had been the 'first local government body to petition for women's suffrage' in 1871, and petitioned again in 1884 and 1886.¹⁶⁹ Lord Provost Thomas Clark declared himself 'quite of opinion that women who are householders should have the suffrage', and even Conservative organisations regularly passed motions in favour of the women's vote.¹⁷⁰ In this atmosphere the suggestion received by the organising Sub-Committee in September 1885 from Major Hugh Christian, Provost of Portobello, that the Exhibition should include a 'Ladies' Section' caused little surprise.¹⁷¹ Christian himself exemplified civic support for women's suffrage. As Provost he had chaired the Portobello suffrage meeting in the 1884 campaign, and he more recently presided over one of the drawing-room meetings held in 1885 in support of the Woodall Bill.¹⁷² In all probability Christian transmitted a proposal that had originated elsewhere within the circles of Edinburgh women's activism; whatever its provenance however, the idea was accepted without recorded discussion and the new Ladies' Section was added to the Exhibition's departments.

As with the Artisan Section, there were precedents for the Ladies' Section in previous exhibitions, but in this case the networking reach of women's activism ensured that they would have been familiar in Edinburgh circles.¹⁷³ For the first time in a great exhibition the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876 contained within it a space directed and managed by women. Peremptorily ejected from the main exhibition building, the Women's Centennial

but lost the vote: *Scotsman*, 29 Oct 1885, p.3.

169 Smitley, *Feminine Public Sphere*, p.20.

170 Clark quoted *Scotsman*, 24 Dec 1885, p.4. The Edinburgh Conservative Association voted 25 to 3 to support the Woodall Bill in July 1885, *Courant*, 03 Jul 1885, p.5.

171 ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 17 Sep 1885.

172 *Scotsman*, 20 Mar 1884, p.4; *Courant*, 24 Apr 1885, p.4. For middle-class drawing-room campaigning see Smitley, *Feminine Public Sphere*, pp.44–45; for Christian, *Scotsman*, 03 Aug 1914, p.6. As a retired Indian Army officer he would have been acquainted with the Exhibition Executive members Major George Grahame and Colonel Peter Dods, both Portobello residents.

173 For women in great exhibitions see Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: the Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs*. (Manchester, 1988), chap.7; Tracey Jean Boisseau and Abigail M. Markwyn (eds.), *Gendering the Fair: Histories of Women and Gender at World's Fairs*. (Urbana, 2010); Mary Pepchinski, 'The Woman's Building and the World Exhibitions: Exhibition Architecture and Conflicting Feminine Ideals at European and American World Exhibitions, 1873–1915', *Wolkenkuckucksheim*, 5:1 (2000), <http://www.tu-cottbus.de/theoriederarchitektur/Wolke/eng/Subjects/001/Pepchinski/pepchinski.htm>, accessed 23 May 2012.

Executive Committee in a short time financed and erected a separate Women's Pavilion: a demonstration of the self-confidence and energy of American female organisation in the face of male exclusion. The Pavilion was directed and managed by women alone: besides the domestic, its contents celebrated women's achievement in the arts and sciences, female invention, and the opening up of professional opportunities. In addition the Pavilion became a focus for social and political issues with the involvement of the suffrage campaigners Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony.¹⁷⁴ The Philadelphia Women's Pavilion gained influential patrons—Queen Victoria herself contributed exhibits—and was widely publicised. There was a direct Scottish connection: in the summer of 1876 Margaret Parker of Dundee presided over the Philadelphia Women's International Temperance Convention which included a visit to the Exhibition in its programme: Jane Wellstood, a leading Edinburgh temperance and suffrage campaigner, also attended as a delegate.¹⁷⁵

The Exhibition of Women's Industries held in Bristol in the spring of 1885 was a closer precedent in both time and place for the Edinburgh Ladies' Section. Bristol, like Edinburgh, was a centre of women's activism. The suffrage campaigner Helen Blackburn played a leading role in the event's organisation and the displays themselves, such as the gallery of portraits of eminent women, had an explicit emancipatory message. The show was held for only a short period of time and had a relatively small number of visitors; however it included an impressive range of exhibitors.¹⁷⁶ The considerable overlap of these exhibitors, the eventual identical titles of the two events, and not least the family and networking connections between the Edinburgh and Bristol women's movements are enough to confirm the Bristol Exhibition as a model for the Edinburgh Women's Industries Section.¹⁷⁷

174 Both Cady Stanton and Anthony visited Edinburgh in the period 1882–1885. For the Philadelphia Women's Pavilion see John Maass, *The Glorious Enterprise: The Centennial Exhibition of 1876*. (New York, 1973), pp.120–25; Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, pp.124–28. For another Women's Department at an American exhibition see Samuel C. Shepherd, 'A Glimmer of Hope: The World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition, New Orleans, 1884–1885', *Louisiana History*, 26:3 (July 1985), pp.271–290.

175 Toronto Women's Christian Temperance Union, *Report of the Women's International Temperance Convention held at Philadelphia, June 12, 1876*. (Toronto, 1876).

176 Emma Ferry, "'A Novelty Among Exhibitions': The Loan Exhibition of Women's Industries, Bristol 1885", in Elizabeth Darling and Lesley Whitworth (eds.), *Women and the Making of Built Space in England, 1870–1950*. (Aldershot, 2007). The event was held over nine weeks, and attracted 18,000 visits. There were 303 exhibitors, against the Edinburgh Section's 225.

177 Although it went unreported in the Edinburgh press. There were personal Edinburgh–Bristol

The Edinburgh Executive's acceptance of the idea of a Ladies' Section did not result in equality of treatment with the other Exhibition subcommittees. The Section was constituted as a separate sphere with its own organisational structure that avoided the need for direct representation on the Executive. Joint-convenership of the Section's Committee was bestowed on four aristocratic ladies. Lothian's consort the Marchioness Victoria and her sister-in-law Louisa, Duchess of Buccleuch, were the courtesy appointments required by aristocratic patronage; they played little part in the Section's development. The third convenership, that of Ishbel Gordon, Countess of Aberdeen, wife of the popular Liberal peer already appointed one of the Exhibition's vice-presidents, was another matter. Lady Aberdeen was a fervent Gladstonian Liberal with a record of Christian philanthropic activity, including job creation, amongst the tenants of her Haddo estates. Committed to women's organisation, her high profile in Edinburgh public life ensured her a place in the city's networks of female activism, most visibly as president of the EAUEW.¹⁷⁸ She took on the Section as a progressive project and actively involved herself in its organisation. In turn she recruited the fourth convener Hannah Rosebery, wife of the other Liberal aristocrat vice-president, who became another of its enthusiastic supporters.¹⁷⁹

Below the aristocratic conveners administrative responsibility for the Ladies' Section was assigned to two honorary secretaries, a position unknown to the other Exhibition Committees and one excluded from the Executive Council. One secretaryship was taken by Annie Harrison, daughter of Lord Provost George Harrison; the other was occupied by Christian Edington Guthrie Wright, 'whose labours in the cause of domestic economy are so well known in Edinburgh' and whose career illustrated the overlapping nature of Edinburgh women's organisations.¹⁸⁰ Guthrie Wright had been a member of Sarah Mair's Edinburgh Ladies' Debating Society; she had attended Masson's lectures to the forerunner of the EAUEW and became the Association's treasurer. She was best known as secretary of the Edinburgh School of Cookery, which she had founded in 1875. The School combined

connections: Jane Wellstood (above), for example, came from a Bristol Quaker background.

178 Ishbel Gordon, Lady Aberdeen, *Address to the Edinburgh Association for the University Education of Women*. (Edinburgh, 1885); For the Aberdeens see *We twa': reminiscences of Lord and Lady Aberdeen*. (London, 1925); Doris French Shackleton, *Ishbel and the Empire: A Biography of Lady Aberdeen*. (Toronto, 1988).

179 NRS GD40/9/492/1/6: Marchbank to Lothian, 04 Nov 1885.

180 *Cameron's Guide through the International Exhibition of Industry, Science, and Art*. (Edinburgh, 1886), p.9. Tom Begg, *The Excellent Women: The Origins and History of Queen Margaret College*. (Edinburgh, 1994), 'Wright, Christian Edington Guthrie (1844–1907)', ODNB.

philanthropy, in aiming to improve standards of cooking, and therefore of domestic comfort and working-class family life, with the opening up of careers for women as teachers of domestic science.¹⁸¹ The School had become a successful enterprise with well-appointed premises in Shandwick Place, and had diversified into teaching dressmaking and needlework. Guthrie Wright's skills as a manager made her an obvious choice to direct the running of the proposed Section.¹⁸²

Appointees to the Section's subcommittee included a contingent of wives and daughters of Executive members. Mrs Thomas Clark was joined amongst others by the wife of Lord Provost McOnie of Glasgow, Gowans's daughter Isabella, and Mrs John Methven, wife of the nurseryman.¹⁸³ But the Committee members also included other public figures in School Board member, educationalist and suffrage campaigner Flora Stevenson, a fellow-worker of Guthrie Brown in the EAUEW,¹⁸⁴ and Margaret Urquhart, one of the Association's vice-presidents.

In the establishment of a prestigious London Committee, the Section was able to demonstrate both the attraction of the idea of women's employment in upper-class philanthropic circles, and the reach of Aberdeen and Rosebery's social networks. Under the Presidency of Henrietta, Lady Hayter, a society hostess and wife of a junior Liberal minister, the six London Committee members included the philanthropist the Hon. Maude Stanley,¹⁸⁵ and Lady Harcourt and Mrs G.O. Trevelyan, both wives of prominent Liberal politicians. No other area of the Exhibition's organisation could demonstrate such connections to metropolitan circles of status and prestige.

The intentions of the then Ladies' Section became apparent in the report transmitted to the Executive in November 1885. The department was to be retitled the Women's Industries Section, and it was proposed '[t]hat the following rule be adopted, viz: As the main object of the section is to show the production of women following some line of

181 C.E. Guthrie Wright, 'Woman's Work, VI: Instructresses in Cookery', *Ladies' Edinburgh Magazine*, 2 (1876), pp.1–5.

182 For Thomas Clark's remarks, chairing the 1885 Cookery School A.G.M., on Guthrie Wright's 'extraordinary amount of common-sense and perseverance' see *Courant*, 06 Jun 1885, p.4.

183 Though these connections do not of course preclude activism: the Harrisons and the Methvens were examples of suffragist families.

184 Helen Corr, 'Stevenson, Flora Clift (1839–1905)', *ODNB*. Guthrie Wright was a member of the organising committee for Stevenson's School Board election; Stevenson's sister Louisa was treasurer of the Edinburgh School of Cookery.

185 Valerie Bonham, 'Stanley, Maude Alethea (1833–1915)', *ODNB*.

work as a serious pursuit, amateur work cannot be accepted'.¹⁸⁶ In their choice of title, in stressing the modernity of women's work and aspiring to a professional status for its presentation, the Edinburgh Women's Industries Section echoed exactly the activist concerns of the recent Bristol exhibition.¹⁸⁷ Further continuities of exhibitors and of underlying themes became apparent as the Exhibition progressed.

The correspondences between the Bristol and Edinburgh displays of Women's Industries can be taken to represent specific instances of the developing 'exhibitionary networks' identified by Alexander Geppert. For Geppert, the momentum of the exhibition movement was accompanied by the passage of exhibition professionals and the transmission of organisational techniques and visitor attractions between the events on the exhibition circuit. Geppert's great *fin-de-siècle* imperial exhibitions were characterised by a sameness that was the outcome of this linkage of personnel and ideas.¹⁸⁸ The smaller-scale British exhibitions of the 1880s were rooted in the specifics of their home cities, and their differences were noteworthy.¹⁸⁹ But familiar ingredients constituted a successful show. Electric lighting, machinery in motion and the electric railway and balloon ascents that had featured at the Forestry Exhibition became expected features. Innovations like the Edinburgh Artisans and Women's Industries Sections were advertised as novelties; success meant reproduction at subsequent events. The historic city exhibit was a prime example. Old Edinburgh was appropriated from South Kensington as the centrepiece of the 1886 Exhibition; its success spawned immediate imitators in Manchester and Newcastle and prefigured the attraction's career as a staple of future European events.¹⁹⁰

The drawback to the proliferation of exhibitions lay in the potential for competition between them for resources, exhibitors and visitors. The Edinburgh organisers were becoming aware that their Exhibition would share the summer with two other major events, the South Kensington Colonial and Indian Exhibition and the Liverpool Shipping Exhibition. Edinburgh projectors did their best to brush this opposition aside, or portray it

186 ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 02 Nov 1885.

187 '[A]ll the modern work ... in this Exhibition is done by women who make a profession of their pursuit, either for the arts' sake, or for the sake of earning a livelihood. No work is shewn done for recreation or amusement only', *Exhibition of Women's Industries, in Queens Villa, Queens Road, Bristol, 1885*. (Bristol, 1885), p.7, quoted Ferry, 'Novelty', p.52.

188 Alexander Geppert, *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*. (Basingstoke, 2010), pp.4–5, 240.

189 Patrick Geddes, *Industrial Exhibitions and Modern Progress*. (Edinburgh, 1887), pp.8–9; N.G.B., 'Edinburgh and Liverpool Exhibitions—1886', *Herald*, 27 Oct 1886, p.4.

190 Geppert, *Fleeting Cities*, p.52.

as positively beneficial: ‘the committee regarded the exhibition at Liverpool and the other exhibitions to be held next year as feeders to this Exhibition. Strangers coming to the country would take the opportunity of seeing the Scottish Exhibition’.¹⁹¹ However, a degree of apprehension was evident. Most immediately, there was a concern for domestic exhibitors: Clydeside shipbuilders, for example, might choose industrial imperatives over national loyalties, and concentrate their efforts in Liverpool rather than Edinburgh.¹⁹²

Of wider significance, the impending South Kensington show was a barrier to the colonial exhibitors that the Edinburgh organisers needed to attract in order to extend their event’s coverage. The Secretary of State for India declined the Executive’s invitation to support the Edinburgh Exhibition, citing explicitly the prior claims of the Colonial and Indian event.¹⁹³ Marchbank advised Lothian to fall back on more familiar networks: ‘as three of the Governors [of Indian provinces] (Lord Reay, Mr Grant Duff & Sir C. Aitchison) are all Scotsmen, they would likely take a great interest in the matter’. Despite Lothian’s lobbying, the India Office remained adamant that ‘with no wish at all to unduly favour London in preference to the Scottish capital ... [no] further charge for Exhibition purposes should be put upon the Indian Finances’.¹⁹⁴

Information was critical for the fledgling Exhibition organisers. Attempts were made to collect such basic documentation as the ground plans of comparable events, while Marchbank succeeded in amassing a noteworthy library of exhibition-related material.¹⁹⁵ In a more direct exercise in networking the organising Sub-Committee constituted a delegation to seek intelligence from the contemporary events in London and Antwerp.¹⁹⁶ At the South Kensington International Inventions Exhibition the delegates interviewed its secretary, Edward Cunliffe-Owen.¹⁹⁷ Cunliffe-Owen confirmed the potential for foreign visitors attracted initially to London for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, but was at the same

191 Walter Brodie at the 29 September General Committee meeting, *Herald*, 24 Oct 1885, p.7.

Conversely, this competition—and a possible resurgence of Glasgow ambitions—no doubt underlaid the rush to proceed with an 1886 date.

192 *Engineer*, 07 May 1886, p.350; *Scotsman*, 03 Jun 1886, p.5.

193 ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 02 Nov 1885.

194 NRS GD40/9/492/1/6: Marchbank to Lothian, 04 Nov 1885; NRS GD40/9/492/1/9: India Office to Lothian, 11 Nov 1885.

195 Acknowledged by Patrick Geddes, *Industrial Exhibitions*, p.iii.

196 Report appended to ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 17 Sep 1885. Subsequent details from this source.

197 Rather than the South Kensington eminence Sir Philip himself. Edward was his son-in-law, *Times*, 30 Dec 1918, p.2. See also *Pall Mall Gazette*, 30 Oct 1884, p.11.

time pessimistic about the competition for exhibitors. 'He was however doubtful, seeing that Foreign Governments have recently had to do with so many Exhibitions, that they would give much assistance in the way of appointing Commissions'.

The subsequent site tour had a more positive outcome. The Edinburgh team was conducted round the Exhibition and Old London by one of its Superintendents H.A. Hedley, a young South African who had officiated at the two previous South Kensington events. Hedley's responses to their detailed questioning about South Kensington organisation and finances impressed the delegation sufficiently for them immediately to offer him the post of Edinburgh manager. Despite his acerbic style Hedley's expertise and managerial skills as one of an emerging professional *cadre* would play a significant part in the success of the Edinburgh Exhibition.¹⁹⁸ The benefits of South Kensington experience were confirmed by the recruitment of Hedley's colleague Arthur Carey as Engineer to the Exhibition in January 1886.

The delegation's subsequent visit to the Antwerp *Exposition universelle* proved less productive.¹⁹⁹ Despite the scale of the event there was little evidence of official British presence or investment. More disappointingly, the Edinburgh delegates found that representatives of the Liverpool Exhibition had preceded them and had already appointed a Continental Agent to sign up European exhibitors. The Antwerp agent for British exhibitors was happy to distribute Edinburgh literature but 'mentioned that he would require a fee for his services, and that he had been appointed London Agent for the Liverpool Exhibition'. Most dramatically, the Liverpool organisers had purchased a substantial range of the Antwerp Exposition buildings for their own venture.²⁰⁰ A subsequent visit to Antwerp by Hedley and Methven resulted in the appointment of a Belgian Commission to the Edinburgh Exhibition. However, despite planned approaches 'to the governments of Norway, Sweden, Russia, France, Austria, Germany and Japan', Cunliffe-Owen's reservations were borne out and no other foreign government Commissions were forthcoming at Edinburgh.²⁰¹

198 For a view of Hedley as the irascible manager of the Glasgow Exhibitions of 1888 and 1901 see Alistair Goldsmith, 'Glasgow on Show and the Boys in Blue, 1888–1938', *History Today*, 47:2 (February 1997), pp.51–57. Obituary, *Herald*, 22 Dec 1911, p.7.

199 For the 1885 Antwerp Exposition see John E. Findling and Kimberly D. Pelle (eds.), *Historical Dictionary of World's Fairs and Expositions, 1851–1988*. (New York, 1990), pp.91–92.

200 In fact the shortcomings of the recycled buildings were held to be one of the reasons for the failure of the Liverpool exhibition, Steele and Benbough-Jackson, 'Civic Pride', pp.182–83.

201 ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 05 Nov 1885.

Closer to home, networking defined the organisation of the Exhibition. Actors in the web of interacting subcommittees performed in the style of Edinburgh's voluntary civil society, in turn reflecting the norms of middle-class associational culture.²⁰² Participation in the project combined the rewards of belonging, of working together in a common cause, with the opportunity to express that sense of civic duty, and of local—and national—patriotism that was such a conspicuous feature of this culture.²⁰³ The Exhibition Executive and its subcommittees interacted with the range of overlapping associations active in the male middle-class stratum of society from which they drew their membership. The comforts of membership of an identifiable community went with the expression of status. Ceremonial confraternities parading their historical roots—as the High Constables, the Incorporated Trades, or the upper-class Royal Archers—all occupied distinctive social spaces in Edinburgh's public sphere. All of them would play their parts in the Exhibition's ceremonials. Membership of organisations such as the Edinburgh Merchants' Association, originators of the Exhibition project, the Chamber of Commerce, now represented on the Exhibition Executive by its Chairman James Tod, and the boards of charitable foundations such as the Merchant Company whose Mastership Thomas Clark had occupied before his elevation to Lord Provost, again conferred status in varying degrees. Election to the Town Council combined the exercise of formal municipal power, and in the case of Bailiership the exercise of judgement over their fellow-citizens, with social position. Careers such as that of Kinloch Anderson, E.M.A. associate, Moderator of the High Constables, Liberal political activist, Town Councillor and supporter of the Exhibition demonstrated the connectivity inherent in public life.

This sociable immersion did not of course generally result in personal disadvantage. The benefits in business life of information sharing, personal contacts, and receipt and return of favours were powerful and obvious.²⁰⁴ The discreet dissemination of information had been, after all, the reason for the Edinburgh Merchants' Association's existence as a trade protection society. Although election to the Town Council could be seen as an opportunity for public service once a business career had been successfully established, the persistent accusations of jobbery in Council dealings—such as the *Scotsman's* aspersions on the activities of the Tramway Ring—indicated that opportunities for advantage were

202 R.J. Morris, 'Clubs, Societies and Associations', in F.M.L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain. Vol. 3, Social Agencies and Institutions*. (Cambridge, 1990), pp.406–16.

203 Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism*, chap.4.

204 Rodger, *Transformation*, pp.13–14.

available to networkers within its circles.

In the same way, if the Exhibition was to bring trade benefits it would do no harm for those members whose firms chose to exhibit there. Despite Hutchison's privately-expressed strictures that 'a hard and fast line should be laid down that no Exhibitor can occupy a position on the Executive', doubts on the legitimacy of this practice were never aired in public and such multiple roles were seen as unexceptionable.²⁰⁵ Even more dubiously, Councillor and Executive member Andrew Ritchie was awarded the contract for Temperance refreshments, part of which he immediately sublet. Limits were however set: James Park was denied the Superintendency of the Machinery Department 'and further, it was resolved that Members of Executive Council be not eligible to hold any salaried office in connection with the Exhibition'.²⁰⁶

Participation generally brought less tangible rewards which were nevertheless plainly important to the participants, no matter how self-important or pompous 'those bumptious gentlemen decorated with ribbon and gold medal' might seem to outsiders.²⁰⁷ Badges of office, real as well as figurative, were produced to be worn with pride: the Executive's gold brooches were considered worthy of emulation by Town Councillors themselves.²⁰⁸ The ceremonial dinners that punctuated the progress of the Exhibition provided a space within which the relationships and ritual of the voluntary association were performed and made visible. Details and participants, both members and distinguished guests, were itemised at length in press reports.²⁰⁹ The dinners were coded spatially with top table and other placements carefully laid out; and functionally, with the offices of president, croupiers, proposers and speakers conferring status for the evening. There were ritual observances in the shape of loyal toasts to the royal family, and to the armed forces and Volunteers, and

205 NRS GD40/9/492/2: Hutchison to Lothian, 21 Sep 1885.

206 ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 24 Dec 1885. It was claimed that Ritchie made a profit of £4,000 on his £1,260 investment, *Dispatch*, 16 Jun 1890 p.4.

207 One of the Crowd, *Dispatch*, 01 Oct 1886, p.2; cf. aspersions on 'the small people who find passing importance in these affairs', *Scotsman*, 19 Nov 1888, p.6.

208 18ct gold badges were minted for Executive members, ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 01 Apr 1886; for illustration see Scran, ref 000-100-103-013-C, accessed 21 Aug 2014. In response the Town Council, 'stirred up to emulation by the prominent display of "gold badges" on the breasts of the Executive Committee of the late Exhibition' commissioned their own, *Dispatch*, 22 Jan 1887, p.2; *Evening News*, 15 Jun 1886, p.4.

209 Executive Dinners were held: 17 Feb 1886; 21 May 1886 to mark the Exhibition opening; 19 Aug 1886 for the Queen's visit; 04 Nov 1886 for the Exhibition closing. The E.M.A. jubilee dinner 14 Jan 1886; the banquet for the Colonial delegates 25 Aug 1886; and the Exhibitors' dinner 28 Oct 1886 also figure here.

congratulatory speeches on the success of the enterprise. There was conviviality, with liberal provision of food—and drink, as the frequency of toasts suggested.²¹⁰ Entertainment was provided in the form of songs and other turns by the diners.



Illus 2-7 Male sociability: the Old Edinburgh Committee pose before their Mercat Cross, J.C. Dunlop sixth from left. Lockhart, *Ye Gilty Goddess*, NLS copy.

The clubability of the festive banquet is captured in accounts of the Executive dinner held in the Waterloo Hotel on 21 May 1886 to commemorate the opening of the Exhibition a fortnight before. The diners, flushed with success, were in a particularly convivial mood. The painter W.E. Lockhart, a member of the Fine Art Committee, recited as his contribution to the after-dinner diversion ‘an amusing rhyme’ mildly twitting some of his fellow revellers. Those twitted were so appreciative that they had the verse printed with Lockhart’s caricature portraits and circulated in a commemorative binding.²¹¹

Such very visible observances of sociability also demonstrated the boundaries around the Exhibition’s inner workings. Despite Kinloch Anderson’s rhetoric of the collaborative

210 The menu card for the Exhibition closing dinner, 04 Nov 1886, lists 18 toasts, NRS GD492/67: Sir Arthur Mitchell scrapbook, p.90.

211 *Scotsman*, 22 May 1886, p.9. The volume was issued as *Ye Gilty Goddess: A Doleful Ditty, By One of the Committee*. (Edinburgh, 1886). The pretext for the hilarity was the disintegration of the *carton-pierre* statue of Fame which had crowned the dome of the Great Hall of the Exhibition. For Lockhart see J.L. Caw, ‘Lockhart, William Ewart (1846–1900)’, rev. Margery A. Wilkins, *ODNB*.

basis of the Trade and the Executive's canvassing of artisan support, A.C. Telfer, Trades Council president and one of the Artisan Section co-conveners—and therefore the working-class representative on a body largely composed of employers of labour—was effectively frozen out of its deliberations: 'Mr Telfer, being a working man like themselves, could not attend the Executive sessions, which were held during the day'.²¹² Telfer was likewise excluded from the sociable bourgeois sphere of the Executive dinners. He would also be absent from Exhibition ceremonial events where William Martin, the Blind Asylum manager, instead guided celebrity visitors through the Artisan Section. The Executive also wished to preserve a suitable distance from the activists of the Women's Industries Section. The committee structure of the Section with its aristocratic lady joint-conveners and administrative honorary secretaries was engineered to preclude direct female representation on the Executive Council. The same principle applied to the Exhibition's ceremonial dinners: like so much of Edinburgh civic life their sociable observances remained a resolutely male affair. On these occasions it was inevitably left to a male proxy to reply to the toast 'to the [absent] Ladies'. Social inclusivity had its clearly prescribed limits.

Yet these limits in a sense define the character of the Exhibition project. It was originated by the small businessmen of the E.M.A., themselves deeply enmeshed in the overlapping memberships of a culture of ceremonial and sociable association. They were able to persuade more powerful members of these social networks of the merits of their proposal: a proposal which would add to the reputation not only of their Association, but benefit the city to which they, as local patriots, owed allegiance. Such bourgeois networks of voluntary association were hardly unique to Edinburgh: they have been identified by historians as among the defining features of the city states of Victorian Britain, and they undoubtedly figured in other great exhibition projects. On the other hand there are two reasons to propose the distinctiveness of Edinburgh's middle-class society. Firstly, its sheer weight of numbers: the predominance of the professions and administration, and the resulting structure of consumption and production gave the city its unique social character. Secondly, the national dimension: the very institutions that underlay this character also underpinned Edinburgh's status as a capital city, and the aspiration to national leadership of its ruling élites. This was demonstrated in the immediate appeal of the Exhibition organisers for national support.

Here the question of civic governance enters the discussion. The careers of Clark,

212 J.C. Mallinson quoted *Dispatch*, 22 Sep 1886, p.2. Telfer is recorded as having attended only one Executive Council meeting, ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 09 Nov 1885.

Kinloch Anderson, and Gowans demonstrate the blurriness of the boundary between voluntary action in civil society and municipal authority. The Exhibition may not initially have fitted in with Lord Provost Harrison's ideas of civic promotion: the more rarefied air of the Fisheries and Foretries was more to his taste. However, once agitation had built up, not least by the Exhibition supporters within the Council, municipal support followed in the form of financial backing and the gift of the Meadows site. The further development of the undertaking was nevertheless left to voluntary Edinburgh, in the expertise deployed in its web of specialised committees, in their sociable ceremonial observances, and in the inclusion, if problematic, of working-class organisation and women's activism. Despite the organisers' appeal for national support this remained largely an Edinburgh project: even after winning over Glasgow Town Council and establishing a Glasgow committee, Glasgow participation and financial backing was in reality minimal.

Lord Provost Clark's metaphor of the acorn and the oak seemed apt. In February 1886 he could look back with satisfaction over the year since the Dowie's Saloon meeting. In only twelve months the resources of Edinburgh society had been mobilised; organisation and finance for the Exhibition project were in place; and the Exhibition buildings were rising in the West Meadows. These buildings and their surrounding grounds were the physical manifestation of the undertaking; completed and fitted out, they embodied not only the organisers' concept of that undertaking, but also their image of the city itself. It is to these constructions of the Exhibition that the next chapter turns.

3. 'The marvellous Fairy Palace of Science and Art': building the Exhibition city

It became commonplace to describe the great exhibitions of the nineteenth century as cities within cities as they developed in size and complexity.¹ The ephemeral, spectacular and exotic space of the exhibition could be seen as possessing urban properties—streets, traffic, landmarks—which it shared with, but which also distinguished it from, its host community. It can be argued that this understanding of the exhibition as a miniature city is more than simply a pleasing figure of speech; it can provide insights into the organisation, characteristics and idiosyncrasies of particular events such as the Edinburgh Exhibition. The idea of the exhibition-as-city can focus attention on the literal production of exhibitionary space, its design, planning, architecture and construction. The exhibition's own physical presence and its infrastructural requirements can be taken as a reflection of, and comment on, the material development of its own host city, and in a more general sense on issues of nineteenth century urban materiality itself.²

To expand the metaphor, the great exhibitions can also be seen, as in James Gilbert's analysis of the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893, as 'perfect cities' whose construction embodies an ideal portrayal of their actual city by the individuals and groups involved in the exhibition's creation.³ For the exhibition was also an *exposition*⁴ of ideas and values, the arena for a discourse dominated by the holders of local power and framed by the ruling ideas of progress and improvement which the exhibition phenomenon exemplified. Through the creation of this perfect city, organisers could propose their vision of their own city as it was and as it could be.⁵ That vision of Edinburgh expressed in the Exhibition

1 Alexander Geppert, *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*. (Basingstoke, 2010), pp.221–240; Maurice Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity: Olympics and Expos in the Growth of Global Culture*. (London, 2000), p.45.

2 Chris Otter, 'Locating Matter: The Place of Materiality in Urban History', in Tony Bennett and Patrick Joyce (eds.), *Material Powers: Cultural Studies, History and the Material Turn*. (London, 2010).

3 James Gilbert, *Perfect Cities: Chicago's Utopias of 1893*. (Chicago, 1991); see also Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture*, (Toronto, 1997), p.233ff.

4 Professor Richard Rodger, in discussion.

5 There is an obvious consonance here with the idea of the exhibition as an arena for the exercise of hegemonic power, for example in Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876–1916*. (Chicago, 1984), Introduction; see

buildings and its grounds forms the subject of this chapter.

Once a site had been secured the Edinburgh Exhibition organisers could set about the physical realisation of their project, the construction of a striking but ephemeral range of buildings typical of great exhibition practice. The Exhibition city was assembled in the West Meadows with the speed and efficiency which distinguished the project's management. Its spatial organisation would reveal a city of spectacle, pomp and ceremonial, a city with space for artisans, for activist women, for industry—Edinburgh as a modern capital. The great exhibitions were festivals of modernity: a modernity realised at Edinburgh in the design and layout of the Exhibition buildings, and the incorporation within them of the staple attractions of large-scale working machinery and electric lighting installations.

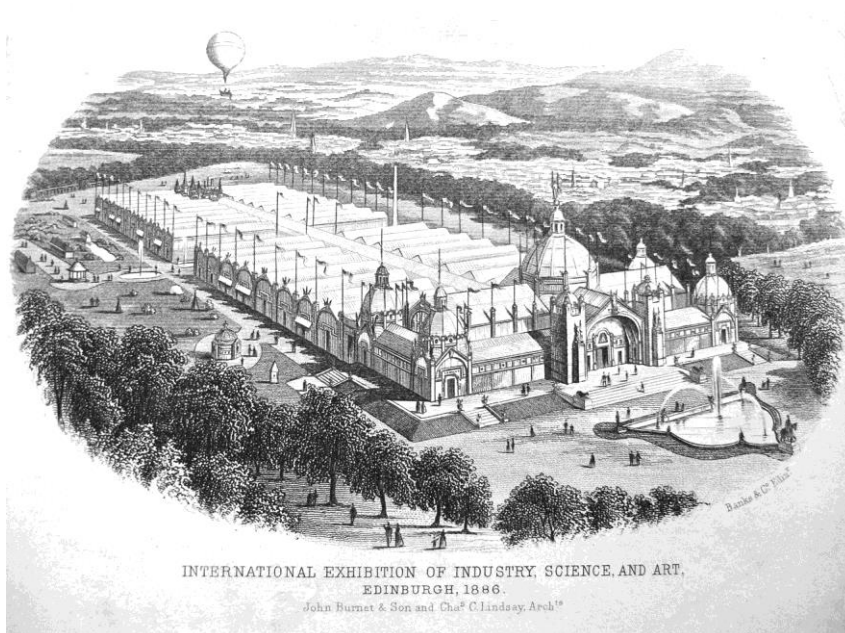
At the same time the Exhibition presented a contrasting view of civic history, mobilising Edinburgh's distinctive cultural and historical resources to assert the city's leading place in Scottish life and the Scottish nation. Symbolic references to Scottish history and nationhood pervaded the show and reached a climax in its centrepiece, the virtuoso reconstruction of Old Edinburgh. Old Edinburgh made material the city's claims to both a tumultuous past and the status of a national capital, expressed in the ruling liberal narrative of Scotland's presbyterian history. This representation of historical townscape however drew attention to the processes of decay and destruction in the real historical city, including the recent loss of many of the buildings represented. The ongoing processes of improvement and the continuing salience of housing as a public issue were demonstrated in Gowans's Model Tenement, intended as his personal statement of best practice in the provision of working-class housing. The interaction of the Exhibition's displays of modernity, historical townscape and housing improvement could only intrigue its most perceptive critic Patrick Geddes: Old Edinburgh, in particular, remained a source of inspiration for his view of the regenerated historic city.

Designing and building

With the grant of the West Meadows on 8 September 1885 decisions on the Exhibition buildings took on a new urgency. Little more than a week after the Town Council decision the organising Sub-Committee agreed to reject the ready-made solution offered by the purchase of the remaining Antwerp buildings and instead to promote an architectural

discussion in Roche, *Mega-Events*, pp.74–78.

competition of their own.⁶ Gowans, his fellow-contractor John Waddell, the engineer Allan Carter and the architect John McLachlan were delegated to oversee the process.⁷ Advertisements had appeared by the time of the General Committee meeting of 23 September.⁸ Less than three weeks later on 12 October the newly formed Executive Committee selected their preferred design from the twenty entries which had been forthcoming. The winners were the Glasgow team of John James Burnet, the rising star of the city's architectural profession, and the experienced engineer Charles C. Lindsay.⁹



Illus 3-1 The Exhibition buildings: Burnet & Lindsay's perspective view. ECA Acc.423/12

In his winning design Burnet combined flamboyance and spectacle in presentation with rationality and legibility in layout to produce a relatively small-scale but convincing example of an established building type, the exhibition complex. The scheme consisted of two parts. In the 'permanent' building Burnet envisaged a showy palace containing a lofty,

6 A wise move, given the difficulties the second-hand Antwerp buildings caused at Liverpool, p.97, n.200 above.

7 Demonstrating the specialist expertise available to the Sub-Committee: ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 17 Sep 1885. For Waddell, see *Scotsman*, 19 Jan 1888, p.5; Carter, *Scotsman*, 08 Sep 1921, p.4; McLachlan, *DSA*.

8 For example *Scotsman*, 21 Sep 1885, p.1.

9 *Scotsman*, 13 Oct 1885, p.4. For Burnet see *DSA*; and David Walker, 'Scotland and Paris, 1874–1887', in John Frew and David Jones (eds.), *Scotland and Europe: Architecture and Design 1850–1940*. (St Andrews, 1991); for Lindsay, *Scottish News*, 07 May 1886, p.4.

domed Grand Hall and flanking art galleries. Behind this Grand Pavilion lay a much more extensive complex of ‘temporary’ courts, covering six acres to the Pavilion’s one, where the great majority of the exhibits would be accommodated. The question of the buildings’ permanence or impermanence, later to cause so much public controversy, was initially a practical matter. Burnet and Lindsay’s temporary courts were of simple timber construction; after the Exhibition they would be demolished and the timber sold as scrap. The Grand Pavilion on the other hand, with its internal structure of steel roof beams and cast-iron supporting pillars and an exterior of rendered brick, glass and corrugated iron ‘may be easily removed to another site and can be altered to suit almost any possible purpose, without interfering with the general construction’.¹⁰

No doubt with Burnet’s Paris education in mind, Exhibition publicists claimed a resemblance between the Edinburgh Grand Pavilion and the *Palais de l’industrie* constructed for the 1855 Paris Exposition, a building with which he would have been familiar.¹¹ A similarity with the main building of the 1878 Exposition has also been discerned.¹² In fact there was no very great likeness between Burnet’s 1886 Pavilion and these examples of the Parisian tradition of sophisticated exhibition-hall engineering.¹³ Of the two winners of the Edinburgh competition it was the engineer Charles Lindsay who had more direct experience of work on exhibition structures. He had been responsible for the erection of the Albert Palace in Battersea, completed in 1884 and itself an example of demountable exhibition architecture: it was composed largely of the remnants of the Dublin International Exhibition building of 1865.¹⁴

The most obvious models for the 1886 buildings lay elsewhere in London’s exhibition history. Captain Francis Fowke’s design for the ill-fated London International Exhibition of

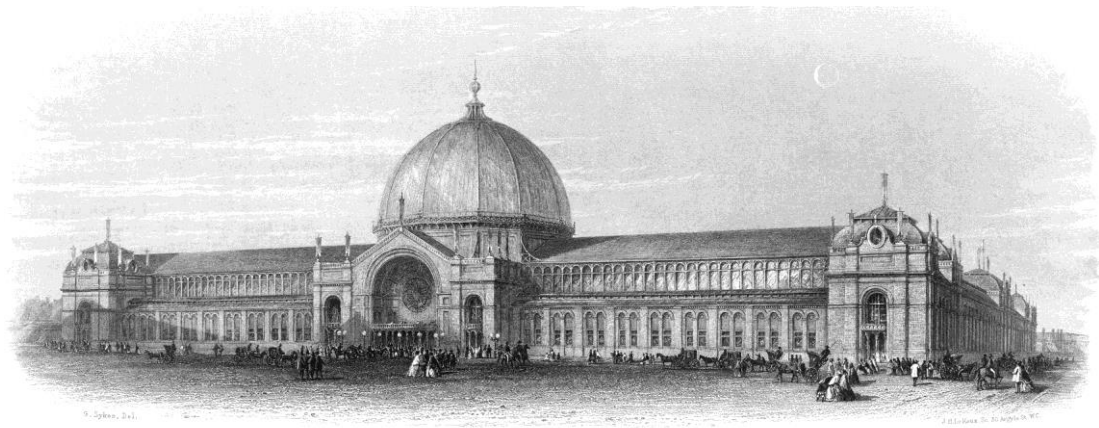
10 ECA Acc.423/12: John Burnet & Son and Charles C. Lindsay, [Report] *To the Committee of the International Industrial Exhibition, Edinburgh*, p.2. This was apparently a requirement of the brief, Gowans, quoted *Edinburgh Evening News*, 23 Sep 1885, p.3.

11 *Cameron’s Guide through the International Exhibition of Industry, Science, and Art*. (Edinburgh, 1886), p.13. Burnet studied in Paris 1872–77, *DSA*. The *Palais de l’Industrie* stood until 1897 when it was replaced by the *Grand* and *Petit Palais* of the 1900 Exposition.

12 Walker, ‘Scotland and Paris’, p.30.

13 Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition*. (Cambridge, Mass, 1956), pp.253–73, places the buildings of the Paris Expositions in a history of avant-garde ferro-vitreous construction. See also Wolfgang Friebe, *Buildings of the World Exhibitions*. (Leipzig, 1985), pp.33–37.

14 *Glasgow Herald*, 29 Apr 1886, p.5; *Engineer*, 23 May 1884, p.386; John Allwood, *The Great Exhibitions*. (London, 1977), p.51.



Illus 3-2 Fowke’s 1862 London International Exhibition building, west façade. Hollingshead, *Concise History of the International Exhibition of 1862*, fp.127

1862 was based on a self-supporting structural framework incorporating two gigantic domes—each ‘comparable in size to the dome of St Peter’s in Rome’¹⁵—enclosed in a utilitarian brick shell. The 1862 building aroused vociferous criticism of ‘the wretched “shed” that was the Fowke version of the Paxton Crystal Palace’,¹⁶ and was ignominiously demolished at the close of its Exhibition. Detailed descriptions were however published.¹⁷ Though much smaller and more decorative in appearance, in organisation at least Burnet’s much later Edinburgh design bears a striking resemblance to some views of Fowke’s 1862 building.¹⁸ The internal structure too resembled Fowke’s, with the substitution of the newly available material of rolled steel for his timber roof-ribs.¹⁹

The timber construction of Burnet and Lindsay’s temporary courts certainly owed everything to South Kensington practice. The 1862 Exhibition building, large as it was, was extended by annexes built using a prefabricated timber truss developed by Fowke. In contrast to the excoriating reviews of the ‘permanent’ building, this simple design—‘all

15 Betty Bradford, ‘The Brick Palace of 1862’, *Architectural Review*, 132 (July 1962), p.20 and *passim*; F.H.W. Sheppard (ed.), *The Museums Area of South Kensington and Westminster (Survey of London, Volume 38)*. (London, 1975), pp.137–147.

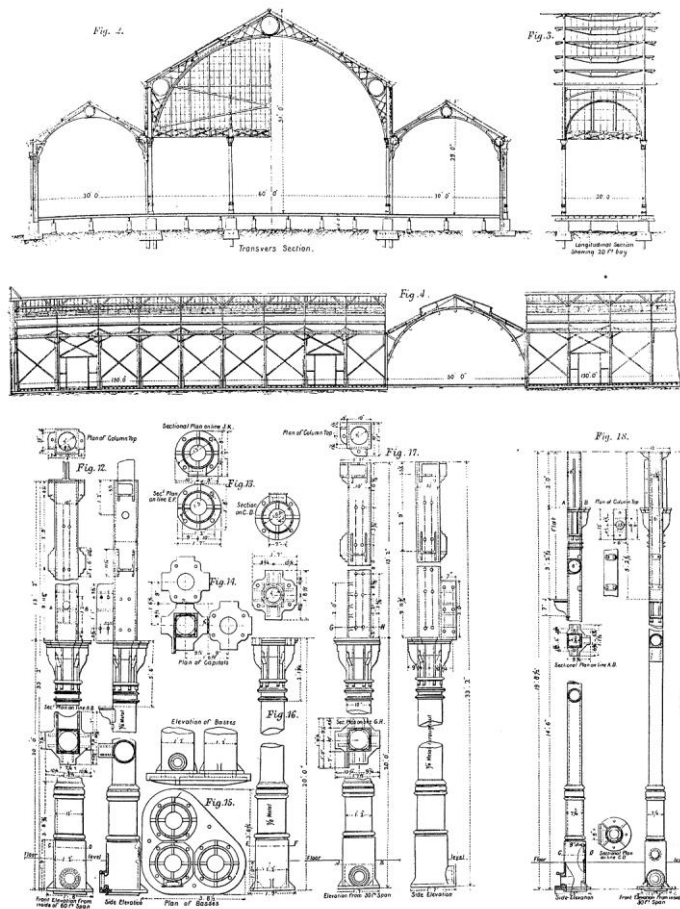
16 *The ‘Art Journal’ Illustrated Catalogue of the International Exhibition, 1862*. (London, 1862), p.xii; see also Bradford, ‘Brick Palace’, pp.20–21.

17 For example Robert Mallet (ed.), *The Record of the International Exhibition, 1862*. (Glasgow, 1862), pp.33–55.

18 See also elevation drawing reproduced Allwood, *Great Exhibitions*, pp.36–37.

19 Cf. Fowke’s Industrial Museum, Chambers Street, Edinburgh: timber beams on cast-iron pillars, though dome-less. Designed 1861, main block completed 1875, *BoSE*, pp.186–87; Carla Yanni, *Nature’s Museums: Victorian Science and the Architecture of Display*. (London, 1999), chap.4.

framed work, without any joinery’—won critical approval: ‘The vista’d interior of his cheaply built machinery annexe ... was widely praised as the best feature of the building’.²⁰



Illus 3-3 Constructional details: Lindsay's iron- and steelwork, with (centre) the temporary timber courts with the South Kensington pattern truss. *Engineering*, 22 Oct 1886

More than twenty years later, the unambitious architects of the 1883 London Fisheries Exhibition took the still-surviving machinery annexe as a prototype for the range of ‘light and elegant, though simple, buildings ... covering a very large area successfully at a low cost’ which housed this and the subsequent South Kensington exhibitions of the 1880s.²¹ The economy and efficiency of the design made it an obvious choice for other temporary

20 International Exhibition of 1862 (London), *Some Account of the Buildings Designed by Francis Fowke, Capt. R.E. for the International Exhibition of 1862*. (London, 1861), p.16; Sheppard (ed.), *Museums Area*, p.141; see illus, Bradford, ‘Brick Palace’, p.16.

21 *Engineering* 04 May 1883, p.411–12, and illus; Sheppard (ed.), *Museums Area*, p.132. Fashionable spectacle resided at South Kensington in the extravagance of exhibits and in outside effects such as fountains and electrical lighting, rather than these very utilitarian structures. Nothing could be further from the tradition of the Crystal Palace—or the French expo buildings.

exhibition structures. Morham had used it for the galleries of the Forestry Exhibition,²² and Burnet and Lindsay now followed. That simple modular construction underpinned the logical and legible disposition of their exhibition courts.

With the design selected, and the plans formally approved by Gowans in his role of Lord Dean of Guild,²³ construction could commence. A ‘vigorous beginning’ was made by enclosing the public parkland of the West Meadows behind a high hoarding, the perimeter which defined the Exhibition grounds.²⁴ Within this stockade work proceeded ‘with scarcely a day’s intermission with the greatest energy and pluck through one of the severest winters experienced for the last fifty years’.²⁵ In the bitter weather the Exhibition provided employment for Edinburgh’s building trades, a tangible example of the benefits to the city’s depressed economy which its projectors, among them Lord Provost Clark, had predicted:

the Exhibition had started at a season when everything was very dull, and it had afforded employment to upwards of 500 men, representing two or three thousand individuals ... They might understand what would have been the condition of the city if these men had been added to the number of unemployed at the present time.

On the same platform, Gowans commended the undertaking as ‘a blink of sunshine that would dispel the murky cloud that had been hanging over the country for so many years’.²⁶ The effects on employment seemed to support this enthusiasm: ‘In many parts of the town money has been circulating with greater freedom than for some time past’.²⁷ Speedy progress provided further cause for optimism. The contractors—Arrol Brothers of Glasgow for the iron and steel work, and local builders Robert Shillinglaw for the structure of the Grand Pavilion and William Beattie for the extensive timber construction of the temporary courts—completed their work on time with, as Gowans put it, ‘not a broken finger’ occurring by way of injury.²⁸

22 See p.41 above.

23 ECA L17G Box355.1: Edinburgh Dean of Guild Court Records, Interim warrant 29 Oct 1885, approved 03 Dec 1885.

24 *Scotsman*, 27 Oct 1885, p.4.

25 *Engineering*, 19 Nov 1886, p.520. Adverse weather included severe snowstorms in March 1886.

26 Both quoted *Scotsman*, 17 Feb 1886, p.8.

27 *Scottish News*, 05 May 1886, p.3. Another, later review was more nuanced: ‘The erection of the Exhibition buildings caused a good deal of work, but many tradesmen, attracted by this, came from towns at a distance’, *Evening News*, 24 Dec 1886, p.2.

28 *Daily Review*, 29 Apr 1886, p.2; for Arrol Brothers (*not* William Arrol & Co, contractors for the Forth Bridge) see *Glasgow of To-day, the Metropolis of the North*. (London, 1888), p.258. The utility of South Kensington construction was demonstrated by Beattie’s early completion and

In constructing their city the Exhibition contractors had nevertheless wreaked havoc on the blank plain of the West Meadows. Timber piles were driven twelve feet through the soft infill to find the solid clay of the original loch bed; cast iron columns were secured on concrete foundations, and ‘thick beds’ of concrete provided a base for heavy machinery and exhibits. Buried pipework provided the infrastructure essential to the networked Victorian city. Miles of water pipe met the needs of drinking, cooking and sanitation, serviced elaborate fire precautions, and powered the hydraulic organ pumps. Connections to the Meadows’ drainage sewer enabled the disposal of waste. A three-inch main supplied gas to ovens, stoves, and demonstration engines. A thousand feet of high-pressure pipe supplied steam from six boilers to the prime movers of the Machinery Department. In time, the miniature city would generate its own electricity, house its own fire brigade and police services, handle its own postal and telephone communications, and print its own news in the form of Constable’s daily programme, produced on the premises.²⁹

Through the Palace and its grounds

The public space of the West Meadows had been appropriated for the Exhibition’s use. To fix the boundary of this new reservation, the contractors’ hoardings were replaced with a purpose-built fence designed by Burnet. Besides its utilitarian function of keeping out the unauthorised public the fence served as another source of Exhibition revenue: its 340 8ft by 6ft panels were let out as advertising space.³⁰ Three gates controlled access to the Exhibition grounds.³¹ Within the perimeter, the grassy plain had been transformed into a Victorian pleasure ground, an echo of Kemp’s project to make a conventional park out of the featureless Meadows. Gravel paths transected a landscape in which the Exhibition’s outside

resulting bonus, *Engineering*, 19 Nov 1886, p.520. Beattie had been the contractor for the (wooden) Forestry Exhibition buildings, Hugh Robert Mill and John Rattray (eds.), *Forestry and Forest Products: Prize Essays of the Edinburgh International Forestry Exhibition, 1884*. (Edinburgh, 1885), p.xvii.

29 International Exhibition of Industry, Science, and Art, *Daily Programme*. (Edinburgh, 1886). The National Telephone Company operated a line to Glasgow from the Exhibition, *Scotsman*, 07 May 1886, p.5. For the Post Office, see *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, 17 Apr 1886, p.2.

30 Burnet and Lindsay, [Report], p.4; Advertisement, *Scotsman*, 13 Jan 1886, p.1. The hoarding generated £740 in income, Exhibition Accounts, ECA Acc.423/13: Exhibition Association Minutes, 28 Dec 1887.

31 These were: the Grand Entrance at the west, facing Brougham Street; the College Entrance from the NE, marked by an elaborate cast-iron gateway from the Grahamston Iron Company and the Grange Entrance from the SE, International Exhibition of Industry, Science, and Art, *Official Catalogue*. (Edinburgh, 1886), Complimentary List.



Illus 3-4 Exhibition buildings from the southwest, showing the Grand Pavilion façade.,
ECL yT570.1886: Cowan Scrapbook

structures—refreshment rooms and kiosks,³² and the external exhibits—were placed amidst re-laid lawns and ornamental shrubberies and flower beds. The ornamental lochans and entrance fountain featured in Burnet’s original plans were however abandoned, victims of the Meadows’ recalcitrant hydrology;³³ though a rockery with waterfall and fountains was erected in the north Garden Court. The groupings of trees and shrubs included exotic specimens of globally sourced plant varieties, in which fashionable Japanese species were particularly conspicuous. Just as at the Forestry Exhibition, the grounds formed a demonstration garden for Edinburgh’s nurserymen and horticultural suppliers, one of the luxury trades catering to the city’s affluent—and plant-loving—upper classes.³⁴ Here, as there, the nurseryman John Methven played a key role as an Executive member of both Exhibitions, as convener of the Grounds Committee, and through his family firm as one of the major horticultural exhibitors.³⁵

Burnet’s building, ‘the marvellous Fairy Palace of Science and Art, which has sprung

32 Amongst which Van Houten’s cocoa stall from the Antwerp Exhibition stood out, a ‘rather ornamental-looking Chinese or Japanese pagoda, done in bright colours’, *Dispatch*, 29 Mar 1886, p.4.

33 *Edinburgh Courant*, 14 Jan 1886, p.4.

34 *Scotsman*, 14 Jun 1886, p.4. ‘Nowhere in the kingdom are there so many nurseries in one locality’, John Croumbie Brown, *The Schools of Forestry in Europe*. (Edinburgh, 1877), p.71.

35 Methven later became president of the Scottish Arboricultural Society, *Scotsman*, 26 May 1913, p.6.

up, as if by the rubbing of a magician’s lamp, in the West Meadow’, was set down in this pleasure ground.³⁶ Negotiating the Grand Entrance and passing John Rhind’s celebratory statue of Victoria, ‘a faithful likeness of the Queen’s winsome countenance in her younger and happier days’,³⁷ the Exhibition visitor was confronted by the Grand Pavilion. Raised on a plinth above ground level and the level of the temporary courts behind, its effect was spectacular. From the corner domes with their Beaux-Arts decoration, along the somewhat blank side walls the eye was drawn to the central massing: ‘The arched façade and recessed screen flanked by massive towers, with the great dome rising above, is the grand “motif” of the front, the centre of which is the grand entrance’; and it was this façade which became the Exhibition’s defining logotype, to be repeated endlessly on prints and souvenirs.³⁸



Illus 3-5 Façade as logo: from the Caledonian/LNWR commemorative timetable. NLS Acc.10222: Bartholomew archive

The rhetoric of allegorical and classically themed statuary asserted the building’s significance. Groups representing Science and Art adorned the flanking pillars: ‘Holding in her uplifted right hand a flaming torch, and resting her left on the tiller of a helm, Science is shown giving light and guidance to the world’.³⁹ A colossal Minerva graced the gable arch;

36 *Dispatch*, 18 Aug 1886, p.2. The following walk through the Exhibition buildings is informed by Nick Prior’s reading of the National Gallery of Scotland, *Museums and Modernity: Art Galleries and the Making of Modern Culture*. (Oxford, 2002), chap.6: ‘The visitor, here, is inscribed in a web of sequenced spaces and arrangements of sounds, colours and objects that provides a “stage set”, shaping the visit according to dominant aesthetic and social interests’ (p.171).

37 *North British Daily Mail*, 08 May 1886.

38 *Engineering*, 19 Nov 1886, p.520.

39 *Scotsman*, 24 Apr 1886, pp.6–7. Sculpted by the brothers D.W. and W. Grant Stephenson

figures of Prometheus and Bacchus decorated the main entrance; while above the doorway itself a representation of 'Edina receiving Homage from Science and Art' lent symbolic weight to the enterprise.⁴⁰ Statues of the national poets Burns and Tannahill flanked the entrance doors, and panels in the Grand Pavilion walls reproduced the arms of Scottish municipalities.⁴¹

Despite its spectacular appearance the Grand Pavilion, the 'Permanent Building', was constructed from materials which favoured rapidity of construction and economy over durability, in keeping with the transient nature of the Exhibition project and in contrast to the solidity of traditional Edinburgh building. Widespread use was made of plastic materials. A render of roughcast plaster concealed the building's brick walls and the façade's timber towers.⁴² Sculpture was executed in plaster or artificial stone rather than more permanent materials: the twelve foot high gilded *carton-pierre* figure of Fame which crowned the dome, a legacy of the Antwerp Exhibition, fell apart within a few days of the exhibition's opening.⁴³ Granolithic, a fine concrete of granite particles in Portland cement developed by the Edinburgh-based entrepreneur Peter Stuart, was prominently used in the ornamentation of the entrance doorway for its Corinthian pillars and surmounting vases and its lintel and supports.⁴⁴

Entry into the Pavilion itself was similarly impressive. After ascending a flight of wide granolithic steps the exhibition-goer crossed a tiled pavement depicting 'Cupid holding a ribbon bearing the word "Caledonia"' to pass through the massive panelled doors of oriental padawak wood, the gift of the contractor Shillinglaw from timber exhibited at the

respectively.

40 *Engineering* 04 Jun 1886, p.540. By T.S. Burnett. Cf. 'France crowning Art and Industry' on the *Palais de l'Industrie*, Palissy database <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/documentation/memoire/HTML/IVR11/IM92001527/index.htm>, accessed 28 May 2014.

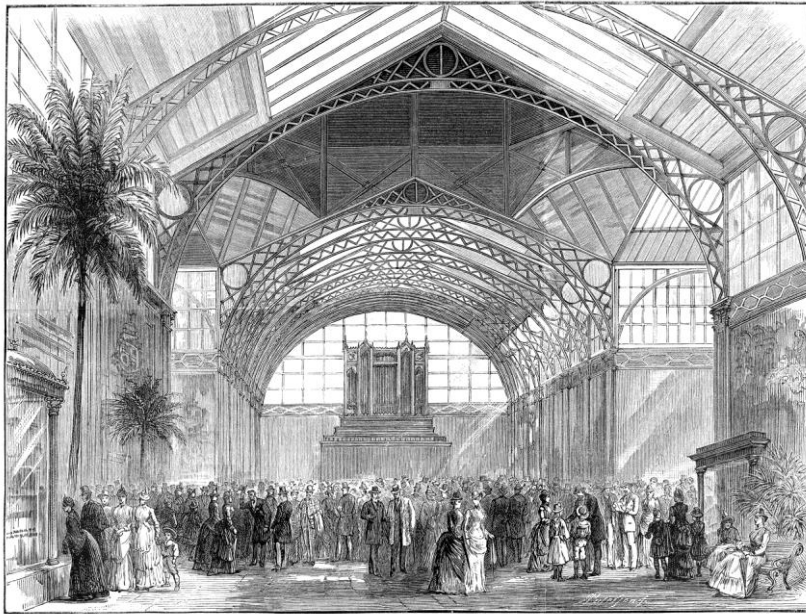
41 Burns and Tannahill, again by the Stevensons, from originals sited in Paisley and Kilmarnock, *Builder*, 31 Jul 1886, p.177.

42 The shell of the Permanent Building was however made considerably more permanent by the substitution of brick walling for the timber-and-plaster construction originally specified, *Courant*, 22 Jan 1886, p.4.

43 *Scotsman*, 24 Apr 1886, pp.6–7, *Dispatch*, 14 May 1886, p.3. Fame's arm, with trumpet, fell into the Grand Hall. No-one was hurt but the statue was removed. The incident provoked Lockhart's *Gilby Goddess* skit, p.100 above.

44 '[T]his material bids fair to be much use to the builder', *Builder*, 08 May 1886, p.674; *Building News*, 25 Jun 1886, p.1028. For Stuart's career to date see *Scottish News*, 11 May 1886, p.7; his business success is evidence of the adoption of labour-saving construction techniques. Andrew Wright, 'Early Portland Cement: Its Use and Influence on Architectural Design', *Architectural Heritage*, 22:1 (November 2011), pp.99–114.

Forestry Exhibition.⁴⁵ The visitor now entered the most prestigious of the Exhibition's interior spaces. The Grand Hall, the nave of the permanent building, was designed as a performance space for music and ceremonial, able to accommodate an audience of 9,000.⁴⁶



THE ENTRANCE-HALL TO THE EXHIBITION.

Illus 3-6 Inside the Grand Hall, looking south to Bishop's organ. *Illustrated London News*, 08 May 1886, p.512

It measured 260 feet in length by 60 wide. Lindsay's cast-iron columns and steel beams carried the roof fifty-five feet above, rising to one hundred feet under the central dome. Light flooded in from high-level glass windows and rooflights. The Hall's south wall was dominated by the Grand Organ provided by Bishop and Son of London.⁴⁷ On the north wall hung Fernand Cormon's twenty-five foot square canvas 'The Age of Stone', an unexpected loan from the French Government: 'a white elephant', but one which provided

45 For the significance of the threshold see Prior, *Museums and Modernity*, p.180. Shillinglaw was chosen by the Indian Government to prepare timber exhibits for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, a prestige appointment. The entrance doors were decorated with electro-bronze panels by Shirreffs of Glasgow depicting the history of the Exhibition, *Scotsman*, 17 Mar 1886, p.6. The tiled pavement was by Field & Allan, *Building News*, 23 Apr 1886, p.686.

46 International Exhibition of Industry, Science, and Art, *Official Guide to the Exhibition*. (Edinburgh, 1886), p.7. Various figures were given for the Hall's capacity.

47 'Blown by two of Bamford's Patent Hydraulic Engines' (*Official Catalogue, Complimentary List*). Bishop supplied organs to most major exhibitions of the period.

some official recognition of the Exhibition's international status.⁴⁸ The spectator's attention was however inevitably drawn to the largest piece of sculpture in the Exhibition, W. Grant Stevenson's seventeen-foot statue of William Wallace positioned immediately opposite the Hall entrance.⁴⁹

The Grand Hall was surrounded by another series of élite spaces, the suite of top-lit art galleries finished like the Grand Hall in appropriately muted tones of green and brown: 'A dull, aesthetic tone characterises the whole appearance of the galleries and hall'.⁵⁰ Here the decoration expressed the privileged status of the objects to be displayed within. 'Massive cornices of painted wood' surmounted an ornamental frieze, 'with festoons in bas-relief'.⁵¹ Security for this superior class of exhibit had been designed into the building:

It is proposed to occupy [the Grand Hall] with all the finer and more costly class of exhibits ... displayed on stalls along the walls, and if necessary in the centre of the floor; oil paintings, water colours, sculpture, drawings, &c., occupying the Galleries. By thus occupying the permanent and more fireproof building, we may meet the objections of artists and collectors to their works and possessions being in danger by proximity to machinery, etc.⁵²

Gowans himself emphasised the care with which works of art would be accommodated:

As to the Art Gallery, he could assure their artist friends that the building would be perfectly dry, and that no harm need be feared to their valuable pictures. They would neither "sky" nor "floor" their pictures, for they had 16,000 or 18,000 feet of space which they could devote to that department.⁵³

From the splendour of the Grand Hall on its elevated plinth the visitor descended into the temporary courts where most exhibits were accommodated. Here too Burnet's design allowed for spectacular interior architectural effects. A Central Court, the Exhibition's grand avenue, formed an unbroken 750-foot thoroughfare linking the anchor attractions of the

48 *Dispatch*, 17 May 1886, p.4. The painting was later exhibited at the 1889 Paris Exposition, Maria P. Gindhart, 'A pinacothèque préhistorique for the Musée des antiquités nationales in Saint-Germain-en-Laye', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 19:1 (May 2007), p.58. For image see Artstor ref ART302267, accessed 27 Jun 2012.

49 Winner of the John Steill Bequest competition for an Aberdeen Wallace statue: 'The Wallace Statue at Aberdeen', *Art Journal*. (November 1885), p.335; *Scotsman*, 27 Jun 1888, p.7.

50 *Daily Review*, 06 Apr 1886, p.4.

51 *Daily Review*, 17 Mar 1886, p.2.

52 Burnet and Lindsay, [*Report*], p.3.

53 *Scotsman*, 17 Feb 1886, p.8.

Grand Hall and the historical reconstruction of Old Edinburgh.⁵⁴ From this central street thirty-four side courts opened off to north and south. In its unfinished state the lightness and openness of the timber construction based on the modular fifty-foot South Kensington truss exposed attractive prospects: ‘the vision wanders amid a forest of pillars and diagonals, which enchantingly lengthen the vista, and make the place look really larger than it is’.⁵⁵ Observers fancied a resemblance between this and another quintessentially modern building type: ‘At present, when empty and without illumination, [the Central Court] gives one the idea of a long, glass-roofed railway station—such as, for example, one sees at York’.⁵⁶

With the regular layout of their temporary courts Burnet and Lindsay had set out to correct the deficiency they detected in previous exhibition planning: ‘hitherto ... visitors have found it extremely difficult either to know where they were or to find their way from space belonging to one country or class of objects to that belonging to any other’.⁵⁷ In contrast to the labyrinthine South Kensington buildings, which grew more complicated with each annual exhibition, the Edinburgh designers had contrived a model of legibility where orientation was facilitated by reference to the unifying Central Court.

The plan may thus be grasped almost at a glance. The visitor is not liable to the sense of bewilderment which is apt to overcome one when threading the labyrinths of a great exhibition. Any one who has the misfortune to lose himself has no difficulty in making his way back to the central court, where he is at once on the great highway of the building.⁵⁸

This legibility could only echo the rectangularity and comprehensibility of modern city design, exemplified in the grid defining the commercial heart of Edinburgh’s New Town.⁵⁹

54 Cf. anchor attractions in shopping mall design: Fabian Faurholt Csaba and Søren Askegaard, ‘Malls and the Orchestration of the Shopping Experience in a Historical Perspective’, *Advances in Consumer Research*, 26:1 (January 1999), pp.34–35.

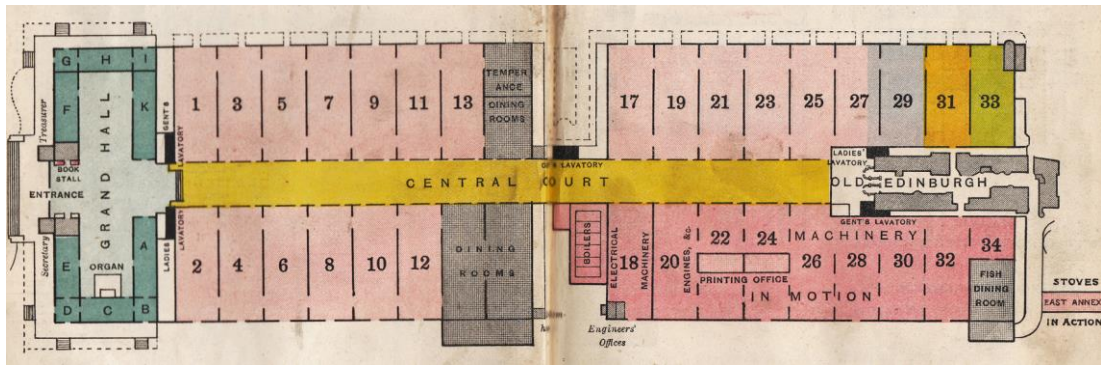
55 *Evening News*, 04 Jan 1886, p.2

56 *Herald*, 03 Feb 1886, p.9. For ‘the first non-space’ of the railway station see R.J. Morris, ‘New Spaces for Scotland, 1800 to 1900’, in Graeme Morton and Trevor Griffiths (eds.), *History of Everyday Life in Scotland, 1800 to 1900*. (Edinburgh, 2010), pp.243–47.

57 Burnet and Lindsay, [Report], p.2.

58 ‘The Edinburgh International Exhibition’, *Saturday Review*, 62:1607 (August 1886), p.216.

59 For urban legibility see Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City*. (Cambridge, Mass, 1960).



Illus 3-7 Plan of the Exhibition buildings. *Official Catalogue*, pp.10–11. Foreign exhibits (blue), Court 29; Artisan Section (orange), Court 31; Women’s Industries (green), Court 33

Burnet and Lindsay’s courts had to be populated with exhibits in an arrangement which, ideally, would be as legible and comprehensible as the buildings’ spatial organisation. The precedent set by universal exhibitions from 1851 onwards suggested a classification scheme: an attempt to reduce the complexity of the world of things to a linear ordering by which ‘everything can be known as long as it has its place within an all-embracing system’.⁶⁰ An exhibition classification was an *a priori* artifact, a manifesto for the event’s universality. Lyon Playfair’s empirical schedule of thirty classes for the Great Exhibition set a precedent which was followed for its 1862 London sequel.⁶¹ Frédéric Le Play, Director of the 1867 Paris Exposition took a more cerebral approach by developing a scheme expressed spatially along the two axes of content and national origin, by which ‘[t]he collections were arranged more admirably than in any previous or perhaps subsequent exhibition’, according to his admirer Patrick Geddes.⁶² The system was developed for the 1878 Exposition and a recognisable form of the Le Play schedules was used for the Antwerp Exhibition of 1885.⁶³

60 Caroline Terryn on the positivistic thrill of classification, ‘From Elite Fair to Mass Medium: Exhibitors and Visitors at the Antwerp World Exhibitions’, in Mandy Nauwelaerts (ed.), *De panoramische droom: Antwerpen en de wereldtentoonstellingen, 1885, 1894, 1930*. (Antwerp, 1993), p.77. The Philadelphia Centennial scheme reputedly inspired Melvil Dewey’s universal library classification: John Maass, *The Glorious Enterprise: The Centennial Exhibition of 1876*. (New York, 1973), p.114.

61 Jeffrey A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display*. (New Haven, 1999), pp.92–93; Thomas A. Markus, *Buildings and Power: Freedom and Control in the Origin of Modern Building Types*. (London, 1993), pp.222–24.

62 Patrick Geddes, *Industrial Exhibitions and Modern Progress*. (Edinburgh, 1887), p.4. For Le Play and the Paris Expositions see Allwood, *Great Exhibitions*, pp.35, 42–43; Luckhurst, *The Story of Exhibitions*, pp.132–33, 141, although Luckhurst attributes the 1867 scheme to Prince Napoléon.

63 René Corneli and Pierre Mussely, *Anvers et l’Exposition universelle, 1885*. (Brussels, 1885), pp.K–L.

The 1885 South Kensington Inventions Exhibition also used an existing classification, an unwieldy adaptation of the Patent Office scheme which produced a bewildering total of 165 classes in 34 groups.⁶⁴

Into this problematic area stepped the Edinburgh organisers. A Classification Committee was formed in June 1885, and immediately sought expert assistance from the recently appointed Director of the Museum of Science and Art Colonel Robert Murdoch Smith and its Curator Alexander Galletly: this was the first involvement of the Museum in the Exhibition project since Thomas Archer's untimely death in 1884.⁶⁵ Drafting obviously proved difficult. Translation into French and German was not authorised by the Sub-Committee until 10 September, and Gowans was still calling for revisions after that date.⁶⁶ The outcome of the deliberations only faintly echoed the issues which had troubled the classifiers of London or Paris. Industries or their products were to be represented by thirteen classes, each further subdivided.⁶⁷ Classes ranged from the relatively specific 'Pottery, Glass, and Kindred Industries', through the general 'Animal and Vegetable Substances and Their Manufacture', to the overly inclusive 'Civil and Military Engineering, Building, Construction, Shipbuilding'. Edinburgh specialisms—'Paper Manufacture, Stationery, Printing, and Bookbinding', 'Scientific Appliances' and 'Educational Appliances'—were awarded classes to themselves. Three of the Exhibition's specialist departments—Fine Arts, Old Edinburgh, and Women's Industries—were also given their own classes,⁶⁸ although the Artisan Section was entirely omitted. And 'Foreign Exhibits', however defined, were not to be classified at all but corralled together in their own, unnumbered division.⁶⁹

64 International Inventions Exhibition, *Official Catalogue*. (London, 1885), p.xii.

65 ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 19 Jun 1885. George Stronach, 'Smith, Sir Robert Murdoch (1835–1900)', rev. Roger T. Stearn, *ODNB*. He later served on the Exhibition's Jury Commission.

66 ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 10 Sep 1885; 14 Sep 1885.

67 *Official Catalogue*, pp.22–23. The subdivisions may have been intended as a guide to prospective exhibitors; they were not used within the Exhibition itself.

68 Though 'Ladies Work' remained as an anomalous subdivision of Class IV 'Animal and Vegetable Substances'.

69 The carefully elaborated classifications of the more international of great exhibitions frequently applied only to home exhibits. For 1851 see James Buzard, 'Conflicting Cartographies: Globalism, Nationalism and the Crystal Palace Floor Plan', in James Buzard, Joseph W. Childers, and Eileen Gillooly (eds.), *Victorian Prism: Refractions of the Crystal Palace*. (Charlottesville, 2007), pp.40–52.

I	Minerals, Mining, Quarrying, and Metallurgy
II	Pottery, Glass, and Kindred Industries
II	Chemistry, Pharmacy, and Food
IV	Animal and Vegetable Substances, and their Manufacture
V	Paper Manufacture, Stationery, Printing, and Bookbinding
VI	Prime Movers
VII	Manufactures in Metal
VIII	Railway, Tramway, and Vehicular Appliances
IX	Civil and Military Engineering, Building, Construction, Shipbuilding
X	Furniture and Decoration
XI	Scientific Appliances
XII	Educational Appliances
XIII	Sea Industries
XIV	Fine Arts
XV	Reproductions of Old Buildings, or Old Streets, or Portions of these
XVI	Women's Industries Section

Table 3-1 Exhibition main classes. Source: *Official Catalogue*, pp.22–23

The difficulties of situating prospective exhibits in all their variety within this structure of classes and of mapping the classes onto the geography of Burnet's temporary courts were obvious though hardly unprecedented.⁷⁰ A form of zoning underlay the basic arrangement. The Grand Hall was reserved for prestige objects; the Central Court would feature a range of spectacular displays. The courts to the north of this central avenue were notionally set aside for lighter industries and more artistic pursuits; these included the specialist Women's Industries and Artisan Sections and the Foreign Exhibits. The southern courts featured heavy industries and their products and housed the extensive Machinery in Motion department.⁷¹

This zoning, and an apparently arbitrary assignation of classes to courts within it, produced little consonance between the classification sequence and the succession of Exhibition spaces. The boundaries of the classes themselves also created puzzling ambiguities. The definition of 'Scientific Appliances' allowed for the inclusion of gas stoves, kitchen ranges, water boilers and domestic lamps. 'Chemistry, Pharmacy and Food', the largest division of the scheme, was drawn so that whisky bottlers and biscuit manufacturers shared one court with a presentation of 'Sulphate of Ammonia, Crude Oil, [and] Naphtha',

⁷⁰ See Auerbach, *Great Exhibition*, pp.94–95 on similar problems in 1851.

⁷¹ Unmentioned in the Classification except as an annexe to Class VI, Prime Movers.

a display of lead ores, and a nine-and-a-half ton trophy alum crystal.⁷² ‘Sea Industries’, the smallest class, on the other hand included only a subset of relevant exhibits: ‘the most gigantic branch of them is classed with concrete mantelpieces, house building materials, water, gas, and sewage pipes’.⁷³

Disregarding the vagaries of classification, objects on display would reveal themselves more serendipitously through the choice of routes through the Exhibition available to the visitor. The configuration of the buildings suggested a natural progression over the threshold into the elite space of the Grand Hall, down through the Central Court, visiting the general courts to right and left, but drawn towards the anchor of Old Edinburgh and the other attractions positioned around it: the Machinery Hall, the Foreign Exhibits, and the Artisan and Women’s Industries Sections. Processional routes for distinguished guests generally involved stately progress along this track, taking in the lavish reception rooms fitted out by Edinburgh decorators for such visitors.⁷⁴

However Burnet’s design had created a layout of permeable interconnected spaces which allowed movement between adjacent courts and from each court to the outside grounds, thereby providing a profusion of routes by which the Exhibition could be explored. From the Grand Pavilion the *Official Guide* conducted the visitor from room to room through the southern courts to the Machinery Hall, through a side entrance into Old Edinburgh and back up the Central Court, to return again by court to court on the northern side to the Women’s Industries Section and thence to the open-air exhibits: an exhaustive (and exhausting) attempt to do the Exhibition in a single visit.⁷⁵ Less disciplined visitors could negotiate ‘a shallow spatial structure’ of the type which Thomas Markus discerns in the original Crystal Palace.

There is a vast number of routes that can be chosen—a very weak programme—which maximises the probability of chance encounters between visitors and exhibits. ... It was nearer to the bird’s eye experience of the panorama than to the sequential programme of a museum.⁷⁶

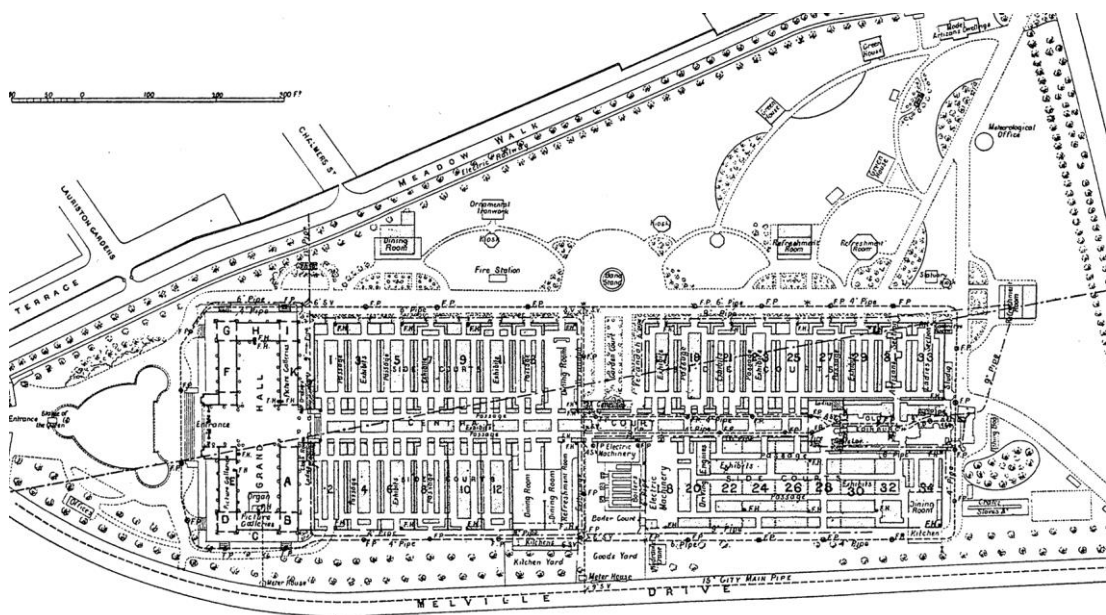
72 *Official Catalogue* listing, Court 25.

73 *Dispatch*, 25 May 1886, p.2.

74 Cf. the ‘Royal Route’—a reference to Scottish tourism branding—taken by the Marquis Tseng, the Chinese diplomat. *Scotsman*, 25 May 1886, p.5.

75 *Official Guide*, *passim*.

76 Markus, *Buildings and Power*, p.226; cf. the visitor’s ‘ceremonial procession’ through the Louvre, Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, ‘The Universal Survey Museum’, *Art History*, 3:4 (December 1980), p.458, cited in Prior, *Museums and Modernity*, p.186.



Illus 3-8 Multiple paths: the building and grounds. *Engineering*, 04 Jun 1886, p.539

The promenader was free to wander at will, catalogue or guidebook in hand, through a landscape of courts, departments, classes, exhibits, and the outside world of the Exhibition grounds.

Machinery in Motion

The Exhibition's largest single department was given over to Machinery in Motion. Seven of the modular exhibition courts had been opened out to form a demonstration machine hall. With this arena for the display of working industrial equipment the Edinburgh organisers provided what had become an expected feature, one that encapsulated the ideals of technological advance and its physical manifestation which were central to the concept of the large-scale exhibition.⁷⁷ The extent of such displays had become one of the measures of an exhibition's ambition, and a factor in the competition between events. In a friendly review of the Edinburgh Exhibition the 13,000 square feet set aside for Machinery in Motion 'is considerably greater than the accommodation afforded at the Inventories [the South Kensington Inventions Exhibition of 1885], and there is reason to believe that the display, taken as a whole, will prove even more attractive than the London Exhibition'; but the size and sophistication of the Edinburgh machine hall would be compared not only

⁷⁷ Auerbach, *Great Exhibition*, p.104 for working machinery in 1851.

with London, but with those of Antwerp and, concurrently, Liverpool as well.⁷⁸

Under the supervision of Arthur Carey, the Engineer recruited from South Kensington, the all-important power transmission system—four 270-foot lines of longitudinal shafting—had been erected by the family firm of William Bertram of the Executive Council and Machinery Committee. G.&W. Bertram also supplied one of their horizontal compound steam engines, buffed and polished to an Exhibition sheen, as one of the sources of motive power. ‘The engine is beautifully finished in every respect, and deservedly attracts great attention in the Exhibition’.⁷⁹ Designed to power the firm’s specialist papermaking machinery, Bertram’s engine here turned the shafting which drove spinning frames, power-looms and other textile equipment, and the array of printing plant with its centrepiece: Constable’s Exhibition Printing Office (#1236) turning out the Exhibition catalogue, the Official Guides, daily programmes, and other Exhibition-related publications.⁸⁰ A second presentation-standard engine, the vertical Corliss machine from the Kirkcaldy engineers Douglas and Grant,⁸¹ supplied power to the remaining two shafts serving manufacturers of confectionery, cocoa and coffee, and for the range of six fully operational bakeries.

In the open yet congested space of the machine hall the viewer was encouraged to observe the workings of modern industrial production at close quarters: ‘the visitor feels ... as if he were in a gigantic factory. He is literally in a world of factories’.⁸² Four corridors ran the length of the hall through the working exhibits but in practice there was once again a multitude of possible routes by which the landscape of spectacularly functioning machines could be explored. Even the *Official Guide* struggled to thread a coherent path: ‘Proceeding westward, and keeping with the north most passage, down which he some time ago found his way, the visitor passes ...’⁸³ Spatial layout was not the only source of confusion. Onlookers vicariously experienced the assault on the senses which characterised Victorian

78 *Scotsman*, 02 Mar 1886, p.5. The Manchester 1887 *Official Catalogue*. (Manchester, 1887), gives different (and less flattering) Machinery Department figures: South Kensington (Colonial & Indian): 25,000ft²; Liverpool: 45,000ft²; Edinburgh: 17,000ft².

79 *Engineer*, 11 Jun 1886, p.467, illus.

80 Constable’s, under the management of Walter Biggar Blaikie, had paid £1,210 for the printing and bookstall concessions. The day-to-day running of the concession is detailed in NLS Ms.23508-09: T.&A. Constable correspondence.

81 *Engineer*, 02 Jul 1886, p.6, illus p.10.

82 *Dispatch*, 29 May 1886, p.2.

83 *Official Guide*, p.18.

technology. The visual workings of the steam engine and its moving parts led the eye to the transmission of power by Bertram's overhead shafting, pulleys and belts. The noise of the machinery and the smell of steam and oil allowed the spectator an impression of the overwhelming sensations of mechanised industry. The theatre for the display of technology, with all its sights, sounds and smells, could become a confusing labyrinth.

Burnet and Lindsay's geographical positioning of Machinery in Motion within the Exhibition complex reflected a desire to isolate this potentially disruptive section. Amongst the major 'faults' of previous exhibitions they had identified

[t]he fact that the Machinery Department was always included in the same Building as the general objects of Exhibits, an arrangement which, from the noise and smell of the hot oil, was unpleasant to the general mass of visitors.⁸⁴

In fact, many of the great universal exhibitions had erected physically separate machine halls, and Burnet and Lindsay, operating within a smaller compass, had failed to solve the problem they had set themselves: the Edinburgh machinery section was inextricably part of a larger building complex. However, their insistence that 'those not specially interested need not pass through the noise and smell of the Machine Department' betrayed a hesitancy about its attraction.⁸⁵

For all Machinery in Motion's centrality to the vision of industrial progress, and despite the organisers' investment in space and plant, there were plainly degrees of enthusiasm about the spectacle of production.

To one unaccustomed to machinery, the noise which it makes as well as the great heat experienced when the weather is mild, will detract somewhat from the pleasure experienced in looking at them [*sic*]. Unless the visitor is of a stolid nature, and apt in mathematics, the din of the machinery, combined with the swift movement of wheels and belting, are apt to confuse and affect the head ... There is, however, something very fascinating about machinery. Most people delight in seeing a machine going, even though they do not understand the movements.⁸⁶

The attempt to segregate Machinery in Motion can be taken also as a recognition that this was to be an Edinburgh exhibition, where fine art, history, craft and consumption would be emphasised.⁸⁷ While the machine hall was undoubtedly a spectacular and impressive feature

84 Burnet and Lindsay, [*Report*], p.1

85 Burnet and Lindsay, [*Report*], p.2.

86 *North British Advertiser & Ladies' Journal*, 12 Jun 1886.

87 Cf. Patrick Geddes's comments, p.164 below.

of the Exhibition, insistence on its marginality recalled Edinburgh's elite characterisation of the city as a bourgeois capital rather than a seat of industry.⁸⁸ In the perfect Exhibition city, as in the real one surrounding it, manufacturing production could be ignored if so desired.

The electric light

The Exhibition's installation of electric lighting was not just a utility servicing the exhibition city, but an application of modern technology as spectacle which provoked awe and delight in its visitors. By the early 1880s lighting had become established as the principal application of electricity. Arc lighting technology had stabilised to the extent that it could be used more or less reliably for the illumination of large spaces, in lighting streets, railway stations, or construction sites.⁸⁹

These public uses had been tested in Edinburgh. A temporary installation of arc lighting on Princes Street and the North Bridge in 1881 was abandoned after a few months: 'during the trial [the lamps] flickered so horribly and were so unreliable and unsatisfactory that they were all removed'.⁹⁰ The arc lights installed at the same time in Waverley Station however continued in service. Even when working as designed, arc lighting was harsh and uncontrollable: for the first time in technological history, an illuminant produced too much light rather than too little.⁹¹ The recent development of practical incandescent lamps offered some alternative;⁹² their lower intensity, to the point of feebleness, and gentler character opened up a range of more flexible uses. There was, however, little flexibility in electricity supply: apart from a handful of London examples, all British electrical installations were self-contained, with their own generating equipment.⁹³ Lacking a transmission mechanism electricity was not, as yet, a networked utility like water or gas: the

88 Rebecca Madgin and Richard Rodger, 'Inspiring Capital? Deconstructing Myths and Reconstructing Urban Environments, Edinburgh, 1860–2010', *Urban History*, 40:03 (2013), pp.508–10.

89 Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Disenchanted Night: The Industrialization of Light in the Nineteenth Century*. (Berkeley, 1995), pp.114–27; Chris Otter, *The Victorian Eye: A Political History of Light and Vision in Britain, 1800–1910*. (Chicago, 2008), chap.2 on light and Victorian urban reform, and pp.177–82 on the imperfections of 1880s electric lighting technology.

90 D.A. Small, *Through Memory's Window: Edinburgh 1860–1927*. (Edinburgh, 1928), p.19.

91 Schivelbusch, *Disenchanted Night*, p.120.

92 Edison's first British patent was granted in 1879; the Edison-Swan Company was formed by merger in 1883. Brian Bowers, *A History of Electric Light and Power*. (London, 1982), chap.8.

93 Charles Singer (ed.), *A History of Technology: Volume V, the Late Nineteenth Century c.1850 to c.1900*. (Oxford, 1958), p.197; Otter, *Victorian Eye*, p.214.

process of generation—novel, local, and to a large extent visible—was inextricably associated with use.⁹⁴

The electric light had grown up with exhibitions. The rapid advance of electrical engineering was displayed and publicised at specialised electrical shows, which themselves demonstrated the potential of the exhibition medium to encourage innovation and the transfer of technology. Electrical exhibitions were held in Paris in 1881, dominated by Edison's system, in London also in 1881, Munich in 1882, Vienna, and London again, in 1883 and in Philadelphia in 1884.⁹⁵ But the spectacular possibilities of lighting by electricity rapidly found a place amongst the attractions which more general exhibitions could offer:

the electric light ... it may be frankly admitted, owes more to the Exhibition craze than to any other influence whatsoever ... it may be doubted whether the [South Kensington Exhibition site] would have proved half so attractive in the evening time, and consequently not nearly so profitable as a place of amusement, had it not been for its decorative splendours of illumination, to which the electric light so readily lends itself.⁹⁶

These South Kensington decorative splendours were crowned by the illuminated fountains and lighting effects directed by Sir Francis Bolton.⁹⁷ On a much less ambitious scale, the organisers of the Forestry Exhibition had felt moved to provide promenades under electric light for their Edinburgh clientele. Electric lighting had become an expected part of the repertoire of exhibitionary effects: like the extent of Machinery in Motion, the scale and sophistication of their lighting installations distinguished competing events. And with the growing maturity of the industry, the financial basis had shifted from the donation of facilities by suppliers anxious for free publicity, to more straightforward commercial terms.⁹⁸

94 Incandescent technology made domestic electric lighting feasible, but only for large mansions with their own generation facilities: Robert Hammond, *The Electric Light in Our Homes*. (London, 1884). The Anglo-American Brush Company's similarly titled penny pamphlet 'The Electric Light in Our Houses', was distributed at the Edinburgh Exhibition: *Official Catalogue*, p.237; K.G. Beauchamp, *Exhibiting Electricity*. (London, 1997), p.147.

95 Beauchamp, *Exhibiting Electricity*, chap.9; see also p.160 for 'the first appearance of [Swan] lamps at a public exhibition' in Glasgow in 1880, cf. Royal Philosophical Society of Glasgow, *Reports Relative to Exhibition of Apparatus for the Utilization of Gas, Electricity, &c.* (Glasgow, 1882).

96 *Electrician*, 29 Oct 1886, p.512.

97 *Engineer*, 28 May 1886, pp.412–14; R.H. Vetch, 'Bolton, Sir Francis John (1831–1887)', rev. James Lunt, ODNB. For electrical effects generally see David E. Nye, 'Electrifying Expositions, 1880–1939', in Robert Rydell and Nancy Gwinn (eds.), *Fair Representations: World's Fairs and the Modern World*. (Amsterdam, 1994), pp.140–156.

98 *Engineering*, 24 Dec 1886, pp.634–35, details South Kensington contracts; *St James's Gazette*,

The contracts for electric lighting at the Edinburgh Exhibition were awarded to five suppliers, the intention being to demonstrating the merits of the different systems competitively, ‘affording the means for a six months’ crucial comparison’.⁹⁹ The chosen contractors revealed the global nature of the new technology. The Anglo-American Brush Corporation, a London-based subsidiary of Charles Brush’s Cleveland Ohio enterprise, was already known in Edinburgh for the Princes Street experiment and for lighting Waverley Station and the Forestry Exhibition. They were joined by Gülcher & Co, also of London but Austrian in origin, the Glasgow firm of Richard Miller demonstrating the American Thomson-Houston system, and another Glasgow firm, J.D.F. Andrews, lighting the machinery hall with arc lamps of their own design. Finally, King, Brown and Co of Edinburgh, Executive member A.B. Brown’s electrical subsidiary, was responsible for an extensive installation of more than 1600 Swan-Edison incandescents.¹⁰⁰ While the award of multiple contracts was a common arrangement which would have minimised the risk of under-performance by a single contractor, by this stage of the rapidly maturing technology few observers could distinguish one supplier from another:

the lights are supplied by five different firms of makers whose systems differ from one another only in points of detail. To the public, there are only two systems apparent—that of the arc lamp and that of the incandescent lamp.¹⁰¹

Adjacent to the Machinery in Motion department, a separate court housed the generators which formed an integral part of the spectacle of the electric light. In an installation of a type now almost standard in exhibition provision, twelve specialised steam engines drove a total of thirty dynamos belonging to the various lighting contractors. In movement the apparatus offered the same pleasures as the neighbouring display of working machines. Arrol Brothers, contractors for the steelwork of the Grand Pavilion, had donated one of their bridges as an observation platform to allow spectators a closer look while avoiding the potential dangers of the new medium: ‘it is prudent to keep well clear of the dynamos’.¹⁰²

13 Nov 1886, p.13, gives costs as: Fisheries [1883] £10,500, though facilities were provided ‘free’ by suppliers; Health £21,000; Inventions £37,000. The Edinburgh 1886 Exhibition Accounts list only £6,800 for electric lighting.

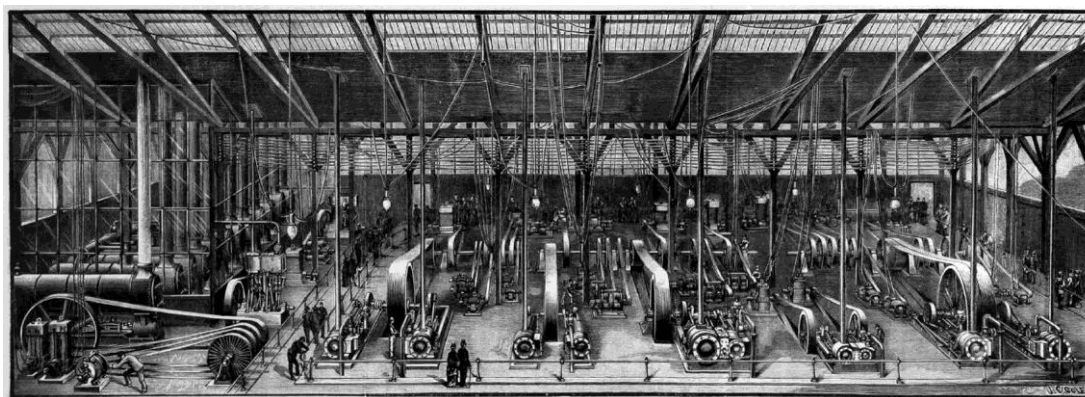
99 *Engineer*, 11 Jun 1886, p.467.

100 Brown also sat on the Decoration and Lighting and the Machinery Committees; as exhibitors King, Brown (#575) showed electrical applications for ships. See *Electrician* 17 May 1886, p.17; and 11 Jun 1886, p.85, for detailed descriptions of the Edinburgh lighting installations.

101 *Saturday Review*, 62:1607 (August 1886), p.217.

102 *Cameron’s Guide*, p.43. An attendant had been electrocuted at the Health Exhibition two years

Generation as spectacle emphasised the fugitive presence of electricity. The lights came on only when steam was up and the dynamos were whirring; generation required the visible and laborious input of mechanical power.



Illus 3-9 Contemporary generating shed at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition. *Engineer*, 14 May 1886, p.373

The outcome was declared to be the most complete and effective application of electric lighting to date—certainly in Scotland, and perhaps in Britain:

the system of installations of electric lighting apparatus now in operation at the International Exhibition is the most extensive in comparison with the space to be lighted that has ever been seen. The displays at the recent Exhibitions in London were brilliant, but they have been fairly eclipsed by what has been done in Edinburgh.¹⁰³

The novelty of the new light source outweighed any objections to its properties, though the typical harshness of the arc lamps lighting the Grand Hall, art galleries and exhibition courts—‘the somewhat ghastly effect produced by the white light’—was deplored by some observers.¹⁰⁴ In the Central Court, King, Brown’s 1,424 incandescents had a more pleasing effect. Following South Kensington practice, the bulbs were fixed to the spear-points of the Fowke timber trusses to form a long archway of light which spectacularly emphasised the corridor’s length: ‘Let the spectator stand in the grand hail of the permanent building and look along the corridor. He has before him a stretch of 750 feet, the semi-circular roof of which is one long tunnel of golden light’.¹⁰⁵

previously, *Builder*, 04 Oct 1884, p.475, though this was an industrial accident.

103 *Herald*, 08 May 1886, p.6; see also *Engineer*, 11 Jun 1886, p.467, for a (congratulatory) London view.

104 *Builder*, 31 Jul 1886, p.177.

105 *Herald*, 08 May 1886, p.6; again echoed in *Engineer*, 11 Jun 1886, p.469. Cf. criticism of the

Outside on the North Promenade coloured incandescents in festoons provided a festive background for evening strollers, with ‘fluted tulip shades’ tinted in red, blue and yellow: ‘The colours have been so arranged to give the onlooker the idea of long bands of colours running the length of the promenade, and forming, as it were, a sort of colour roof to the promenade’.¹⁰⁶ While vastly more extensive and complete than the Forestry Exhibition, the 1886 installation included nothing as brilliant as the South Kensington fountains.¹⁰⁷ However, the brilliant illumination of the Exhibition interiors, the *coup de théâtre* of the instantaneous illumination as dusk fell, the colourful outdoor promenades, and, later, the integration of the electric light into firework displays, all served to elicit wonder and pleasure from the spectacle of electricity.

Symbols of nationhood

The places set for the Machinery Department and the electrical installations were to be expected: these were the products of modern industry and technology which defined the exhibition as a genre. But beside these universalistic manifestations of progress, and at times overwhelming them, the Edinburgh Exhibition adopted a much more particular tone: a rhetoric of Scottish nationhood expressed in the display of symbolic and historic objects. This display reflected the protestation of Scottish loyalties and the objection to London centralism of Hutchison’s ‘Scotch Kensington’ project, or of Lothian’s convenership of the campaigning meeting for the Scottish Secretaryship. It embodied the municipal patriotism of Edinburgh bourgeois civil society which had motivated the Edinburgh Merchants’ Association to initiate the project, and which inspired the rhetoric of Council leaders such as Clark and Gowans and justified Council programmes of civic development and promotion. And it recalled the missionary efforts of the Exhibition organisers to enlist the support of municipal Scotland as guarantors of, and participators in, the undertaking.¹⁰⁸

The Exhibition project had assumed the character of a Scottish national enterprise. If the universal exhibition, in South Kensington practice at least, had been supplanted by the themed event, the theme of the Edinburgh Exhibition could be taken to be Scottishness

South Kensington incandescents, *Engineering*, 24 Dec 1886, p.635: ‘The experience of the [Colonial and Indian] Exhibition shows that the arc lamp is the proper means of illumination for large spaces’.

106 *Evening News*, 19 Apr 1886, p.2; *Herald*, 08 May 1886, p.6.

107 Although the fountain and cascade in the north Garden Court were later illuminated by electricity: *Dispatch*, 09 Aug 1886, p.3; 14 Aug 1886, advertisement p.1.

108 See p.62ff above.

itself:

It would be difficult to conceive any more perfect means of instructing a foreigner in the habits and pursuits of Scotchmen in their native land than a visit to this Exhibition, so full is it with everything tending to reflect the national life.¹⁰⁹

And central to this exposition of the national life lay Edinburgh's place as the nation's capital. No less a figure than W.E. Gladstone himself situated the Exhibition project in this context. On 23 November 1885 at the unveiling of the restored Mercat Cross—his gift to the city, the work of the young Edinburgh architect Sydney Mitchell—Gladstone praised the forthcoming Exhibition as a reinforcement of the city's historic and civic status:

I am very glad whenever I hear that Edinburgh is going to discharge any of the functions of a capital. No more gross or stupid mistake could possibly be made than to have the idea that Scotland had ceased to value her own nationality. She is conscious of it, and is ready to assert it on every appropriate occasion, to any length circumstances may require. One cannot help a little feeling that ... Edinburgh is to some extent shorn of the privilege and prerogatives she once enjoyed and highly valued; and I am glad whenever she is able judiciously to assert her position as the capital of the country.¹¹⁰

Thus the Exhibition, like the city itself, represented the nation.

Symbols of Scottishness were unavoidable. In the riot of allegory on the Grand Pavilion's façade Edina presided over the burgh shields of municipal Scotland; the representations of the national poets were associated with their places of origin, Burns's statue from Ayr and Tannahill's from Paisley. Within the grandeur of the Grand Hall the scale and presence of Stevenson's colossal statue fleshed out the cult of Wallace; Wallace, the key figure in unionist-nationalist discourse, whose struggle had guaranteed Scotland's independence and thus equality within the Union.¹¹¹ Wallace shared the ceremonial space with other relics of resistance: 'the ancient pennon said to have been taken by the men of Jedburgh from the English at Bannockburn'; and the English flag allegedly carried off by Selkirk men from the disastrous field of Flodden.¹¹²

109 *Black's Guide to Edinburgh, the International Exhibition and the Environs*. (Edinburgh, 1886), p.x.

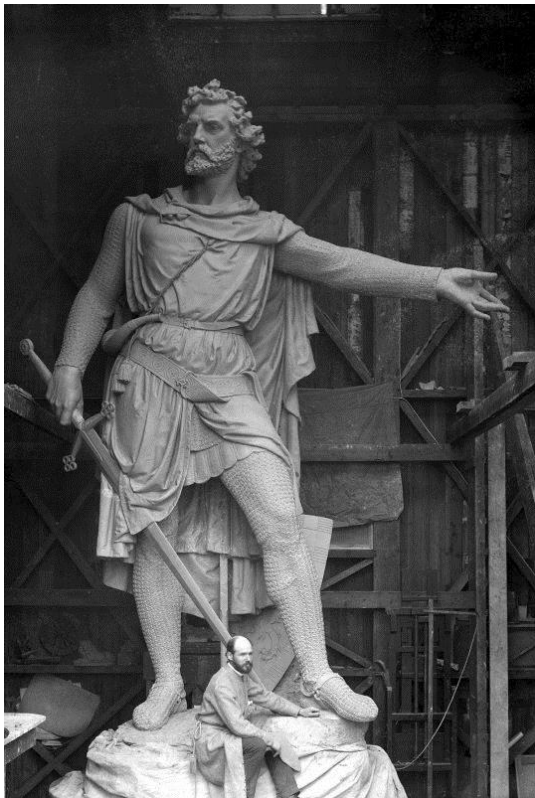
110 *Scotsman*, 24 Nov 1885, p.5. See p.30ff above for international exhibitions as attributes of capital cities.

111 Graeme Morton, 'The Most Efficacious Patriot: The Heritage of William Wallace in Nineteenth-Century Scotland', *Scottish Historical Review*, 77:2 (October 1998), pp.224–51.

112 For the Jedburgh banner, obtained at Lothian's request, see *Scotsman*, 05 May 1886, p.6; *Official Catalogue*, Complimentary List, for the Selkirk flag. A replica of the Blue Blanket, another Flodden relic and the totemic banner of the Incorporated Trades, was displayed in Old

These trophies were complemented by the show of antiquities mounted by Marshall & Sons of George Street, ‘Goldsmiths to the Queen’ (#623). Together with historic artifacts such as the regalia of the Royal Company of Archers ‘dating back three centuries’ Marshalls had assembled a comprehensive display of Scottish Church communion cups, relics of the nation’s Presbyterian traditions which could only invite a patriotic response:

For do they [the cups] not carry the mind back to the time when there was but one King and one Church in Scotland; and are they not silent but eloquent witnesses to the struggles maintained for freedom during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, of which none can speak but with feelings of emotion and pride? ¹¹³



Illus 3-10 W. Grant Stevenson with the final cast version of his Wallace. RCAHMS

The sense of history embodied in antiquarian objects could evoke such strong national sentiments. However, the Exhibition included an even more spectacular evocation of the historic nation. If, as Gladstone had proclaimed, Edinburgh as a modern capital embodied the nation then in Old Edinburgh the Exhibition organisers had themselves constructed a representation of the historic city which would stand not only for the capital, but also for

Edinburgh, *BoOE* pp.147–50; see Illus 5-2 below.

113 *Scotsman*, 01 Jun 1886, p.5.

Scotland.

In October 1885, following the selection of Burnet and Lindsay's design for the main Exhibition buildings, the Old Edinburgh Committee had made their own choice of architect: the same Sydney Mitchell who was at that point completing the restoration of Gladstone's Mercat Cross. Mitchell was a promising architect with impeccable Liberal connections. Besides the Cross, he had recently completed the 'picturesque fantasy' of Well Court, a model housing development for the philanthropist and *Scotsman* proprietor J.R. Findlay.¹¹⁴ It was Mitchell's virtuoso construction which now beckoned the visitor descending from the Grand Hall.

After passing down the central avenue, where everything is intensely modern he finds himself outside the eastern door way in the open air, and before him, as if raised by the skill of a magician, stands the gateway of an ancient city.¹¹⁵

Passing through this reproduction of the Nether Bow which once marked the boundary of the High Street and the burgh of Canongate, visitors found themselves in a re-created seventeenth-century street.

Within a space of around 200 feet by 65, open to the sky but enclosed within the Exhibition complex, stood Old Edinburgh. Some twenty once-existing but now demolished buildings had been selected for reproduction by Mitchell as 'interesting from historical associations, as well as because they are favourable types of the Domestic Architecture which was in use in the streets of Edinburgh'.¹¹⁶ The distinctive features of the Edinburgh, and Scottish, vernacular were revealed in typical tenements and in such historically significant landmarks as the Cunzie-House or Royal Mint, the Tolbooth or city jail—Scott's 'Heart of Midlothian'—and a replica of an earlier version of the Mercat Cross. The buildings' scale had been adjusted to produce a convincing ensemble reproduction of the historical cityscape; and an attempt had been made to represent the ancient street patterns of Edinburgh's distinctive wynds and closes. 'An illustration is thus given of each of the street arrangements which were more or less peculiar to Old Edinburgh'.¹¹⁷

114 *BoSE*, p.394. For Mitchell, see *DSA*; and his father Sir Arthur's scrapbooks, NRS GD492: Mitchell papers. A.H. Millar, 'Mitchell, Sir Arthur (1826–1909)', rev. Jonathan Andrews, *ODNB*.

115 *Builder*, 15 May 1886, p.703. Much of the following is drawn from Wilson Smith, 'Old London, Old Edinburgh: Constructing Historic Cities', in Marta Filipová (ed.), *Cultures of International Exhibitions, 1840–1940*. (Farnham, forthcoming 2015).

116 ECA Acc.423/9/6: Sydney Mitchell [as 'Tolbooth?'], [*Report*] *To the Old Edinburgh Street Committee*, p.1.

117 Mitchell, [*Report*] p.2.



Illus 3-11 Inside Old Edinburgh: looking west to the Nether Bow. Marshall Wane, *Old Edinburgh*

Construction materials of wood, plaster and paint had been worked into realistic but illusionary finishes. Distressed surfaces simulated the effects of age, under the supervision of ‘Mr Smythe, the scenic artist of the Theatre Royal, whose splendid canvases on the stage are a guarantee that the colourings of the old buildings will be sufficiently realistic, yet refined in tone’.¹¹⁸ In the process workmen were encouraged to add their own, suitably historical, graffiti to the reproduction surface.

The impression is heightened by every detail, even to the chipping here and there of the surface, breaking an occasional chimney can, toning down the warm colour of the tiles with the hues of mossy growth and weather-beaten age.¹¹⁹

The resulting reality was not that of the pristine original, but of undisturbed ageing: the illusion, that the buildings had survived undisturbed into the present.

Once within Old Edinburgh’s walls, visitors would revel in the immersive nature of

118 *Daily Review*, 09 Mar 1886, p.2.

119 *Cameron’s Guide*, p.55.

this illusion of the past, of the dream-like quality of the experience.¹²⁰ Spectators were encouraged to suspend disbelief, to imagine themselves carried back in time in pleasurable, and abrupt, contrast to the displays of modern industry in the adjacent Machine Hall and the exhibition courts. The effect was most compelling at dusk when, aided by modern technology

the moon (electric of course) ... produces the most fantastic and vivid effects of light and shade upon the nooks and corners of the ancient and quaint edifices. The Rembrandtesque scenes in the booths and the twinkling lights in the windows aloft lend aid to the making up of a scene more deceptive than could be attempted upon a stage.¹²¹

And so the happy conjunction of a glaring arc lamp simulating moonlight and feeble Brush incandescents giving the effect of lamplight recalled the *chiaroscuro* effects of graphic reproduction and of Victorian spectacular theatre.¹²²

The disjunction between this essentially backward-looking immersion in the past and the surrounding evidence of modernity could be held to illustrate the idea of progress which great exhibitions were intended to embody; and in the case of the Edinburgh Exhibition that illustration was the advance of a nation. The Exhibition ‘enables us to measure ... the progress which this once poor and backward nation is making in these grand departments of human effort’:¹²³

One or two hundred years ago, in such close and dingy streets, up such spiral stairs, and in such overhanging storeys, lived and pushed their old-fashioned trades the forefathers of those men whose works in the present day are to be viewed in the aisles of the main building and amidst the swift motion of the machinery section. Scotsmen have no reason to be ashamed of the past, and they have every reason to be proud of the present.¹²⁴

The concept behind Old Edinburgh was far from original. The exhibit was based frankly on Old London, the popular attraction created by the architect George H. Birch for

120 See for example A.C., “‘Old Edinburgh’: a Morning Visit and a Reverie’, *Leeds Mercury*, 24 Jul 1886, p.5.

121 *Builder*, 31 Jul 1886, p.172.

122 Peter Mandler, “‘The Wand of Fancy’: The Historical Imagination of the Victorian Tourist’, in Marius Kwint, Christopher Breward, and Jeremy Aynsley (eds.), *Material Memories*. (Oxford, 1999), pp.135–36. The *Builder’s* correspondent prefigures Mandler’s discussion of Victorian familiarity with technologies of representation.

123 *Dispatch*, 06 May 1886, p.2.

124 *Scottish News*, 07 May 1886, p.4.



Illus 3-12 Chiaroscuro in Old Edinburgh. Marshall Wane, *Old Edinburgh*

the South Kensington Health Exhibition of 1884, still standing for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in 1886—and ‘which I have seen and minutely studied’, Mitchell declared in his competition-winning prospectus.¹²⁵ Birch had originated the devices which Mitchell deployed so successfully: entry through a reproduction gateway, this time Bishopsgate, into an enclosed but open space; the assemblage of re-created lost buildings into a seamless historical streetscape, with adjustments of scale to form a coherent whole; the use of fibrous plaster to reproduce details of construction; and the simulated process of ageing. Old London had been the first—and Old Edinburgh was therefore the second—‘historic city’, a genre of exhibition attraction which became a standard feature of great exhibitions. Though growing in scale and ambition, succeeding exhibits were constructed on similar

125 Mitchell, [Report], p.2. For Birch, see Margaret Richardson, ‘Birch, George Henry (1842–1904)’, ODNB; for Old London, International Health Exhibition, ‘Official Catalogue’, *The Health Exhibition Literature, Volume XVIII*. (London, 1884), pp.172–76; Smith, ‘Old London, Old Edinburgh’; Annmarie Adams, ‘The Healthy Victorian City: The Old London Street at the International Health Exhibition of 1884’, in Zeynep Çelik, Diane Favro, and Richard Ingersoll (eds.), *Streets: Critical Perspectives on Public Space*. (Berkeley, 1994), pp.203–12, though Adams’s discussion centres on the exhibit’s public health aspect.

principles and provoked the same audience delight.¹²⁶ The historic city's fascination rested on its specificity. As an evocation of a particular historical place it presented an image of the city attractive to outside visitors, or more tellingly an invitation to its own citizens to identify with a shared and familiar past, prompting a *frisson* of historic civic identification and providing an opportunity for the exercise of the contemporary popular historical imagination.¹²⁷

This opportunity reflected contemporary local realities of power and influence: the image of the historic city with which visitors were being invited to identify propounded the views of its creators. Old London had been lavishly funded by a number of City Livery Companies, eager to present themselves as the representatives of Old London at a time when their wealth and privileges were under attack: 'The object being to popularise the facts of history in opposition to the fancies of modern so-called reformers'.¹²⁸ Old Edinburgh also encapsulated its creators' interpretation of a city's history, but this interpretation turned out to be of a radically different kind.

Mitchell's suggestion of an explanatory guidebook to his exhibit was taken up enthusiastically by the Executive: early in 1886, Constables could write to their London agent that

We have a charming little book to send you called "the Book of Old Edinburgh" which will we think be the most successful book of the whole. It is being written by a noted local antiquarian—John Dunlop—and we are having it ... fully illustrated by W. Hole ARSA ... It is full of human and antiquarian lore ... we are trying to make it the

126 Smith, 'Old London, Old Edinburgh'; Geppert, *Fleeting Cities*, pp.52–56; Later examples include Old Manchester and Salford, 1887, Alan Kidd, 'The Industrial City and Its Pre-Industrial Past: The Manchester Royal Jubilee Exhibition of 1887', *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, 89 (1995), pp.54–73 (my thanks to Malcolm Cooper for this reference); *Oude Antwerpen*, 1895, Mandy Nauwelaerts (ed.), *De panoramische droom: Antwerpen en de wereldtentoonstellingen, 1885, 1894, 1930*. (Antwerp, 1993), pp.256–69; *Alt-Berlin*, 1896, Katja Zelljadt, 'Presenting and Consuming the Past—Old Berlin at the Industrial Exhibition of 1896', *Journal of Urban History*, 31:3 (March 2005), pp.306–33; *Gamla Stockholm*, 1897, Allan Pred, 'Spectacular Articulations of Modernity: The Stockholm Exhibition of 1897', *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography*, 73:1 (January 1991), pp.45–84; and *vieux Paris*, 1900, Robert W. Brown, 'Albert Robida's Vieux Paris Exhibit', *Yearbook of Interdisciplinary Studies in the Fine Arts*, 2 (1991), pp.421–45.

127 Sharing many of the characteristics identified in Mandler's 'Wand of Fancy', a study of the Victorian tourist experience of real historic buildings.

128 LMA CLC/261/1/32: George Shaw, Master of the Plumbers' Company, ms. note. In the second edition of his *Revived Guild Action, with a History of the Movement for the Registration of Plumbers*. (London, 1889), pp.14–16, 127–28, Shaw asserts his responsibility for Old London.

prettiest thing possible and are spending an enormous sum on illustrations.¹²⁹

J.C. Dunlop, member of the Exhibition Executive and joint-convener of the Old Edinburgh Committee, was a prominent Town Councillor and a house factor and property agent with antiquarian interests. The *Book of Old Edinburgh* was written jointly with his sister Alison Hay Dunlop, a talented writer and local historian who had attended David Masson's classes for the Edinburgh Association for the University Education of Women. 'Brother and sister were equally responsible for the information in the production, but it was an open secret from the first that the form and diction of the work were essentially due to Miss Dunlop'.¹³⁰

This attractive publication was produced in large numbers for sale in the Exhibition while leather-bound presentation copies were bestowed on visiting dignitaries. Informed by the Dunlops' Radical Liberal and United Presbyterian Church background as much as by their considerable antiquarian knowledge, the *Book* portrays Old Edinburgh from the ruling municipal liberal and presbyterian point of view. Edinburgh's distinctiveness as a place and as a capital city is linked to a fervent assertion of its central role in a moral history of the Scottish nation.

Besides her dower of beauty, the Capital of the North has ever possessed an individuality more marked than any other city in the Empire. ... [W]e offer some representation of the scenes where ... Scottish history was lived and enacted; for in so far as that history was pure and honest, fearlessly God-fearing and true, it has given our country its place among the nations.¹³¹

This view of Edinburgh's historical significance is echoed in the (anonymous) *Official Guide*:

The city contains the graves of the Scottish martyrs. It was the scene of countless struggles for civil and religious liberties. It was the seat of the Scottish Parliaments ...

129 NLS Ms.23509/1: T.&A. Constable to A.P. Watt, 01 Feb 1886. The book was published as J.C. Dunlop and Alison Hay Dunlop, *The Book of Old Edinburgh, and Hand-Book to the Old Edinburgh Street*. (Edinburgh, 1886), hereafter *BoOE*.

130 Alison Hay Dunlop, *Anent Old Edinburgh and Some of the Worthies Who Walked Its Streets*. (Edinburgh, 1890), pp.xxv–xxvi. NLS holds a presentation copy of *BoOE* inscribed to Professor Masson by both Dunlops. 'The Late Miss Alison H. Dunlop', *Scots Observer*, 1:5 (December 1888), pp.124–125; for J.C. Dunlop, *Scotsman*, 06 Feb 1899, p.7; for William Hole the illustrator, Walter Biggar Blaikie, *William Hole, R.S.A.* (Edinburgh, 1917). Hole had won recognition with *Quasi Cursores: Portraits of the High Officers and Professors of the University of Edinburgh at Its Tercentenary Festival*. (Edinburgh, 1884), and went on produce the reproductive etchings for W.E. Henley's catalogue of the Exhibition's Dutch and French Loan Collection.

131 *BoOE*, p.5.

Between the occupancy of Cromwell and the descent of Prince Charles Edward, it was plunged in dark and painful strife, in which the citizens held aloft the banner of religious freedom.¹³²

The Dunlops situated Mitchell's re-created buildings within a Romantic/Tragic emplotment of this tumultuous history. The reconstructed historical spaces are associated with historical characters such as the Stewart Kings, Cardinal Beaton, Mary of Guise, and of course Mary Queen of Scots, but the stories are told from a contemporary presbyterian perspective: while Walter Scott's role in creating Edinburgh's past is gratefully acknowledged, his political views are rejected. Vivid and intense passages describe the fate of the Covenanters, the seventeenth-century presbyterian fundamentalists treated with disdain by the Enlightenment—and unsympathetically by Scott—but whose rehabilitation provided a martyrology for the radical and working-class movements of Victorian Scotland. This popular Liberal presbyterian history stands in distinction from the alternative, the simplistic reading of Scott which informed the tourist view of Edinburgh with its Jacobitism and Mary-Queen-of-Scottery, itself centred round the historical imagining of place.¹³³ The Dunlops were at pains to reject this tradition explicitly: 'Amongst much of Old Edinburgh that has passed away there is no room to regret the *genteel history-writing* of the past centuries, and its emasculated shadow in the present day'.¹³⁴

These conflicting views however shared an understanding of Edinburgh's centrality in a romantic re-telling of Scottish history and the assertion of its status as an ancient capital, expressed architecturally in the monumentalisation of what J.C. Dunlop elsewhere described as the city's 'Three Historic Boulders' of Palace, Kirk and Castle,¹³⁵ and in the picturesque qualities of its ancient buildings. If the Exhibition represented Edinburgh, the contrast between the modern regularity of its temporary courts, sites for the celebration of production and commodification, and the ancient variety and quaintness of Old Edinburgh played out the much-noted contrast between the modern regularity of the New Town and

132 *Official Guide*, p.47.

133 Mandler, 'Wand of Fancy'; Grenier, *Tourism and Identity*, chap.4. A classic locus was Holyroodhouse and the site of the murder of Rizzio.

134 *BoOE*, p.32, original emphasis. The Tory *Scottish News* responded by remarking on the Dunlops' 'uncalled-for attack on Mary and a re-hash of all the miserable suspicions which have been attached to her name', 08 May 1886, p.7. Cf. the letter from Jacobite, *Scottish News*, 10 May 1886, p.3, criticising Lord Provost Clark's characterisation of Charles Edward Stuart as an 'individual' in his address to Prince Albert Victor.

135 J.C. Dunlop, *Official Penny Guide to the Old Edinburgh Street*. (Edinburgh, 1886).

the dramatic and picturesque qualities of the Old.¹³⁶

In this reading, Old Edinburgh stands for the existing Old Town itself. Mitchell himself was keen to make the association:

It seemed to me undesirable to reproduce existing buildings, with which visitors to the Exhibition would be certain to make themselves acquainted—such well-known examples, for instance, as Knox’s House, the Canongate Tolbooth, Moray House, Allan Ramsay’s House, etc. etc. All these buildings lie along the line between the Castle and Holyrood—a road which every stranger to the City is sure to traverse, and which is already familiar to the Citizens themselves.¹³⁷

This remaining Old Edinburgh was increasingly under threat. Dunlop’s ‘Three Boulders’, with the law courts, the City Chambers, the ecclesiastical assemblies and Mitchell’s restored Mercat Cross itself provided a dramatic backdrop for the urban pageantry of the historic city. But at the same time Edinburgh’s characteristic ancient tenements were deteriorating as once-grand mansions were endlessly made down into crowded lodgings. The Old Town had become synonymous with deprivation, disease and mortality, its crumbling fabric inviting the processes of improvement and the civic toilette. The work of the Commissioners for William Chambers’ 1867 clearance scheme was all but completed by 1886: seven new streets had been cut through the medieval huddle; 3,000 dwellings had been demolished, 14,000 inhabitants displaced.¹³⁸

Many observers felt that these often ineffective incursions of modernity had caused irreversible damage to a unique architectural and urban legacy: ‘Old Edinburgh is being fast improved off the face of the earth’.¹³⁹ In contrast to Birch’s Old London, set in the comfortable past of the Olden Time, much of Mitchell’s ‘lost’ Old Edinburgh had stood until very recently. Eighteen of the exhibit’s twenty-two named buildings had survived into

136 See p.22ff above.

137 Mitchell, [*Report*], pp.1–2.

138 Richard Rodger, *The Transformation of Edinburgh: Land, Property and Trust in the Nineteenth Century*. (Cambridge, 2001), chap.12; P.J. Smith, ‘Slum Clearance as an Instrument of Sanitary Reform: The Flawed Vision of Edinburgh’s First Slum Clearance Scheme’, *Planning Perspectives*, 9:1 (1994), pp.1–27.

139 Gillies, *Edinburgh Past and Present*, p.162. Though ‘the preservation, as far as possible, of the peculiarly picturesque character of this ancient City’ was a concern of the improvers themselves, David Cousin and John Lessels, *Plan of Sanitary Improvements of the City of Edinburgh*. (Edinburgh, 1866): see also the appended ‘Report of Sub-Committee of Architectural Institute of Scotland’, to which Gowans was a signatory.



Illus 3-13 The Bow Head tenement, real and recreated. Thomas Keith's view of 1855, contrasted with Marshall Wane's postcard (right), collected by Patrick Geddes. Capital Collections; Strathclyde University.

the nineteenth century; of these, nine had been demolished after 1850.¹⁴⁰ The distinctive tenement at the Bow Head, a familiar tourist landmark, had been unceremoniously pulled down only in 1878.

The demolition of this characteristic building robbed Edinburgh of its most remarkable and valuable survival of sixteenth century street architecture, and many will view this capital reproduction of it with the delight that attends a meeting with an old friend.¹⁴¹

Re-incarnated as one of Old Edinburgh's set-pieces it was the subject of one of the Dunlops' most effective passages of historical imagination.¹⁴² However, such reminders of recent loss were, as yet, likely to provoke nothing more than a resigned nostalgia in the face of the demands of sanitary improvement; though the clearances had by no means

140 See Table 3-2 p.140. Robert J. Morris, 'Photography, environment and «improvements» in Scottish cities 1860–1900', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome*, 116:2 (2004) discusses Archibald Burns's photographic documentation of some late survivors.

141 *Scottish News*, 08 May 1886, p.7.

142 *BoOE*, pp.23–32.

building	location	removed	notes
Netherbow Port	High St/Canongate	1768	
Twelve Apostles' House	Cowgate/Libberton's Wynd	1829	removed 'for the erection of George IV Bridge'
French Ambassador's Chapel	Cowgate/Libberton's Wynd	1829	'east wing' of above
House in Dickson's Close	Dickson's Close (S side High St)	after 1850	
Bowhead Corner House	Lawnmarket/West Bow	1878	
Gable of Major Weir's House	off West Bow	1878	
Earl of Hyndford's [or Selkirk's] House	South Gray's Close/Hyndford Close	1870s	
Nameless House from Cowgate	between College Wynd/Horse Wynd	1870s	
Laus Deo House	Castlehill/Blyth's Close	1845	site of New College
Cunzie House	Candlemaker Row/Cowgatehead	after 1850	
Paul's Wark	Leith Wynd	1840s	'removed during the construction of the North British Railway'
Symson the Printer's House	Cowgate/Horse Wynd	1870s	
Mary of Guise's Oratory	Castlehill/Blyth's Close	1845	site of New College
Royal Porch	Holyrood	1753	
Tolbooth	High Street/St Giles	1817	
Gourlay's House	Melbourne Place/Old Bank Close	1834	
Cardinal Beaton's House	Cowgate/Blackfriars Wynd	1874	
Parliament House Stair and Gable		1824	stair removed after Great Fire
Old Assembly Rooms	West Bow	1836	
Black Turnpike	High Street/Hunter Square	1788	removed for South Bridge works
Cowgate House forment the Mint Close	Cowgate south side	1870s	
Mercat Cross	High Street	1617	relocated version demolished 1756

Table 3-2 Buildings of Old Edinburgh and their dates of demolition. Source: Dunlops, *Book of Old Edinburgh*; Capital Collections database, <http://www.capitalcollections.org.uk>, accessed 28 Aug 2014

eradicated the slums, or solved the problems of the still very visible slum-dwellers.¹⁴³ The continuing environmental deficiencies of ‘the dense exhibition of dingy picturesqueness now known as the Canongate of Edinburgh, with repulsive entries of closes on either side, leading to cages of crammed humanity of the poorer sort’,¹⁴⁴ or its neighbour, ‘the ancient picturesque, but evil-odoured, Cowgate’¹⁴⁵—a panorama of poverty for the middle-class or tourist gaze from the bridges above—remained obvious.¹⁴⁶ The recreated spaces of the Exhibition’s Old Edinburgh could only present a sanitised version of this reality, or like Old London and indeed all other historic city exhibits, of the past itself. The aim was to provoke pleasure, not disgust.¹⁴⁷

The health of the community: Improvement and the Model Tenement

Thomas Clark, with his personal history of concern for public health and sanitary matters, took a brisk view of issues of architectural heritage.

I confess to what some may look upon as a sentimental difficulty in the removal of historic tenements which have been famous as the residence of men, and women too, notable in bygone days. Still, the health of the community must ever be paramount to sentiment.¹⁴⁸

If Old Edinburgh presented an pleurably idealised and sanitised vision of the historic Old Town, the Exhibition also found space for a practical demonstration of progress and improvement in housing. A Model Tenement of four dwellings designed by James Gowans stood in the north-eastern corner of the Exhibition grounds, a suburban counterpoint to the hubbub of Old Edinburgh.¹⁴⁹ The genesis of the exhibit can be located in Gowans’s

143 ‘The [1867] clearance scheme was not a major factor in ... reduced mortality. Instead, it probably helped to perpetuate slum conditions’, Smith, ‘Slum Clearance’, p.1. The displaced were expected to fend for themselves in the housing market.

144 David Masson, quoted in *Quiz*, 27 Aug 1886, p.244: precisely the tourist route highlighted by Mitchell.

145 *Macleod’s Tourists’ Guide through Edinburgh and Glasgow*. (Edinburgh, 1883), p.xvii.

146 Charles McKean, *Edinburgh: Portrait of a City*. (London, 1991), pp.158–59; cf. Patrick Geddes, a quarter of a century later in *The Civic Survey of Edinburgh*. (Edinburgh, 1911), p.558: ‘the upper and middle classes have been wont to traverse Edinburgh by viaducts high above the festering squalor below, and to live and die in practical indifference to it’.

147 Cf. Zelljadt, ‘Presenting and Consuming’, p.314.

148 On his appointment as Lord Provost, *Scotsman*, 07 Nov 1885, p.6.

149 Jim Johnson and Lou Rosenberg, *Renewing Old Edinburgh: The Enduring Legacy of Patrick Geddes*. (Glendaruel, 2010), pp.82–84.

and Clark's interventions in working-class housing, in public health and in sanitation, and in the resurgence of urban redevelopment as a public issue in Edinburgh in 1885.

Her Majesty's Commissioners for Inquiring into the Housing of the Working Classes arrived in the city in April 1885 to gather evidence of conditions in Scotland.¹⁵⁰ The Royal Commission had been set up by the Conservative Prime Minister Lord Salisbury and chaired by Sir Charles Dilke as a prestigious enquiry intended as a response to the current housing crisis in London.¹⁵¹ By the time the Commissioners reached Scotland, even with the addition of George Harrison as Lord Provost of Edinburgh their urgency, and comprehension of the local situation, was less obvious. For the *Evening News* the Commission's efforts were 'a bit of flash and bamboozlement'; 'they gave themselves into the hands of managers and manipulators ... for, whereas half-a-dozen rich men, speculators in house property, were examined, only one working man, the president of the Trades' Council, was asked to tell his tale'.¹⁵²

Thomas Clark as Convener of the Public Health Committee and Gowans the newly appointed Lord Dean of Guild were joined by Robert Paterson, City Assessor, Knox Crawford, Clerk to the Improvement Trust, and Medical Officer of Health Henry Littlejohn as representatives of official Edinburgh. Their testimony demonstrated a certain complacency. There was no shortage of housing in the city; and therefore no obligation to rehouse displaced tenants from cleared properties. Lack of mobility on the part of the displaced reflected 'poverty and choice',¹⁵³ one the result of drunkenness and other moral failings, the other compounded by ethnicity and religious persuasion: 'there is one class of unskilled labourers viz. the Irish; they prefer to live in a place called the Cowgate, because it is near their place of worship'.¹⁵⁴

Witnesses from Edinburgh's voluntary sector testified to their approaches to housing improvement: James Colville on the management of the long-established Edinburgh Cooperative Building Company; Sydney Mitchell's patron John Ritchie Findlay on the

150 Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes, *Second Report [C.4409], Vol. V: Minutes of Evidence [etc] ... as to Scotland*. (1885).

151 Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship Between Classes in Victorian Society*. (Harmondsworth, 1976), p.229.

152 *Evening News*, 09 Apr 1885, p.2. See also Johnson and Rosenberg, *Renewing*, pp.54–58; Paul Laxton and Richard Rodger, *Insanitary City: Henry Littlejohn and the Condition of Edinburgh*. (Lancaster, 2013), pp.209–10.

153 R.C. Housing, q.18630 (Paterson).

154 R.C. Housing, q.18634 (Paterson); on this point see also q.18820 (Clark), q.18927 (Gowans), and—much-quoted—q.19273 (Telfer).

recently completed Well Court development; and Rev. E.J. Hannan on the activities of the equally recently established Social and Sanitary Society of Edinburgh.¹⁵⁵ A.C. Telfer, the ‘one working man’ witness, though less sanguine on the rehousing issue and advocating a land tax to stimulate peripheral development, nevertheless spoke for artisan opinion in condemning any municipal intervention in the free market. It was Clark who put forward a proposal for limited action: ‘Personally I should like a model tenement to be erected by the local authority that would serve as a model for builders to erect such houses upon; but I would not go beyond that’.¹⁵⁶

The Commission’s evidence-taking spurred the municipal authorities and traditional philanthropists into action, despite their optimistic testimony. Little more than a fortnight later Harrison convened a well-attended Conference on the Dwellings of the Poor in the City Chambers to re-examine the issue. Although the arguments put forward to the Commission were repeated, and the diagnosis the same, it was proposed to tackle the supposed immobility of the displaced poor by developing improved housing within the core of the Old Town itself. Gowans, still pursuing the idea of a demonstration project, now suggested that the proposed Association ‘should turn their attention to the renovation of old houses’—an idea no doubt heard with interest by one of the audience, Patrick Geddes, not yet started on his career of conservative surgery.¹⁵⁷

The idea of demonstration housing was in the air, and the International Exhibition was a suitable forum in which Gowans could express it. International exhibitions had promoted the display of ‘improved’ working class housing from their very origins; social progress and perfectibility was as capable of display as the industrial and commercial varieties. The block of four model dwellings built by Henry Roberts for Prince Albert’s Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes was a popular adjunct to the Great Exhibition of 1851, and itself an influential design.¹⁵⁸ The display of model workers’ housing was taken up with enthusiasm in France. The 1867 Paris Exposition featured six examples of such model dwellings in a display of social improvement expressing the corporatism of the Second Empire, the Saint-Simonian-tinged ideals of the French

155 The SSSE was one of the ‘new’ socially-concerned organisations of the mid-1880s: Johnson and Rosenberg, *Renewing*, pp.58–68.

156 R.C. Housing, q.18822; see also q.18837 suggesting a vacant site in the Cowgate. Cf. Kinloch Anderson’s more radical speech to the Tailors’ soirée, p.88 above.

157 *Courant*, 21 Apr 1885, p.3; see also *Scotsman*, 21 Apr 1885, p.3

158 Auerbach, *Great Exhibition*, pp.111–12.

industrial bourgeoisie and the technocratic social science of Frédéric Le Play.¹⁵⁹ In Britain, such opportunities came less readily, though public interest in the developing profession of sanitary engineering led to a number of events culminating in the Health Exhibition of 1884. Here visitors could compare Old London's cleaned-up depiction of the past not only with the display of modern sanitary products, but also with an exhibit consisting of 'the erection of two full-sized models of houses in the grounds of the Exhibition, one of which illustrates a house with good sanitary arrangements, and the other a house with many of the usual defects'.¹⁶⁰

If model dwellings at great exhibitions could publicise best, and occasionally worst, practice in workers' housing, the real-life erection of such models by philanthropic or private enterprise had become a familiar tactic in the struggle to alleviate the worst excesses of urban degeneration. Edinburgh could show several examples of such projects, of which Findlay and Mitchell's Well Court was only the latest instance.¹⁶¹ Gowans himself had played a key role in this story with his Rosebank Cottages, an estate of thirty-six two-storey houses in upper and lower flats built in 1853.¹⁶² The Rosebank configuration of terraced upper and lower flats with external stairs and gardens proved a popular alternative to the density of tenement life and was adopted by the Edinburgh Cooperative Building Company from 1861 for its colony developments for sale to working families.¹⁶³

Gowans in contrast retained ownership of the majority of the flats in the Rosebank development—only twelve had been sold by 1885—and was able to provide detailed information on its philosophy and financing to the Royal Commission:

The idea that I had was to get working men into small self-contained houses, where

159 Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: the Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs*. (Manchester, 1988), pp.145–47; for the link between the 1851 and 1867 events through the Mulhouse *cités ouvrières*, see Stéphane Jonas, *Mulhouse et ses cités ouvrières: Perspective historique, 1840–1918*. (Strasbourg, 2003), pp.76–79, 196–98; and *Engineering*, 23 Aug 1867, p.145.

160 International Health Exhibition, *Guide to the Sanitary and Insanitary Houses*. (London, 1884), p.3; see also Mark Hayler Judge, *Sanitary Arrangements of Dwelling Houses: Notes in Connection with the Sanitary Exhibits at the International Health Exhibition, 1884*. (London, 1884).

161 Richard Rodger, *Edinburgh's Colonies: Housing the Workers*. (Glendaruel, 2011), chap.5; Adams, *The Making of Urban Scotland*, pp.190–93, esp fig.9.1; Stedman Jones, *Outcast London*, pp.183–88, for the model dwellings movement in London.

162 Duncan McAra, *Sir James Gowans, Romantic Rationalist*. (Edinburgh, 1975), p.10; Peter Robinson, 'Edinburgh—a Tenement City?', in Edwards and Jenkins (eds.), *Edinburgh*, p.114, finds precursors in Pilrig Model Dwellings (1849, *BoSE*, p.647) and earlier: 'The cottage-flat solution was not new, reflecting smaller burgh practice'; see also Rodger, *Edinburgh's Colonies*, pp.52–54.

163 Rodger, *Edinburgh's Colonies*, p.71.

they would have their own door to go in by, every room being independent of the others, having a door from the lobby for privacy, and having a little green attached to each house, and having everything arranged in a sanitary way, with the closets to the outer wall, and plenty of light about them; and those houses have been fairly successful.¹⁶⁴

At the same time, Gowans's experience as the founding convener of the Public Health Committee had consolidated his reputation as a sanitary reformer. After his ejection from the Council he became a director of Fleeming Jenkin's Sanitary Protection Association, an inspection service set up primarily to protect more affluent homes from sanitary contamination, but with technocratic and philanthropic overtones.¹⁶⁵ Gowans's return to municipal office as Lord Dean of Guild gave him a more public platform to expound his views on sanitary matters; and a measure of real power to impose standards of building and sanitation on new construction in Edinburgh.¹⁶⁶

Built solidly and substantially as four complete, habitable dwelling-houses, the Exhibition Model Tenement had the character of a manifesto. Though described by Gowans as 'suggestive rather than assertive' it was intended to demonstrate his awareness of the importance of building standards and sanitary engineering, and to provide a summation of his career as a builder, architect and sanitary reformer.¹⁶⁷ Outwardly, the Tenement showed the flamboyant features of Gowans's architecture, '[d]esigned by Mr Gowans with some of the marked characteristics of his peculiar style, of which the florid development has long been familiar'.¹⁶⁸ The upper dormer windows projected into a massive overhanging roof crowned by an ornate cupola over the internal common stair. Prominent string courses in the chimneys as well as in the main structure broke up a masonry structure largely composed, in the interests of the economy to which the building was dedicated, of white whin from Gowans's Plean and Redbank quarries, 'a material

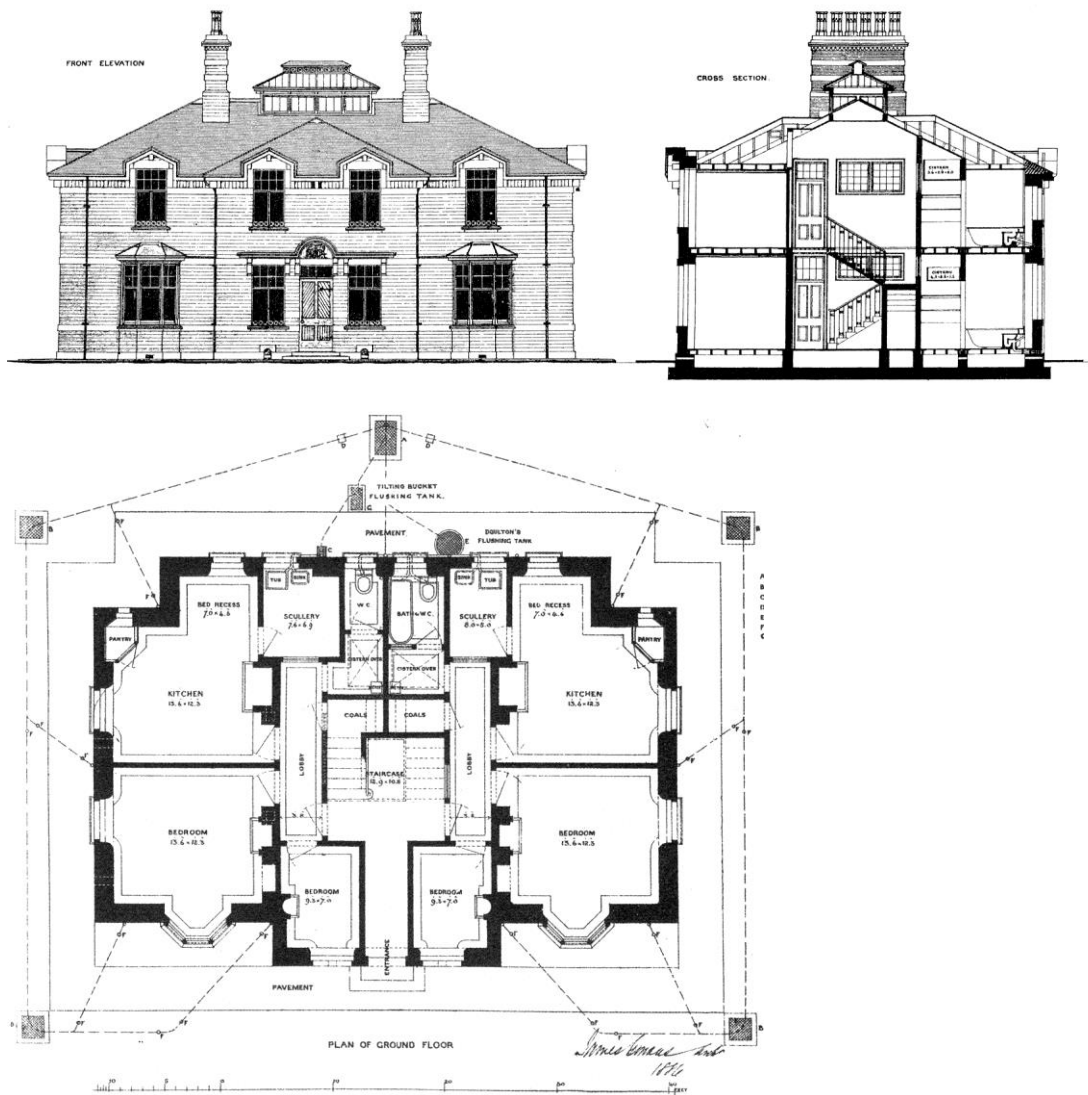
164 R.C. Housing, q.18858; q.18873 for details of sales.

165 For Jenkin's prescriptions, based on a miasmatic rather than bacterial understanding of public health, see *Healthy Houses*. (Edinburgh, 1878); *What Is the Best Mode of Amending the Present Laws with Reference to Existing Buildings ...?* (London, 1880).

166 R.C. Housing, qq.18841–59, qq.18883–90; James Gowans, 'On the Laying Out of Feuing Grounds and the Planning of Houses', *Sanitary Journal*, IX (April 1885), pp.41–44, 65–73; 'The Maintenance of the Health of the People and the Beauty of the City', *Sanitary Journal*, X:121 (March 1886), pp.1–11.

167 James Gowans, *Model Dwelling-Houses, with a Description of the Model Tenement Erected within the Grounds of the International Exhibition*. (Edinburgh, 1886), p.1; further parenthetical references are to this source). See also Johnson and Rosenberg, *Renewing*, pp.81–83.

168 *Building News*, 14 May 1886, p.776.



Illus 3-14 The Model Tenement: front elevation, a cross-section, and ground floor plan. Gowans, *Model Dwelling-Houses*

usually cast aside into the rubbish-heaps at the quarry as being useless' (p.29).

The Tenement's interior arrangements, like those of Rosebank, showed Gowans's trademark inventiveness: Stuart's granolithic, the new material in evidence throughout the Exhibition, was used to form floor margins and skirtings. The upper landing of the common stair was constructed using glass blocks in an iron frame to allow daylight to penetrate:¹⁶⁹ access to natural light and fresh air being the goals of the sanitary movement. The generously proportioned common stairwell, and the lobbies of each of the constituent

169 In this Gowans was following commercial practice: such glass-and-iron panels provided light to shop and other basement premises.

flats formed ‘the lungs of the dwelling’ for Gowans (pp.1, 12).¹⁷⁰ Each flat consisted of a kitchen with the traditional bed-recess and a separate scullery, a parlour or bedroom, and an additional bedroom. All contained water-closets, though only the easternmost dwellings on each floor included a bath; even so, this was a considerable advance on the ‘[o]ne bedroom and kitchen, with watercloset and other conveniences’ which constituted the standard family home for Edinburgh’s artisan population.¹⁷¹

A total of forty-three firms from Edinburgh and beyond donated labour and materials to construct the Tenement and to decorate and furnish it as a credible ideal of the working-class home (pp.38–45). Drainage and sanitary arrangements followed the precepts of the Sanitary Protection Association whose resident engineer Alexander Welsh acted as a consultant to the project (pp.35–37). The involvement of nationally prominent companies underlined the Tenement’s aspirations to excellence. Doulton & Co, Shanks of Barrhead, and the Glasgow plumbing theorist and designer Walter Paton Buchan contributed improved sanitary and plumbing fittings; all were exhibitors in the extensive general display of sanitary engineering products in the Exhibition itself, a technological reference point for the Model Tenement.¹⁷²

Although the Tenement demonstrated modern best practice in housing and sanitation, it was nonetheless rooted in a vision of time and place. In his pamphlet, Gowans’s exposition is preceded by an excursion into Edinburgh’s history. The flatted tenement is characterised as a building type which typified and defined Edinburgh: ‘this system ... became the architectural style of the city’ (p.3). Gowans links the buildings of the Old Town with their recreations in Old Edinburgh, and laments their decline:

What tales and histories would these old walls relate could they but speak, for they have looked down calmly on the lives of all orders and conditions of men—from the proud and wealthy of the highest rank and lineage, through all the succeeding grades

170 Cf. Gowans’s innovative ventilation and heating arrangements in the Rosebank development: McAra, *Gowans*, p.10; *Builder*, 02 May 1857, p.246; cf. p.76 above for another ‘lungs’ metaphor.

171 R.C. Housing, q.19174 (Telfer); for comparison with the Model Tenement, see the 1887 plan reproduced in Robinson, ‘Tenement City?’, p.117, of a typical Dalry tenement of four room-and-kitchen flats per landing—though all of these had baths.

172 For sanitary fittings at the Exhibition see ‘The Edinburgh Exhibition—II’, *British Architect*, 26:1 (July 1886), pp.23–25; for W.P. Buchan, R.J. Morris, ‘White Horse Close: Philanthropy, Scottish Historical Imagination and the Re-building of Edinburgh in the later Nineteenth Century’, *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 33:1 (April 2013), p.108. Buchan was awarded a gold medal at the Health Exhibition, and a silver at Edinburgh.

of the social scale, down to the most wretched! (pp.4–5).¹⁷³

Although constructed for the sake of practicality as a two-storey building, the model block was defined from the outset as a tenement, extensible upwards and outwards to true tenement scale.¹⁷⁴ While Gowans recognised the attractions of the terraced cottage-flat development, in the current circumstances of ownership, speculation and development in Edinburgh only the densities offered by the tenement could provide a viable pattern for working-class housing:

At the present day, when excessively high feu-duties are exacted for building sites by their fortunate possessors, enterprising contractors have found that, so far as houses for the working classes are concerned, it is only by erecting tenements on the flatted system that a rental can be obtained which will cover the feu-duty, and give a return on the cost of building (p.5).¹⁷⁵

Response to the exhibit was mixed. *Building News* saw its appearance as ‘pleasing, and well-proportioned every way; and far removed from what is usually presented as a model of the economic sanitary tenement’.¹⁷⁶ Another London journal, the *Sanitary Record*, however launched into detailed criticism: ‘We have seldom met a model house we could unreservedly praise, and unfortunately this is not an exception’. The reviewer condemned such details as doors opening against chimney-breasts: ‘quite an elementary fault in planning, provocative of a great deal of discomfort’. Some of the *Record*’s censure, however, seemed rooted in the experience of London model dwellings rather than the Edinburgh tenement tradition: ‘The entrance lobbies, lighted and ventilated from the staircase, seem to us quite inadmissible in a model house’; ‘[the] total absence of verandahs ... is a serious mistake’.¹⁷⁷

However open to criticism in details, the principal objection to the practicality of the Model Tenement was economic. Gowans argued that, as well as benefitting the working-class family, improved housing gave an advantage to the private landlord: ‘he will never lack tenants—and what is more, tenants who are likely to appreciate the advantages offered, and

173 Cf. another Gowans foray into Edinburgh history, *Edinburgh and Its Neighbourhood in the Days of Our Grandfathers*. (London, 1886), a reprint of Thomas Shepherd’s 1833 plates, with updated commentary.

174 Although extension of the model laterally would have sacrificed light from the windows in the side walls.

175 Echoing Gowans’s testimony to R.C. Housing, qq.18892–93: David McCrone and Brian Elliott, *Property and Power in a City: The Sociological Significance of Landlordism*. (Basingstoke, 1989), p.50.

176 *Building News*, 14 May 1886, p.776.

177 *Sanitary Record*, 15 Sep 1886, pp.133–34.

be able to pay their rents' (p.17). On the other hand, the attractiveness of the dwellings and their generosity of provision were enough to raise objections: 'By those who have practically to do with property there have been grave head-shakings at the idea of building tenements on this model with the remotest prospect of getting the smallest return for their money'.¹⁷⁸

Certainly, builders and developers were less than keen to take up Gowans's suggestions. It would be difficult to trace any direct influence on commercial tenement design. The innovative glass landings and granolithic details were never favoured in practice. No philanthropic model dwellings were constructed on such a generous scale. The Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Poor, formed at the April 1885 City Chambers meeting, proposed a much less ambitious intervention in the Old Town's housing problems by constructing a block of twenty two-roomed and four one-roomed dwellings on a cramped site at the head of the West Port: 'to all present appearance there will be many applicants for the houses'.¹⁷⁹ The significance of the Exhibition Model Tenement lies more in Gowans's combative dismissal of current bad practice in tenement construction, and as a declaration of his intention to use the powers of the Dean of Guild Court to enforce the building standards it exemplified. To this extent, the exhibit was a commentary on Gowans's performance of the role of Lord Dean of Guild.¹⁸⁰

Geddes, Old Edinburgh, and modern progress

Just as Gowans's Model Tenement left little trace on the practice of housing provision for the Edinburgh working class, historians have struggled to find any explicit connection between the Old Edinburgh exhibit and developing ideas of preservation and conservation of the city's architectural heritage.¹⁸¹ Sydney Mitchell himself expressed no such aims in designing what was intended primarily as a visitor attraction, and the Dunlops, the exhibit's publicists and interpreters, adhered to the view that the loss of ancient buildings was an

178 *Scotsman*, 04 Aug 1886, p.7.

179 *Evening News*, 20 Apr 1887, p.3.; *Scottish News*, 03 Feb 87, p.3.

180 See also Gowans's paper, read to the 1889 Art Congress: 'Municipal Legislation with Reference to Architecture', *Transactions of the National Association for the Advancement of Art and Its Application to Industry. Edinburgh Meeting. MDCCCLXXXIX*. (London, 1890), although its prescriptive tone was badly received by the meeting.

181 Johnson and Rosenberg, *Renewing*, p.84; Similarly, Lou Rosenberg and Jim Johnson, "'Conservative Surgery' in Old Edinburgh, 1880–1940", in Brian Edwards and Paul Jenkins (eds.), *Edinburgh: The Making of a Capital City*. (Edinburgh, 2005), p.136

inevitable consequence of sanitary improvement:

The driving of ventilating side-shafts streets through the serried masses of the densely crowded closes was necessary for the health, the morality, and the well-being of the people. The Civic Rulers of the city have hitherto regulated wisely the momentum of these great measures, and in this matter it becomes the most aesthetic lover of the Past to yield to the philanthropist without a sigh.¹⁸²

J.C. Dunlop himself contemplated the loss even of the emblematic Bow Head tenement with equanimity: 'It was cherished as an ancient landmark, and its removal was simply owing to the natural decay of old age'.¹⁸³

Such removals were continuing. During the course of the Exhibition Milton House, an eighteenth-century mansion in the Canongate notable for its plasterwork, painted murals and interior fittings, was demolished to make way for that most modern of institutions, a Board School.¹⁸⁴ The following year saw the loss of two, more ancient, buildings: in the Cowgate, the Hope House of 1616 occupied the site of the new Public Library; on Castlehill, the sixteenth-century Gordon House fell to another Board School. While detailed descriptions and histories of the buildings were published, no hint of opposition to their passing was expressed.¹⁸⁵

From the 1890s onwards a change in the underlying climate of public opinion can be discerned; polite regret turned to anger at the loss of so much of the historic fabric of the Old Town, and to proposals for the preservation of what had been spared. By the turn of the new century the city's cultural élite organisations—such as the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and the Cockburn Association—were mobilised in this cause;¹⁸⁶ and with the inauguration of the Old Edinburgh Club in January 1908, 'an aesthetic, architectural, conservationist lobby with an eye for vandalism' found a voice.¹⁸⁷ The Club's first publication documented the survivors of such vandalism, in Bruce Home's catalogue of

182 *BoOE*, p.158. The Dunlops were moved to anger only at the loss of the historic and civic totem of the Mercat Cross, fully 130 years before.

183 J.C. Dunlop, *Official Penny Guide to the Old Edinburgh Street*. (Edinburgh, 1886), p.3.

184 *Scotsman*, 10 Apr 1886, p.7.

185 'Anent Sir Thomas Hope's House and the Site of the Edinburgh Free Library', *Scotsman*, 26 Feb 1887, p.9–10; 'Concerning the Gordon House, Castlehill', *Scotsman*, 10 Jun 1887, p.5.

186 Malcolm A. Cooper, 'Gerard Baldwin Brown and the Preservation of Edinburgh's Old Town', *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society*, 58 (2014), pp.134–54, discusses the growth of this preservationist movement: see in particular pp.140–44.

187 Owen Dudley Edwards, 'Rosebery and the Birth of the Old Edinburgh Club', *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*. New Series, 7 (2008), p.6.

remaining historic Old Town domestic architecture. Home's verdict on the Bow Head tenement, the lost centrepiece of Old Edinburgh, contrasted with the equanimity of two decades before: the building had been 'unnecessarily and unfortunately demolished by civic authority ... an irreparable loss to the antiquities of the city'.¹⁸⁸

It is at least credible that the virtuosity of the Old Edinburgh exhibit itself formed a trigger for this incipient change in sensibility. Its influence may be traced most directly in the thought and action of Patrick Geddes, in 1886 on the threshold of his career in popular education, sanitary reform and urban renewal. Geddes was already prominent enough in the public sphere to have been noted at the inaugural meeting of the Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Poor.¹⁸⁹ Though Gowans's musings on tenement refurbishment on that occasion may have struck a chord, Geddes's thinking thereafter took a trajectory distinct from the Association's traditional philanthropy. His elaboration of the idea of conservative surgery—of refurbishment and sanitary improvement of existing tenements where possible, but small-scale demolition and sensitive rebuilding where necessary—proposed a solution to the Old Town's housing problems which would involve minimum disruption to the lives of its inhabitants and preserve the identity of the place, the ambience of the historical setting.¹⁹⁰ After setting up home in the Old Town in 1887, Geddes's interventions—centring on the conversion of derelict buildings into student residencies—were visible enough to influence the Town Council-sponsored Improvement Scheme of 1893.¹⁹¹ The more sensitive and contingent nature of that project contrasted with the wide-scale demolition and redevelopment which resulted from the 1867 Chambers Scheme.¹⁹²

Throughout his career Geddes used exhibition as a technique for publicising and explaining his doctrines. His establishment of the Outlook Tower on Castlehill in 1892 as an educational and exhibition centre, his series of peripatetic planning exhibitions, and his

188 Bruce J. Home, 'Provisional List of Old Houses Remaining in the High Street and Canongate of Edinburgh', *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, 1 (1908), p.5. For Home, Curator of the Municipal Museum and a gifted topographical artist, see Johnson and Rosenberg, *Renewing*, pp.135–37. Home's first catalogue of historical survivals was produced in 1902.

189 n.157, p.143 above.

190 Johnson and Rosenberg, *Renewing*, pp.24–25.

191 Johnson and Rosenberg, *Renewing*, chap.4. The reconstruction of White Horse Close in the Canongate by E.S.U. members in the early 1890s represents another significant surgical intervention: R.J. Morris, 'White Horse Close: Philanthropy, Scottish Historical Imagination and the Re-building of Edinburgh in the later Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 33:1 (April 2013), pp.101–128.

192 But see n.139, p.138 above.

involvement in the academic conferences of the great European exhibitions, all attest to the importance he attached to the physical display—the *exposition*—of his ideas.¹⁹³ His reaction to the Edinburgh Exhibition is of some importance in the evolution of these ideas. Geddes had played an identifiable role, however minor, in the Exhibition itself: as Secretary of the Art Department of the Edinburgh Social Union he submitted the Union's entry to the Women's Industries Section.¹⁹⁴ At the close of the event he picked up the theme in his role of an aspiring public intellectual to deliver lectures on 'The Exhibition in its bearings on Social Progress' to the Edinburgh Eastern Radical and Advanced Liberal Association on 1 November; and at St George's Hall on the 5th.¹⁹⁵ The reworked lecture was published in the periodical *Industries* and re-appeared as the pamphlet *Industrial Exhibitions and Modern Progress*.¹⁹⁶

Geddes took a somewhat disparaging view of the commercial aspects of exhibitions such as Edinburgh's: 'The "trophies", tinsel, and music-hall elements soon assert themselves ... while the higher questions silently vanish' (p.18). In the constellation of exhibitionary institutions Geddes's ideal was the improving austerity of the museum rather than the charms of the department store, the hateful bazaar. His advocacy of explanatory diagrams and wall-charts, of 'the simplest possible show-cases, uniform for each class of goods, and placed in regular rows upon the ground-plan' (p.26), may have prefigured his own didactic practice but excluded entirely the qualities of sparkle and spectacle which increasingly attracted the diversion-seeking exhibition-goer.

The areas of the Edinburgh exhibition which engaged with Geddes's own social and aesthetic concerns met with more approval. Gowans's Model Tenement deserved the highest praise: 'Best of all were the typical workmen's dwellings, slums no longer, but genuine human homes, spacious and lightsome, with flower-filled windows, and built with

193 See for example 'Professor Geddes goes to the Fair', Siân Reynolds, *Paris–Edinburgh: Cultural Connections in the Belle Époque*, (Aldershot, 2007), chap.6, for his involvement in the 1900 Paris Exposition; Patrick Geddes, 'The Closing Exhibition—Paris 1900', *Contemporary Review*, 78 (1900), pp.653–68.

194 n.131, p.188 below: the E.S.U. was founded in 1885 with Geddes as a leading member. The Union also showed the work of its Art Classes for Artisans at the Exhibition.

195 *Evening News*, 02 Nov 1886, p.2; *Herald*, 06 Nov 1886, p.4.

196 Patrick Geddes, *Industrial Exhibitions and Modern Progress*, (Edinburgh, 1887): page numbers in parentheses in subsequent paragraphs refer to this publication. This early piece of Geddesiana is cited frequently in the literature of exhibitions; its origin in the circumstances of the Edinburgh Exhibition is less often examined.

honest old-fashioned mason's marks' (p.9).¹⁹⁷ This idealised family home, the image of Improvement, was contrasted with a Geddesian evocation of the reality of urban development, surely based on his image of a contemporary Edinburgh of 'dreary labyrinths of so-called new streets—too often mere roofless tunnels, leading nowhere save to the factory, and the public-house, the hospital and the grave' (p.9).

But Old Edinburgh, the idealised depiction of the decaying Old Town, fascinated Geddes equally 'as at once stimulating and popularising the historic spirit, and helping to the recovery of the fallen, yet highest art of civilised production of permanent wealth—that of rational, fitting and beautiful architecture, civic and domestic' (p.9).¹⁹⁸ This stimulus to historical imagination and the recovery of civic architecture chimed with Geddes's own practice of urban regeneration. Ramsay Garden, begun in 1892 and his most ambitious and visible Edinburgh project, was intended as a contribution to the remodelling of the Old Town skyline. For the development's second phase in the following year Geddes employed as his architect none other than Sydney Mitchell partly, as surmised by Volker Welter, on the strength of Mitchell's design for the Nether Bow gateway which had welcomed the crowds to Old Edinburgh. Geddes proposed nothing less than the reconstruction of this lost landmark prominently along the ridge of the Royal Mile as part of a scheme intended to restore 'the missing elements of the ideal medieval Edinburgh'.¹⁹⁹ Even without this unrealised adornment, the influence of Old Edinburgh could be detected in the completed Ramsay Garden development.²⁰⁰

Geddes's fascination with Old Edinburgh persisted. A quarter of a century after the event, the Outlook Tower exhibition featured photographs of the exhibit, to represent the romantic side of his dichotomy between Edinburgh's Romance and—still very present—Squalor. For Geddes, Old Edinburgh represented 'probably the most admirable reconstruction of an ancient city yet effected, and a suggestion of what may yet be done in some of our old quarters in permanent form'.²⁰¹ The recently-formed Old Edinburgh Club

197 For Gowans's interest in masons' marks see McAra, *Gowans*, pp.15–16.

198 Passage also quoted in Volker Welter, 'History, Biology and City Design—Patrick Geddes in Edinburgh', *Architectural Heritage*, 6:6 (1995), p.64.

199 Welter, 'History, Biology', p.75.

200 R.J. Morris, 'Ramsay Garden: "Professor Geddes's New Buildings"', *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, New Series, 10 (2014), p.114, and p.124 for the (possible) influence of the Old Edinburgh colour scheme on Geddes's earlier James Court refurbishment.

201 Geddes, *Civic Survey*, p.565. Note Geddes's ownership of the Marshall Wane postcard in Illus 3-13, p.139 above.

and Bruce Home's catalogue of threatened buildings illustrated the changing public sensibility as to 'what may yet be done';²⁰² Geddes's memories of the Old Edinburgh exhibit indicate its relevance, for him at least, in framing that debate.

In 1886 the debate between improvement and preservation lay largely in the future. Whatever the relationship of the sanitised Old Edinburgh to the real, decaying Old Town, the exhibit's pleasures could as yet provoke only nostalgic regret for often very recent loss in the face of Clark's dispassionate forces of sanitary improvement. But as the Exhibition complex neared completion, the preoccupations of the exhibition organisers were elsewhere. Old Edinburgh lay at the heart of their 'Fairy Palace', the ideal Exhibition city: around it Burnet and Lindsay's courts invited the presence of the exhibitors who would inhabit them in spectacular style: the exhibitors, whose trophies and tinsel so alarmed Geddes, but whose presence breathed life into the enterprise.

202 Geddes was a 'pre-inaugural' Associate Member of the O.E.C., Edwards, 'Rosebery', p.15; Home was an associate of Geddes and had worked in the Outlook Tower, Johnson and Rosenberg, *Renewing*, p.136–37.

4. In the International Kettledrum: the Edinburgh exhibitors

The Exhibition organisers built their ideal city, provided its infrastructure of power and light and dressed it to represent Edinburgh as the historic capital of the Scottish nation and at the same time a modern centre of commerce and industry. The success of the enterprise now depended on a second group of participants: the number and variety of exhibitors who could be attracted to fill the Exhibition spaces. The exhibitors provided the riot of commodities, of machinery and merchandise, which characterised the displays of the Victorian great exhibition; their stands would compete in attractiveness and animation to seize the attention of the Exhibition-going public. 'It is a kind of "International Kettledrum" to which all and sundry are invited, and so far as space will go, all are welcome'.¹

And so it proved at Edinburgh. While the number of exhibitors was relatively small, spectacular exhibits crowded the space available in Burnet and Lindsay's courts. Their preponderantly Scottish origins, and the strong showing of Edinburgh firms amongst them, undermined any claims to true international status for the event: but this local concentration reinforced identification of the Exhibition as a national undertaking, projecting the industrial and commercial dimensions of the national life. And the paucity of foreign exhibitors did not prevent the depiction, sometimes banal, of imperial connections and global trade links, not least in the presentations of West of Scotland exporters and the orientalist ingredients and branding of domestic producers.

Two most distinctive Exhibition courts stood apart from the worlds of industrial commerce and manufactures. The Artisan Court presented contrasting views of the traditional culture of the Trade and the products of modern rational working-class recreation. The Women's Industries court mobilised the networks of women's activism to demonstrate different aspects of women's work: from the emancipatory potential of middle-class employment in studio or workshop, to the relief of genteel poverty for female breadwinners, to the promotion of rural craftwork in a variety of home industries. These last demonstrations of craft skills by costumed homeworkers were only one aspect of the general theme of performance used as a display technique throughout the Exhibition: nowhere more so than in Old Edinburgh, where Mitchell's reconstructions fronted a variety of more or less incongruous retail outlets.

1 *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, 24 Apr 1886, p.2.

The bazaar atmosphere of Old Edinburgh exemplified the dissonance between the organisers' high-minded aims and the commercial imperatives of exhibitors that underlay the great exhibition phenomenon. Contemporary theory stressed the community of interest between managers and exhibitors in working together towards a successful event,² but these exhibitors participated for their own motives and sought their own rewards in a climate where increasing competition, branding and advertising characterised business life. At Edinburgh, this conflict manifested itself in unedifying squabbles between Exhibition management and exhibitors. First, the Executive felt moved to suppress the unauthorised over-the-counter sales in which some stalls indulged. Then a bitter controversy broke out over the judgements of the Exhibition juries and about the nature of the medals they awarded, for many firms the entire reason for exhibiting and a weapon in their sales and advertising strategies. Exhibitors attended at the Exhibition kettledrum for reasons of their own self-interest; many left dissatisfied with the welcome they had received there.

Amongst the exhibitors

At the outset the call for exhibitors was met with enthusiasm. The Exhibition promoters were able to announce that the 78,000 square feet initially reserved for exhibits had to be increased to 102,000 to accommodate the flood of applications for space.³ Reception and positioning of the multitude and variety of artifacts submitted occupied the weeks before the opening date of 6 May. With twelve days to go, the animation and congestion of the Melville Drive goods yard was obvious; 'the great crane ... is kept going from morning till evening lifting heavy boxes and bales off the railway lorries'.⁴ Four railway locomotives were manhandled from their railheads through the city streets to the Exhibition, in itself a demonstration of the challenge presented by the Meadows site.⁵ By the opening deadline

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- 2 See for example the exchange of views between two exhibition insiders: Georges Berger, 'Suggestions for the Next World's Fair', *Century Magazine*, XXXIX:6 (April 1890), pp.845–851; H. Trueman Wood, 'M. Berger on the Chicago Exhibition', *Engineering*, 02 May 1890, pp.527–30; Georges Berger, 'The Chicago Exhibition', *Engineering*, 04 Jul 1890, pp.2–4.
 - 3 Gowans quoted *Scotsman*, 15 Jan 1886, p.7: apparently without altering or expanding Burnet's design.
 - 4 *Scotsman*, 24 Apr 1886, p.6; the crane was loaned by the contractor Waddell, International Exhibition of Industry, Science, and Art, *Official Catalogue*. (Edinburgh, 1886), Compliments List.
 - 5 The North British locomotive arrived at the Meadows from the Powburn depot under its own steam, 'a fully sleepered, chaired and jointed track being laid ahead of her and taken up in rear as she proceeded', C. Hamilton Ellis, *The North British Railway*. (London, 1955), p.136, although

order had been achieved. A London journal congratulated the organisers on

the extraordinary degree of perfection of all the arrangements, which have, perhaps, never in any former instance, been so complete at the opening, for on that occasion almost everything seemed to be in its place and ready for the inspection of the visitors;⁶

Another commented that

The Edinburgh people—and we suppose we may say the people of Scotland—have secured for their first venture in International Exhibitions that amount of perfection and economy which have been arrived at in the metropolis only by lengthened experience and much outlay.⁷

The management of Marchbank and Hedley and the efforts of their staff and the exhibitors had ensured a state of readiness unheard of for a large-scale exhibition, where late arrivals and tardiness in setting-up were expected.

An overwhelming array of things crammed the courts whose light and airy atmosphere had been praised only a few weeks before. The Exhibition organisers' success in attracting exhibitors, and their disinclination to lose rental income by turning any away, had produced this result: there were too many exhibits.⁸ The press of objects was however hardly unprecedented in itself. Clutter was a characteristic which defined cognate spaces of consumption: the exhibition, but also the department store, the museum, and the domestic interior.⁹

Following Burnet and Lindsay's plan, the Grand Pavilion held the most opulent and prestigious exhibits. The galleries accommodated the displays of fine art. The loan collection of 190 modern French and Dutch paintings curated by R.T. Hamilton Bruce was the Exhibition's critical success,¹⁰ but it was accompanied by other loans of English paintings, many from aristocratic or royal sources, and of Scottish works in which the Royal

Ellis inaccurately gives St Leonards as the depot. See also illus p.139.

6 *Engineering*, 04 Jun 1886, p.539.

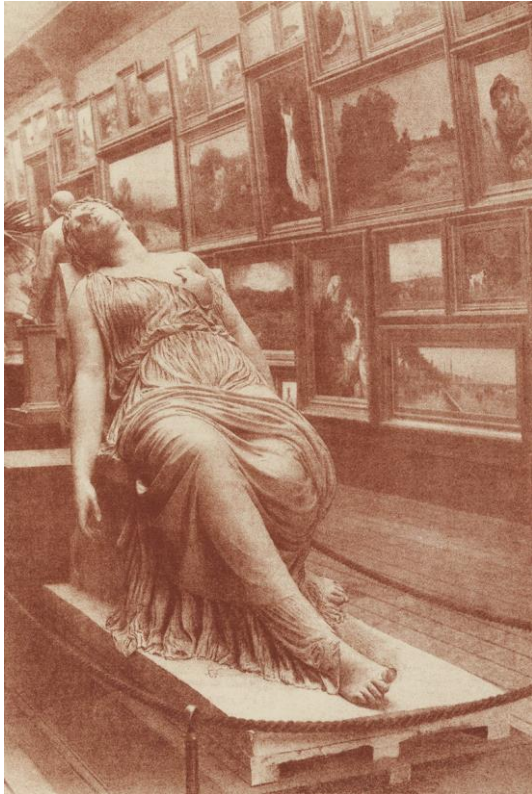
7 *Engineer*, 07 May 1886, p.350.

8 *Builder*, 30 Oct 1886, p.622, considered that four or six more courts should have been provided.

9 Kevin Hetherington, *Capitalism's Eye: Cultural Spaces of the Commodity*. (London, 2007).

10 *Memorial Catalogue of the French and Dutch Loan Collection: Edinburgh International Exhibition 1886*. (Edinburgh, 1888); Suzanne Veldink, "Be-Marised or Bemused!" R.T. Hamilton Bruce and the International Exhibition of 1886', *Journal of the Scottish Society for Art History*, 14 (2010), pp.51–62.

Scottish Academy establishment figured prominently.¹¹ More than 500 additional paintings were offered for sale, and watercolours, architectural designs, etchings, and photographs, together with sculpture—‘[t]he display of statuary is the most important ever exhibited in Scotland’—completed the art holdings.¹²



Illus 4-1 An Exhibition art gallery: G.A. Lawson’s ‘Cleopatra’; behind, a crowded hanging of paintings. *Builder*, 23 Oct 1886

The Grand Hall was intended principally as an auditorium; its very emptiness emphasised its ceremonial grandeur. The margins of the great nave were given up to stands displaying luxury goods, in which Edinburgh manufacturers or representatives were conspicuous. Marshall & Sons’ (#631) private museum of Scottish antiquities was accompanied by a display of their own work, only one of the exhibits of fine metalwork

11 For unionist-nationalist tendencies in Scottish art and the influence of contemporary Dutch painting see John Morrison, *Painting the Nation: Identity and Nationalism in Scottish Painting, 1800–1920*. (Edinburgh, 2003).

12 *Builder*, 31 Jul 1886, p.172. General review *Times*, 29 Sep 1886, p.4; official listing, International Exhibition of Industry, Science, and Art, *Catalogue of the Pictures and Works of Art*. (Edinburgh, 1886) identifying lenders, a matter of consuming interest to picture-fanciers. 1,071 oils were included, cf. the 817 selected for the Royal Scottish Academy’s annual exhibition, *Scotsman*, 12 Feb 1886, p.5.

and jewellery.¹³ Displays of art pottery and glassware and high-class watches and clocks were also admitted to the prestige space. In contrast to the scale of their surroundings, and to the gigantism on show elsewhere in the Exhibition, the appeal of the Grand Hall exhibits resided in their small scale.¹⁴ This miniature quality was also evident in the collection of ship



INTERIOR OF GREAT HALLS - EDINBURGH EXHIBITION.

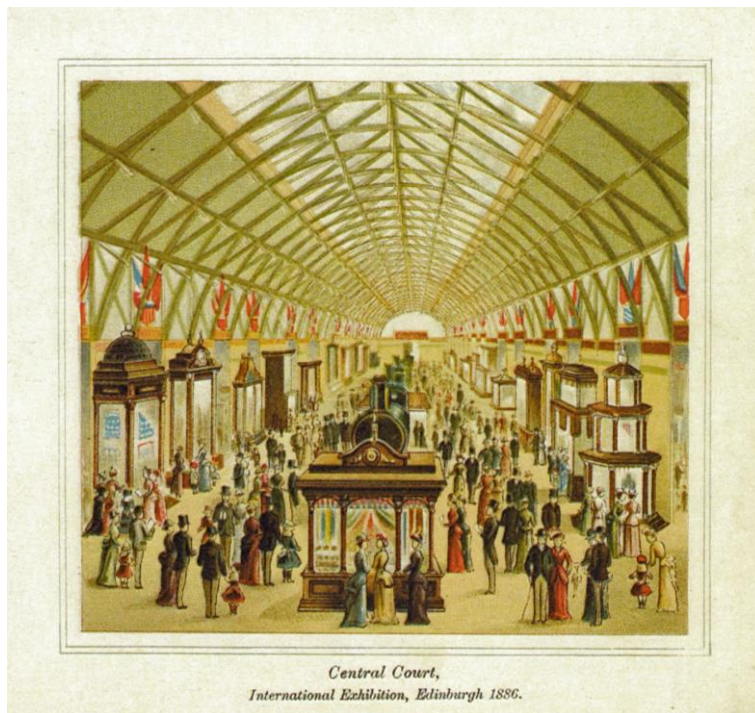
Illus 4-2 Display cases in the Grand Hall transept. From Ormiston & Glass's *Souvenir of the Exhibition*

models from Clydeside and East Coast yards on show in the Hall. Produced by shipbuilding firms as records of achievement, and expressing pride in possession in the hands of shipowners, these finely detailed scale models attracted a knowledgeable audience and formed a popular subject for exhibitions. 'The public, as it happens, is utterly sick of models' the *Glasgow Herald* declared when the Glasgow steamship exhibition was mooted in 1884; but ship models were a prominent feature of the South Glasgow Exhibition later than year, and the much larger display at Edinburgh was enthusiastically reviewed as a gauge of

13 See p.129 above.

14 For miniaturisation and gigantism as display techniques see Burton Benedict, *The Anthropology of World's Fairs: San Francisco's Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915*. (London, 1983), p.16-17.

Scottish industrial superiority.¹⁵ The miniature scale of the models—though they could be as much as four feet long—contrasted pleasantly with the full-size cast-steel sternposts on show as outside exhibits (#2217, #2218).



Illus 4-3 The Central Court. *Pictorial Souvenir*

Within the temporary buildings, the main thoroughfare naturally offered an opportunity for striking visual effects:

The Central Court, running the whole length of the Exhibition building, [is] lined with objects of interest which have apparently been selected for their fitness to contribute to an effective *coup d'oeil* rather than on any principle of systematic classification.¹⁶

The Court's jumble of towering exhibits contrasted with the more restrained displays in the Grand Hall. The visual impact of the four full-size railway locomotives placed on 250 feet of track was unmistakable. The 'magnificent trophy' of the Steel Company of Scotland—the dominant producer of Scottish open-hearth steel, who had supplied the roof structure for the Grand Hall—sat close by, a collage of the company's products, bars, girders, rails

15 *Glasgow Herald*, 31 Oct 1884, p.6. The Edinburgh collection reviewed *Scotsman*, 31 Jul 1886, p.7. See also A.S.E. Browning, *Ship Models: The Clyde Room and the Glasgow Museums' Ship Model Collection*. (Glasgow, 1988).

16 *Scotsman*, 07 May 1886, p.4.

and castings forming an archway twenty feet high.¹⁷ As the Court became filled with such physically imposing specimens vying for attention, and like the Steel Company ignoring the ten-foot height limit imposed by the Exhibition regulations, observers bemoaned the loss of the endless, open vista of the long avenue. The four-tier linoleum ziggurat erected by the prominent department store Cranston & Elliot, ‘which, like a veritable Tower of Babel, overtops all the rest and reaches almost to the skylight’, aroused particular comment.¹⁸

Interior architecture was commissioned by the more publicity-conscious exhibitors; substantial constructions stood out in the landscape of showcases and display tables. Sydney Mitchell, architect of Old Edinburgh, designed an aesthetically acceptable counterpart to the Cranston and Elliot pyramid for the Kirkcaldy Linoleum Company, ‘a large model of an Egyptian temple’, ‘covered with patterns of their goods, on which the lily and other characteristic emblems appear’.¹⁹ In the Machinery Hall George Washington Browne, another up-and-coming Edinburgh architect, created an ambitious joint pavilion, pilastered, ornamentally arched and balustraded, for three disparate exhibitors, William Martin’s Royal Blind Asylum, the Singer Sewing Machine Company, and a manufacturer of ‘Machinery, Appliances, and Fittings for the Aerated Water Trade’. But Browne’s triumph, ‘probably the most beautiful stand in the whole Exhibition’, housed a display of Egyptian cigarette manufacture for the George Street grocers Dymock & Guthrie: ‘Formed on the model of a Cairo bazaar, it displays great wealth of wood turning and carving, is hung with blue and gold curtains, and lighted by Moorish lamps’.²⁰

The heterogeneous character of the exhibitors was obvious. A number of technical educational and philanthropic institutions were represented. Undaunted after the setback of the Forestry Exhibition, the Scottish Arboricultural Society (#384) showed specimens ‘which will be the nucleus of the proposed Forestry collection’.²¹ Christian Guthrie Wright’s Edinburgh Cookery School (#1144) took a stand to publicise their ventures in dressmaking and embroidery. And William Martin’s Royal Blind Asylum (#805, #937, #1298)²² and its

17 *Engineering*, 30 Jul 1886, p.116.

18 *North British Advertiser & Ladies’ Journal*, 15 May 1886. See also *Dispatch*, 17 Apr 1886, p.2; *Citizen*, *Scotsman*, 16 Apr 1886, p.3. The organisers’ unwillingness (or inability) to enforce the height regulation was a foretaste of conflicts to come.

19 *Scotsman*, 29 Apr 1886, p.5; *Cameron’s Guide through the International Exhibition of Industry, Science, and Art*. (Edinburgh, 1886), p.31.

20 *Edinburgh Evening News*, 12 May 1886, p.2. *Scottish News*, 10 Apr 1886, p.3. For Browne see *DSA*.

21 *Cameron’s Guide*, p.83.

22 Martin exhibited the Asylum’s products in two Classes and in Machinery in Motion, and

Glasgow equivalent the Asylum for the Blind (#931) presented the charitable foundation as a productive enterprise in their manufactures of bedding and basketry.

In other instances the local committees formed as a result of the Exhibition organisers' overtures to municipal Scotland had produced corporate trophies promoting local industrial specialisms. The most ambitious of these was the Greenock Trophy (#700), another of the Central Avenue's ziggurats 'rising in tiers almost to the roof', a concoction of artifacts celebrating the town's shipbuilding, engineering, textile and pottery industries on a foundation, appropriately, of sugar.²³ The Dunfermline Linen Manufacturers (#299) and the Galashiels Manufacturers' Corporation (#323) also presented displays of their signature local industries.

These examples of voluntary or municipal display were far outnumbered by the industrial and commercial enterprises which formed the overwhelming majority of general exhibitors. Yet, despite the organisers' proclamations about applications for space and the close packing of the Exhibition courts, at 1,179 the number of these general exhibitors was comparatively small.²⁴ Though the bald total of exhibitors was an imperfect measure, conflating Constable's print works with the display of 'the world's smallest book' (#1382), the Edinburgh figure could hardly be compared to the numbers claimed for the great European exhibitions—most recently Antwerp, with 14,472 exhibitors—or even for the specialised and much smaller South Kensington events. On this comparison the limited scale of the Edinburgh event was apparent.²⁵

The general exhibitors' geographical origins underlined this limited reach. In particular, they revealed the flimsiness of the Exhibition's claim to be truly international: only eighty-three exhibitors, or seven per cent of the total, came from outside the United Kingdom: 'the nations of the world prefer to confine their attention to exhibitions in the world's

provided bedding for the Model Tenement.

23 *Scotsman*, 13 Sep 1886, p.5.

24 General exhibitors are those showing in Classes I to XIII, Machinery in Motion, Foreign Exhibits and Outside Exhibits (therefore excluding Fine Art, Artisan and Women's Industries Sections and the Old Edinburgh shopkeepers). This and the following analyses are based on *Official Catalogue*, 5th edition. Here exhibitors showing in more than one class have been counted only once.

25 Caroline Terryn, 'From Elite Fair to Mass Medium: Exhibitors and Visitors at the Antwerp World Exhibitions', in *De panoramische droom: Antwerpen en de wereldtentoonstellingen, 1885, 1894, 1930*, ed. by Mandy Nauwelaerts (Antwerp: Antwerpen 93, 1993), pp.77–81, p.77. South Kensington exhibitors, estimated from their catalogues: Health > 2,400; Inventions > 3,000.

origin	number	%
Edinburgh	332	28
Glasgow	204	17
other Scotland	241	20
Scotland	777	66
London	143	12
rest of England & Wales	166	14
Ireland	10	1
other UK	319	27
Germany (inc. Bavaria)	15	
Italy	14	
France	12	
Austria (inc. Bohemia)	10	
Belgium	7	
USA	5	
Russia	4	
Switzerland	4	
Denmark	3	
Holland	2	
Norway	2	
Australia, India, New Zealand, Hungary, Turkey (1 each)	5	
rest of world	83	7
total general exhibitors	1179	100

Table 4-1 Geographical origins of general exhibitors. Source: *Official Catalogue*

greater capitals: and, whether we like it or not, we cannot fail to see that they declined to put in an appearance at Edinburgh'.²⁶ In this the event failed to compare even with its much smaller Edinburgh predecessors, the Fisheries Exhibition with its European presence and the Forestry Exhibition with its Indian and Japanese contributions.

In the absence of any official certifying body, the appointment of official Commissions by foreign governments formed one measure of the internationality of an exhibition. Here again the Edinburgh organisers had fared badly. Beyond sponsoring a sale

²⁶ *Scottish News*, 22 Oct 1886, p.6. Location of exhibitors as given in *Official Catalogue*. Some foreign exhibitors were represented by local agents; a firm's registered office was normally given as its location, rather than that of its works—the shale oil producers of West Lothian and Fife had either Edinburgh or Glasgow offices; the US-originated parent of the Singer works at Clydebank was London-registered.

collection of some sixty indifferently-received paintings,²⁷ the solitary Belgian Commission had little effect: only seven general exhibitors originated from Belgium.²⁸ Even this meagre presence was more than the combined total of three Colonial entries: tinned meat from Queensland (#170); kauri gum from New Zealand (#894A); and Indian tea samples (#193).²⁹ Despite the Executive's lobbying, the much stronger claims of the South Kensington Colonial and Indian Exhibition had prevailed over the distant appeal of the Edinburgh event.³⁰ The paucity of international exhibitors from any quarter was obvious, even to sympathetic observers.

Excepting, perhaps, contributors to the department of art, the foreign exhibits form a supremely disappointing section of the exhibition [containing] nothing ... that appears to differ from the art shop in a fashionable quarter of a city ... The Exhibition may be International as regards Art, but it certainly is not conspicuously so as regards either Science or Industry.³¹

Patrick Geddes was scathing:

While the Liverpool Exhibition was widely international, as becomed a great maritime city, that of Edinburgh was so in little more than the name, scarcely, indeed, even British, but acutely provincial – in too many respects, indeed, almost parochial—alike in conception and execution.³²

As the other face of the Geddes's provincialism, the local origins of the majority of exhibitors demonstrated the Exhibition's success in mobilising Scottish industry and

27 For these 'Belgian atrocities' see Megilp, *Bailie*, 12 May 1886, p.11.

28 For the invitation to foreign Commissions see p.97 above. John Allwood, *The Great Exhibitions*. (London, 1977), p.179 takes the presence of four official Commissions as defining internationality; see H. Trueman Wood, 'Memorandum on Exhibitions Held in Great Britain and Ireland', *Journal of the Society of Arts*, 37 (1889), pp.900–905, on lack of international content in British exhibitions of the 1880s.

29 A display of Canadian apples from the Colonial and Indian Exhibition also put in a late appearance, Advertisement, *Scotsman*, 23 Oct 1886, p.1. For kauri gum see Carl Walrond, 'Kauri gum and gum digging', *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand* <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/kauri-gum-and-gum-digging>, accessed 30 Oct 2013.

30 Although these claims hindered the Liverpool organisers, with their city's trading connections, much less. Wood, 'Memorandum', p.904; Murray Steele and Mike Benbough-Jackson, 'Civic Pride on an International Stage: The Liverpool "Shipperies", 1886', *Local Historian*, 42:3 (August 2012), pp.180–92. Five foreign Commissions were appointed at Liverpool, thirteen at the Health Exhibition, and seven at Inventions (Catalogues of exhibitions concerned).

31 *Dispatch*, 18 May 1886, p.2. See also *Scotsman*, 30 Aug 1886, p.5.

32 Patrick Geddes, *Industrial Exhibitions and Modern Progress*. (Edinburgh, 1887), p.8.

class	Edinburgh		Glasgow		all Scotland		other UK		world	total
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%		
I Minerals, Mining etc	16	30	7	13	44	81	10	19		54
II Pottery, Glass, etc	10	28	5	14	22	61	14	39		36
II Chemistry Pharmacy Food	57	29	36	18	136	69	57	29	5	198
IV Animal & Veg Substances	56	37	18	12	120	79	29	19	2	151
V Paper, Printing etc	30	48	9	14	43	68	19	30	1	63
VI Prime Movers	6	19	11	35	26	84	5	16		31
VII Manufactures in Metal	24	30	16	20	53	65	28	35		81
VIII Railways, Vehicles	14	34	8	20	26	63	15	37		41
IX Civil Eng, Building, Shipbding	17	19	21	24	66	75	21	24	1	88
X Furniture & Decoration	28	38	14	19	56	77	16	22	1	73
XI Scientific Appliances	33	31	25	24	71	68	33	31	1	105
XII Educational Appliances	18	40	6	13	26	58	17	38	2	45
XIII Sea Industries	5	25	2	10	14	70	6	30		20
Machinery in Motion	26	21	28	23	76	62	44	36	2	122

Table 4-2 Geographical origins of exhibitors, by Exhibition class. Source: *Official Catalogue*

commerce. Two-thirds of the exhibitors were Scottish; more than a quarter came from Edinburgh itself. This was, once again, an exposition of national achievement; pride in national progress provided the modern counterpart to the historical depiction of Old Edinburgh and the antiquarian relics in the Grand Hall. The iconography of nationhood could be adapted to industrial and commercial ends. The statuary of the buildings' façade was echoed in exercises such as the Pumpherston Oil Company's bust of Burns 'modelled in some waxy substance' and Isdale & McCallum's likeness of Walter Scott executed in 'good ordinary household soap'.³³

The exhibitors, a limited and self-selected sample of the overall population of Scottish enterprises, could not be considered strictly representative. It was a patchy likeness, where the patches might obscure distinctive sectors of the local economy: 'It is remarkable that of the 30 odd brewing establishments in Edinburgh, only one is represented, that of Mr James Jamieson, of the Waverley Brewery. One of the leading industries of Edinburgh is thus practically taken out of competition'.³⁴ On the other hand, the visitor perusing the sometimes helpful, sometimes confusing aggregated groupings in the Exhibition courts

³³ *North British Daily Mail*, 18 May 1886.

³⁴ *Evening News*, 12 May 1886, p.2. Jamieson's stand featured a display model of the Scott Monument in crystal, lit by electricity.

could take them as a convincing depiction of Scottish, and Edinburgh, industry and commerce, albeit one skewed towards its most characterful, dynamic and publicity-conscious constituents.

The Geological Survey Office's display of maps (#51) charted Scotland's mineral wealth, samples of which were displayed by representatives of the country's extractive industries. More than eighty per cent of the exhibitors in Class I, of 'Minerals, Mining, etc', were Scottish. Caithness flags, Aberdeenshire and Dalbeattie granite and Perthshire slate represented the country's stone and quarrying industries. The stands of the booming Scottish shale oil producers included specimens of their raw material; coal mining companies showed the products of their pits. The subject, mineral abundance, demanded a display of the massive from 'the tall obelisks of red and grey granite' to 'a great block of Quarter ell coal, weighing 3 tons 7cwt' and another obelisk 'formed of Lesmahagow cannel coal'.³⁵

Exhibitors from the engineering industries displayed progress in the specialities associated with the West of Scotland. The Steel Company of Scotland's arch celebrated the materials revolution wrought so recently by their volume production of acid steel.³⁶ The extent of this revolution was evident in the Grand Hall in the models of advanced steel-hulled ships from the Clyde yards: of designs such as J.&G. Thomson's *America* of 1883 (#786) and the Fairfield Company's *Umbria* and *Etruria* of 1884 (#786).³⁷ Another innovator in metallurgy, the Edinburgh firm of Millar & Company showed an extensive display of their advanced-technology chilled iron castings (#13).³⁸ The gleaming railway locomotives in the Central Court displayed the latest products of a signature Glasgow industry.³⁹ Bertram's and Douglas & Grant's working engines demonstrated advanced

35 *Scotsman*, 20 May 1886, p.5; 21 May 1886, p.4. The shale oil industry exhibited in Class III, also the location for Peter Spence's 9½-ton alum block, p.120 above. Manchester-based Spence was a Brechin native, *St James's Gazette*, 28 Apr 1886, p.12.

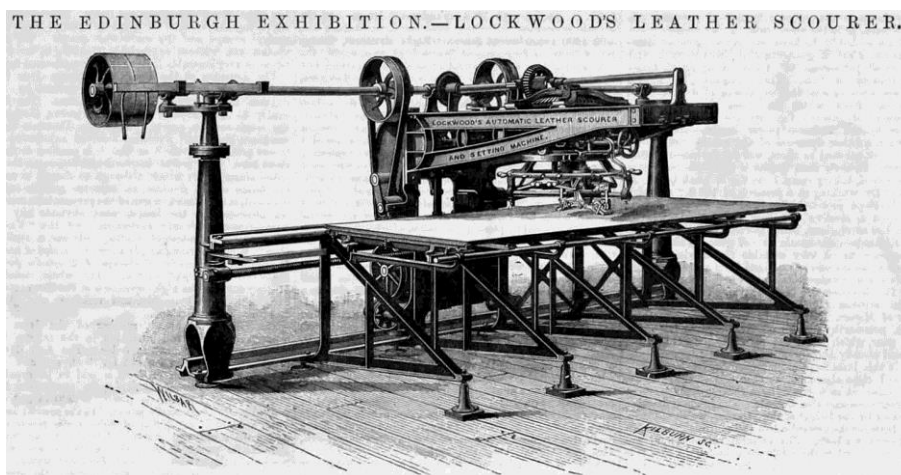
36 *Engineering*, 30 Jul 1886, p.116. Bruce Lenman, *An Economic History of Modern Scotland, 1660–1976*. (London, 1977), pp.175–76 on the rise of the Steel Company after 1876; 'it was only after 1880 that Scottish steel firms began to emerge in any number'.

37 David Pollock, *Modern Shipbuilding and the Men Engaged in It: A Review of Recent Progress in Steamship Design and Construction*. (London, 1884), a publication on sale in the Exhibition bookstall: International Exhibition of Industry, Science, and Art, *Official Guide to the Exhibition*. (Edinburgh, 1886), p.68.

38 For Miller see Institute of Public Administration, *Studies in the Development of Edinburgh*. (London, 1939), series II pp.29–30.

39 Murdoch Nicolson, *Glasgow: Locomotive Builder to Britain*. (Glasgow, 1998), for the poisonous

practice in stationary steam-engine technology; while the current concern for economy in power generation was addressed in model form by one of the Fairfield Company's triple-expansion engines, and elsewhere by examples of innovative valve-gear such as that of Dübs's locomotive for the Caledonian Railway (#721).⁴⁰



Illus 4-4 The Lockwood Leather Scourer. *Engineer*, 11 Jun 1886, p.470

Innovation in capital equipment was inevitably accompanied by claims of savings in labour. The much-admired Lockwood leather scourer, an American design built by Arrol Brothers for Schrader, Mitchell, & Weir of Glasgow (#1249), introduced such a labour-saving device into a traditional industry, and the wood-carving machine developed by Pollock of Beith (#1260) represented mechanised production in another area of craft skill.⁴¹ And, although entries were small in number, Scottish firms were present either as manufacturers of or as agents for applications of the new technologies of electricity, as they were for the installations of the electric light. Another new technology, the gas engine, was similarly represented. In the production of bicycles and tricycles, another area of innovation and the current beneficiary of an upper-class cycling craze, Scottish manufacturers left the field entirely to English light engineering firms; though the most extensive cycle range was shown by the enterprising Edinburgh agent Walter Hislop (#731).

relationships between three of the Glasgow firms; see p.64 above for W. Montgomerie Neilson's attempt to raise interest in a Glasgow Exhibition. For the locomotives displayed see Alan J.S. Paterson, 'Exhibition Engines of 1886', *Railway World*, 21 (January 1960), pp.15–18, *Scotsman*, 04 Jun 1886, p.5.

40 Paterson, 'Exhibition Engines', pp.16–17; on triple expansion engines at the Exhibition, *Engineering*, 15 Oct 1886, pp.404–405.

41 *Engineer*, 27 Aug 1886, pp.164–66, illus.

The installations in the Machinery Hall demonstrated the workings of mass-production consumer industries. In textiles, Platt Brothers of Oldham's worsted spinning-frames and power-loom (#1220) constituted the Hall's largest exhibit.⁴² Its neighbour the Constable model printworks, printing and binding the Exhibition publications, was of much greater local significance. Constable's stand also hosted lithographic printing by McLagan & Cumming; together with the displays of Seggie's advanced printing machinery and inks from A.B. Fleming's Caroline Park works it made clear the interconnectedness of local firms and the industry's leading place in the Edinburgh economy.⁴³

The Machinery Hall's six working bakeries depicted an industry in transition. Technological innovation in the shape of more efficient ovens and mechanised preparation, new techniques of leavening, and patent innovations such as John Montgomerie's Malt Digestive Bread (#140) were indicators of increasing scale, business concentration and mechanisation in a vital sector of food production.⁴⁴ The adjoining demonstrations of the manufacture of confectionery—'[t]he delights of childhood and the solace of old age',⁴⁵ and early evidence of the national sweet tooth—portrayed a Scottish specialism based on the cheap-sugar economy captured in the Greenock trophy—of 'Sugaropolis'—and in the engineering exhibits of sugar refining plant.

The baking and confectionery displays were the most spectacular manifestations of the industrial manufacture and branding of food products. Displays of pickles and preserves competed for the viewer's attention. Andrew Beveridge & Co. of Glasgow (#207) was able to persuade the Liberal man of the hour to lend his name to their Rosebery sauce.⁴⁶ Branding and product identity reached a peak in the trophies of the merchants of Scotch whisky whose marketing combined appeals to national pride and connoisseurship with the traditional attractions of this booming industry.⁴⁷

42 For Platt see James Hogg (ed.), *Fortunes Made in Business: A Series of Original Sketches, Biographical and Anecdotic*. (London, 1887), vol.III pp.421–85. Their Glasgow representative Richard Murray was a member of the Glasgow Committee Executive and of the Machinery Committee.

43 Almost half of the entries in Class V came from Edinburgh firms.

44 The 'scientific' nature of the Scottish bakery and milling industries was noted by *Sanitary Record*, 16 Aug 1886 pp.72–76. W. Hamish Fraser, *The Coming of the Mass Market 1850–1914*. (London, 1981), pp.165–8; Sigfried Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History*. (New York, 1948), pp.169–208.

45 *Scotsman*, 02 Mar 1886, p.5.

46 International Forestry Exhibition, *Official Catalogue*. (Edinburgh, 1884), advertisement p.190.

47 J.&G. Stewart's (#144) commendation for a 'Highly Interesting and Instructive Exhibit of Samples of Product of Nearly Every Malt Whisky Distillery in Scotland' (Awards list). See also

In contrast to the spectacle of industrial capital equipment and the mass production of consumer goods, the Exhibition provided an occasion for the display of the skills and taste associated with the luxury industries which featured strongly in the Edinburgh economy. The high-class jewellers in the Grand Hall were only one of the trades catering to the city's wealthy upper-class and professional residents and to its prestigious institutions. Amongst the exhibits of Furniture and Decoration, William Adams's highly-praised carved oak furniture (#924, see Illus 4-5) was produced specifically for an aristocratic market.⁴⁸ The



Illus 4-5 Edinburgh craft skills: William Adam's carved sideboard. *Builder*, 11 Dec 1886

three reception rooms in the Exhibition buildings were tastefully decorated and furnished by leading local firms;⁴⁹ George Dobie & Son contributed less elevated room settings of 'Boudoir, Study, and Smoking-Room, illustrating the application of comparatively inexpensive fittings and decorations to such apartments in a middle-class house' (#880). Scott Morton's 'Tynecastle Embossed Canvas' (#882) was the best-known of the decorative materials for the middle- and upper-class home exhibited by Edinburgh suppliers. Displays of dressmaking and tailoring from fashionable New Town and Bridges stores, as well the

NLS Acc.10222: Bartholomew archive, Stewart's 'National Exhibit of Scotch Malt Whiskies'.

48 Edinburgh firms' 'artistic handiwork of a high order' was praised *Builder*, 21 Aug 1886, p.286; for Adams's sideboard see *NBA&LJ*, 29 May 1886.

49 They were: W.R. Clapperton, Whytock & Reid, and John Taylor & Co. (*Official Catalogue*, Complimentary List).

bespoke products of the Edinburgh specialist robemakers and Highland outfitters, took a prominent place in the courts devoted to clothing.⁵⁰

The presence of these businesses dramatised the tension between manufacturing and merchandising in exhibition practice. The élite Edinburgh stores were involved in production: Charles Taylor's carved furniture (#881), Cranston & Elliott's velvet-cutting (#342), and even Dymock & Guthrie's hand-rolled cigarettes (#184) were prominent exhibits. They were however primarily retailers, with their Exhibition stands acting as shop windows for their home establishments. The great exhibitions have been seen as theatres of commodification, characterised by the overwhelming presence of goods; the department store is one of the institutions of modernity to which the exhibition has been compared.⁵¹ The convergence of the two—the department store within the exhibition—emphasised still more sharply the nature of exhibits as saleable commodities. Edinburgh exhibitors such as Craig Brothers, showing 'Scotch Tweed Winter Styles, 1886-87' (#338), or Renton & Co with their 'Ladies' Costumes and Mantles, designed for the International Exhibition' (#333), made the connection explicit. The demands of commerce, in their various forms, became a focus for tensions between management and exhibitors during the course of the event.

The banality of the global

In the literature of exhibitions, the great exhibitions of the late nineteenth century have become firmly associated with the celebration of Empire.⁵² Their depiction of colonies as abundant sources of raw materials and their enthusiastic display of the exotic, of which the parading of living anthropological specimens is the most notorious manifestation, have marked the exhibitions essentially as vehicles for imperial propaganda.⁵³ The quickening pace of imperial competition in the 1880s saw the rise of the overtly imperial exhibition.

50 *Dispatch*, 12 Jun 1886, p.2; for a review of Highland jewellery and costume centred on R.&H.B. Kirkwood's exhibit (#629) see *Watchmaker, Jeweller and Silversmith*, October 1886, pp.85–86.

51 Russell Lewis, 'Everything Under One Roof: World's Fairs and Department Stores in Paris and Chicago', *Chicago History*, 12:3 (Fall 1983), pp.28–47; Larry D. Lutchmansingh, 'Commodity Exhibitionism at the London Great Exhibition of 1851', *Annals of Scholarship*, 7 (1990), pp.203–16.

52 Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: the Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs*. (Manchester, 1988), chap.3; Burton Benedict, 'International Exhibitions and National Identity', *Anthropology Today*, 7:3 (June 1991), pp.5–9 treats 'national identity' as synonymous with imperial pretension.

53 John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880–1960*. (Manchester, 1984), chap.4.

The Amsterdam International Colonial Exhibition of 1883 was the first such dedicated event. The Antwerp Exhibition in 1885 included products and artifacts from Belgian, French and Portuguese colonies. In 1886, the Colonial and Indian Exhibition brought the triumphant celebration of the Indian Empire and the Colonies to South Kensington.⁵⁴ The organisers of the Liverpool Exhibition had not been appreciably hindered by the resulting competition for exotic content. Local connections produced sideshows which included the reproduction Ashantee Palace erected by the West Africa Company and the Indian Pavilion with its ‘Grand Indian Procession’ of imported people and animals.⁵⁵

The Edinburgh Exhibition, squeezed out of this contest, and with its miserable complement of colonial exhibitors, might have seemed an unlikely forum for imperial display. Yet this perception underplays the context, the place of the Empire in Scottish public life and in the life of many of its citizens.⁵⁶ Glasgow was an imperial city, the Second City of Empire despite Liverpool claims; the capital goods produced by West of Scotland industries, amongst them the ships, steel, and sugar-pans displayed in the Exhibition, found markets in the Empire and the wider world.⁵⁷ Edinburgh too had imperial and world connections though its distinctive exports, for example of capital or of qualified doctors, were rather less amenable to exhibition and its institutions may have been at times reluctant to indulge in imperial observances.⁵⁸ The Exhibition organisers had to make use of such networks and material which lay at their disposal.

In this matter Marchbank had prevailed on Lothian to call for assistance from the

54 For Internationale Koloniale en Uitvoerhandel Tentoonstelling, Amsterdam 1883, see Findling and Pelle (eds.), *Historical Dictionary of World's Fairs and Expositions, 1851–1988*, pp.78–79. J Dehuy, *Exposition universelle d'Anvers: guide à travers l'exposition*. (Huy, 1885), pp.30–33; Frank Cundall (ed.), *Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition*. (London, 1886).

55 K.C. Spier, *International Exhibition at Liverpool, 1886. Some of the Sights for Visitors*. (Liverpool, 1886), pp.16–17; International Exhibition of Navigation, Travelling, Commerce & Manufacture, *Official Guide*. (Liverpool, 1886), p.75. Much of this content was supplied through the agency of the animal importer William Cross. Steele and Benbough-Jackson, ‘Civic Pride’, pp.184–85.

56 Richard J. Finlay, ‘The Rise and Fall of Popular Imperialism in Scotland, 1850–1950’, *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 113:1 (1997), pp.13–21; ‘National Identity, Union, and Empire, c.1850–c.1970’, in John M. MacKenzie and T.M. Devine (eds.), *Scotland and the British Empire*. (Oxford, 2011), pp.280–316.

57 John M. MacKenzie, ‘“The Second City of the Empire”: Glasgow—Imperial Municipality’, in Felix Driver and David Gilbert (eds.), *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity*. (Manchester, 1999).

58 For example Robert Anderson, ‘Ceremony in Context: The Edinburgh University Tercentenary, 1884’, *Scottish Historical Review*, 87:1 (April 2008), p.138.

Scottish Governors of Imperial India.⁵⁹ Lady Frances Reay's collection (#1896) of more than 300 pieces of embroidery by Indian women was the sole outcome; dispatched to the Women's Industries Section it was a powerful example of these Scottish connections in action, and of the networking potential of the aristocratic Liberal organisers of the Women's Industries Committee. The Liberal peer Lord Reay, a Gladstonian confederate of Rosebery and Aberdeen, was appointed Governor of Bombay in 1885; his wife Fanny had been acquainted with Ladies Rosebery and Aberdeen at least since the Midlothian campaign of 1879, when they formed, with their husbands, part of the house party at Dalmeny.⁶⁰ These connections had secured one substantial Indian exhibit for the Edinburgh Exhibition:

What, for instance, could be more suggestive as to the greatness of the Empire than those delicate fabrics which Lady Reay has sent, the work of the dusky women of India? ... The women of India have been helped into existence, so to speak—made part of the active industrial community, and recognised as such.⁶¹

Another resonant echo of empire could be heard in the Free Church of Scotland's display of artifacts from the Livingstonia Mission (#487), a foundation central to the Scottish evangelising project in the Nyasa region of southern Africa.⁶² The region and the Mission were in the public eye. Africa and the imperial geographical vision were abiding concerns of the recently established Scottish Geographical Society; and Robert Laws, Livingstonia's leader, had completed a popular fund-raising missionary campaign in January 1886.⁶³ Beside domestic implements, the Mission displayed 'assegais barbed so as to make it almost impossible to withdraw them from a wound, and a number of other weapons of

59 See p.96 above.

60 See the photograph including the three couples with the Gladstones at Dalmeny, reproduced in for example W. T. Stead, 'Lord and Lady Aberdeen, a Character Sketch', *Review of Reviews* (1894), p.49. For Lord Reay see E.M. Satow, 'Mackay, Donald James, eleventh Lord Reay and Baron Reay (1839–1921)', rev. P.W.H. Brown, *ODNB*.

61 *Scotsman*, 20 Aug 1886, p.4. Though listed in the *Official Catalogue*, the Reay collection arrived only in early August, *Evening News*, 09 Aug 1886, p.3. For Indian merchandise and exhibition in Scotland see Stana Nenadic, 'Exhibiting India in Nineteenth-Century Scotland and the Impact on Commerce, Industry and Popular Culture', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 34:1 (April 2014), pp.67–89, though this does not mention the Reay collection.

62 See Esther Breitenbach, *Empire and Scottish Society: The Impact of Foreign Missions at Home, c.1790 to c.1914*. (Edinburgh, 2009), p.44 for Livingstonia and a mention of the Exhibition display.

63 *Herald*, 19 Jan 1886, p.3; Breitenbach, *Empire*, p.15. H.M. Stanley addressed the S.G.S inaugural meeting in Edinburgh in December 1884, *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 1:1. (1885), pp.1–17; African themes featured prominently in the journal thereafter. The S.G.S. had a stand at the Exhibition, though its 'Old Plans and Views of Edinburgh' (#1108) were civic rather than imperial in focus.

war'. The violent impulses they revealed could however be countered by Scottish discipline and mastery of the local Chinyanja language: 'a paradigm of the verb "to love" is shown, a few minutes' study of which gives some idea of the difficulties to be encountered in endeavouring to reduce the spoken dialect to rules of grammar'.⁶⁴

The Exhibition visitor would have struggled to find further evidence of overt imperial content in the Edinburgh courts. This is not, however, to say that Reay's embroidery or the Livingstonia assegais and grammars exhausted the presence of Empire at the event. Michael Billig's employment of the linguistic category of deixis—a statement which requires the listener to supply context to be understood—in his discussion of the banality of nationalism may form a useful starting point.⁶⁵ For Billig, the very pervasiveness of symbols of nationhood, routinised and enhabited, give them an unconscious power. The appeals to Scottish national sentiment on display throughout the Exhibition courts were anything but banal in Billig's terms; the banners, the statues and the emblems were intended to convey an explicit message. But the Exhibition encompassed a rich sub-text of utterances and references about the world beyond the nation, which required audience knowledge to complete their meaning: a kind of banal imperialism.

Thus in the display of ship models, itself a potent reminder to visitors of the global reach of Scottish industry, the replica of the *Doomoon*, an advanced river cruiser built by William Denny & Brothers (#1934) for the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company was celebrated as 'the vessel which conveyed the British representative up the Irrawaddy with the ultimatum to the King of Burmah' at the onset of the Third Burmese War in 1885.⁶⁶ The model served as a prompt for its viewers to a brutally-conducted colonial adventure whose (British) casualty lists featured regularly in newspaper reports.⁶⁷ In a similar vein, the

64 *Cameron's Guide*, p.41; see also *Evening News*, 18 May 1886, p.2. The National Bible Society (#521), printer of Laws's Chinyanja New Testament, showed Bibles in c.200 languages nearby. According to Macdonald, *Unique and Glorious Mission*, p.133ff, Laws's 'harsh regime of discipline and corporal punishment was a reproach to the mission and to Christianity itself'.

65 Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism*. (London, 1995); cf. Colin Kidd's formulation of 'banal unionism' in *Union and Unionisms: Political Thought in Scotland, 1500–2000*. (Cambridge, 2008).

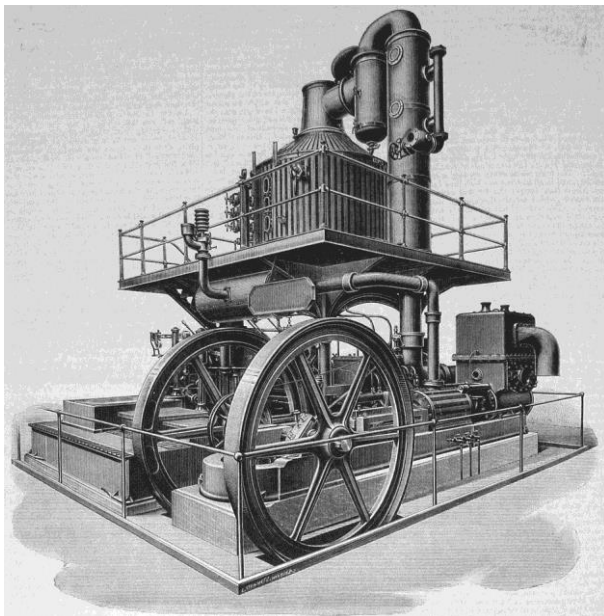
66 *Official Guide*, p.8; for the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company see Paul L. Robertson, 'Shipping and Shipbuilding: The Case of William Denny and Brothers', *Business History*, 16:1 (January 1974), p.39.

67 'Upper Burma during 1886', *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 3:8 (1887), pp.410–421; John Nisbet, *Burma Under British Rule---and Before*. (London, 1901), vol.1 pp.114–15 for the Flotilla Company and the 'pacification' of Upper Burma; though Nisbet identifies the ultimatum-carrying steamer as the *Ashley Eden*.

Glasgow firm of A.&J. Stewart's banal display of pipework (#678) was enough to remind one reporter of a colonial débâcle in the Sudan:

to the general run of visitors the specimens of the tubing supplied to the Government to convey water for the unfortunate Suakim-Berber Railway will awaken the greatest interest, as well as recall an episode in British history which cannot be rehearsed without a sense of shame.⁶⁸

But banality also characterised the wider engagement with a world economy in which these colonial adventures flourished. The Grand Hall's display of ship models demonstrated the range of customers for the products of the Clyde yards, from Scottish coasters to European navies to Mediterranean, Atlantic and South American shipping lines. Intended specifically for the tropics, A.&W. Smith's range of sugar processing equipment (#1707) was completed by an impressive vacuum pan designed for incorporation into the economy of the plantation.⁶⁹



Illus 4-6 A.&W. Smith's vacuum pan. *Engineering*, 12 Nov 1886, p.490

The world economy intruded into the Exhibition most obviously in the form of imported goods. Foreign exhibitors may have been few, but exhibits of the foreign were widespread.

68 *NBA&LJ*, 29 May 1886; Augustus Blandy Wylde, *'83 to '87 in the Soudan*. (London, 1888), vol.2 chap.5.

69 *Evening News*, 30 Apr 1886, p.2.

The scantiness of foreign exhibits has been remarked on, and the whole pronounced more of a national than an international collection: but a little reflection and some observation of exhibits will dispel the fancy, as a very large proportion of the contents of the stalls and trophies are really foreign exhibits, though shown by national exhibitors.⁷⁰

These were evident in the displays of consumer merchandise such as that of Palmer of Princes Street, exhibiting 'Japanese, Chinese, and other Foreign Goods' (#381), or in an Old Edinburgh shopkeeper's advertisement for 'Indian goods, Kotli, Moradabad and Benares ware'.⁷¹

It was in the field of patent food production that exhibitors, with their growing concern for branding, sought most clearly to use exotic origins as a marketing attraction. Thus the Edinburgh firm of Maclean & Sons (#196) found a suitable fashion in which to display their Revalenta, an invalid food manufactured, in Morningside, 'from the imported staple article ... Dahl [*sic*], or lentil of the Ganges'. 'The stand is appropriately set off with palm trees'.⁷² Brown & Polson of Paisley (#179) manufactured a mythical primitivism out of their workaday cornflour in a stand 'crowned by the figure of a North American savage'.⁷³ Most spectacular of all, in George Washington Browne's Orientalist enclave Dymock and Guthrie's 'Eastern Experts' hand-rolled the 'Cigarette de l'Orient', 'two Egyptians and a Greek attired in native costume having been specially engaged for the purpose'. The architect 'has kept strictly to the Oriental style so that the natives will appear to work as nearly as possible in one of their own Cairo bazaars'.⁷⁴

Artisans as exhibitors

The Artisan Section opened up a space for the display of working-class creativity in the Exhibition city, offered by an Executive Council largely composed of employers of labour and taken up by Edinburgh Trades Council, the representative body for organised labour in the city. The gesture of inclusion was an appealing one: 'It is meet [*sic*] that in Industrial exhibitions provision should be made for the special efforts of the working-classes, so that their zeal may be stimulated, their inventive faculty sharpened, and their skill as craftsmen

70 *Building News*, 26 Jun 1886, p.1028.

71 J.C. Dunlop, *Official Penny Guide to the Old Edinburgh Street*. (Edinburgh, 1886), advertisement.

72 *Evening News*, 12 May 1886, p.2.

73 *Daily Review*, 11 May 1886, p.4.

74 *Scottish News*, 10 Apr 1886, p.3.

encouraged'.⁷⁵ Inclusion, however, as events had already shown, had its limits.⁷⁶

'This somewhat novel feature in connection with large international exhibitions' was advertised as one of the Exhibition's distinctive features and principal attractions.⁷⁷ The Section was amongst the first departments to be reviewed, and then usually in glowing terms. 'The workmen's section is hardly second to any in popularity'. As a display of 'inventive genius' and 'artistic faculty', the Section was seen as a worthy representation of the products of respectable labour: 'A collection which for extent, variety, and distinct merit has not been surpassed at any similar exhibition'; 'There is much of real novelty; there is on all hands abundant evidence of patient industry, well-directed skill, and profitably spent leisure'; it provided evidence of working-class gains in resources, wages and free time in 'a display by individual workmen which ... as regards extent, variety, and beauty, could hardly have been collected half a century ago'.⁷⁸

The decoration of the Exhibition court set aside for this display appealed to the traditional craft loyalties of Edinburgh workers. The Artisan Section Committee had requested 'to the Trades through the [Trades] Council ... that they might have the use of the various Trade Flags and Emblems to decorate the Section' and these emblems adorned the court.⁷⁹ The Leith Shipwrights contributed '[t]wo great wooden frigates of the old type ... trophies of the trade which have been borne aloft on more than one public demonstration since the commencement of the century'.⁸⁰ Trade banners reinforced the association with these political parades the most recent of which, the Reform demonstrations of 1884, located the Trades firmly within the Gladstonian consensus of popular Edinburgh politics.⁸¹

Artisans have been right plucky for more than half a century. Of this characteristic there are many trophies. The Franchise Bill of 1884 is heralded there, and that of 1832 comes in for a slashing eulogism in the shape of a bannerette, bearing the figure of a

75 *Scotsman*, 15 May 1886, p.9.

76 p.101, above.

77 *Engineer*, 21 May 1886, p.388

78 *Dispatch*, 13 May 1886, p.2; *Scotsman*, 15 May 1886, p.9; see also *Herald*, 29 Apr 1886, p.5, *Dundee Courier*, 14 Jun 1886, p.4.

79 NLS Acc.11177/5: Edinburgh United Trades Council, Minutes, 09 Mar 1886.

80 *Dispatch*, 13 May 1886, p.2.

81 Mark Nixon, Gordon Pentland, and Matthew Roberts, 'The Material Culture of Scottish Reform Politics, c.1820–c.1884', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 32:1 (April 2012), pp.28–49; cf. Robert Q. Gray, *The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh*. (Oxford, 1976), pp.92–93.

Highlander, who looks extremely determined in his tartans.⁸²

The centrepiece of the Artisan Court elaborated the idea of the Trade as a collaboration between masters and artisans, capital and skilled labour. The Grand Obelisk Trophy of the Brassfounders of Edinburgh stood as a demonstration of artisan skill, materially assisted by employers and directed by professional designers. Members of the Brassfounders' Society, an affiliate of the Trades Council, executed the work with their employers' encouragement; 'the employers and friends of the trade have subscribed liberally towards defraying the expenses'.⁸³ James Gowans himself contributed the design. The thirteen-foot column incorporated the same local and national symbols as the buildings' façade. '[E]mbellished not only with all the emblems of the trade, but with shields of twenty Scottish Royal burghs and the national arms of England, Scotland and Ireland', the monument was crowned by an idealised figure sculpted by W. Stevenson Rhind. 'Attired in classical tunic, the worker stands with thoughtful, intent face, surveying, it may be presumed, the work on which he is engaged'.⁸⁴

Another Gowans project echoed the collaborative spirit of the Brassfounders Column. The Memorial Mason's Pillars by the Grand Entrance—'specimens of an order of architecture invented by Mr Gowans; the proportions being determined by some occult selection of ratios known only to the architect'⁸⁵—again incorporated Scottish municipal emblems, the national arms, and trade symbols. Intended as a permanent record of the Exhibition, the Pillars demonstrated Gowans's personal interest in stone as a material and the techniques of stone-working while at the same time expressing his Masonic romanticism.⁸⁶ And once again the exhibit embodied a collaboration between masters and trade society, in this case the Operative Masons: each defrayed the 'working and setting' expenses of one pillar, while '[q]uarry masters, architects and surveyors, Railway Companies and others' provided support.⁸⁷

82 *Courier*, 14 Jun 1886, p.4. For Reform banners see Helen Clark, *Raise the Banners High: The City of Edinburgh's Banner Collection*. (Edinburgh, 2001); the banner mentioned, of the Associated Carpenters, is illustrated p.57.

83 *Scotsman*, 25 Mar 1886, p.5; 24 Dec 1885, p.4.

84 *Scotsman*, 15 Apr 1886, p.4.

85 *Building News*, 14 May 1886, pp.775–76

86 For which see James Gowans, 'On the Use of Building Stones', *Builder*, 20 Jan 1883, p.88. For the Pillars see Gowans's *Model Dwelling-Houses*, pp.52–57; and Andrew A. McMillan, Richard J. Gillanders, and John A. Fairhurst, *Building Stones of Edinburgh*. (Edinburgh, 1999), pp.102–104.

87 *Dispatch*, 01 Apr 1886, p.4.

origin	number	%
Edinburgh (inc. Leith & Portobello)	213	50
Glasgow	34	8
other Scotland	102	24
Scotland	349	82
Sheffield	69	16
rest of England	9	2
Ireland	1	-
other UK	79	18
total identified addresses	428	100

428 individual exhibitors identified by address
8 exhibitors' addresses not given

Table 4-3 Geographical origins of Artisan Section exhibitors. *Source: Official Catalogue*

Around 400 artisan exhibitors had responded to the Trades Council's invitation to submit work. Although space in the Artisan Court was provided without charge the limited resources available to both the Section's subcommittee and the exhibitors themselves meant that the geographical origins of the entries was even more restricted than that of the general exhibitors. Half of the entrants were local, from Edinburgh, Leith or Portobello, with another third from Glasgow and the rest of Scotland. The efforts of a large contingent of English exhibitors were combined in the Sheffield Trophy: these skilled craftsmen seized the opportunity offered by the Section to present a combined display analogous to those of Dunfermline or Galashiels in the main courts. Besides these, there were only nine other English exhibitors and a single Irish entry: the high hopes of international coverage which had been entertained in the early days of the project had plainly failed to materialise.⁸⁸

Neither the Exhibition Executive nor the Artisan Committee imposed a test of artisan status on the Section's exhibitors:⁸⁹ they included an assortment of white-collar entrants as well as a proportion of unskilled workers. Artisanship was however an essentially male

88 For example David Blackburn of the Glassworkers: 'in his trade no credit would accrue to anyone in a competition confined to Scotland', NLS Acc.11177/5: Edinburgh United Trades Council, Minutes, 25 Aug 1885.

89 The Newcastle Exhibition of 1887 excluded even foremen from their Artisan Section: Royal Mining, Engineering and Industrial Exhibition, *Official Catalogue*. (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1887), Regulations.

white collar		other trades (cont)	
Agent, Factor, Salesman	3	Silver Chaser	2
Collector, Surveyor of Gas Meters	3	Boat-builder	2
Civil Engineer, Mechanical Engineer	2	Cart and Wheel-Wright	1
Museum Curator	1	Coach-painter	1
Gas, Shipyard Manager	2	Cork Cutter	1
Clerk	5	Designer	1
Police Constable	1	Engraver	1
Post Office Employé	1	Engraver on Wood	1
Teacher	3	Furniture Draughtsman	1
Retail	6	Grainer	1
	<u>27</u>	Gun-maker	1
wood trades		Harness-maker	1
Cabinetmaker	16	Heraldic Artist	1
Carpenter, Joiner	52	Hot-water Valve-fitter	1
Wood Carver, Turner	10	Lapidary	1
	<u>78</u>	Lithographic Printer	1
metal trades		Modeller	1
Blacksmith	8	Pail Maker	1
Boiler Maker	1	Pastry Cook	1
Brass workers	8	Plasterer	1
Engineer etc	17	Ship Model Maker	1
Millwright	3	Typefounder	1
	<u>37</u>	Watch Dial Painter	1
glass		Wood Type Cutter	1
Glass Engraver, Maker, Blower etc	18		<u>102</u>
other trades		other occupations	
Painter	12	Porter, Hospital Porter	4
Mason	10	Warehouseman	3
Basketmaker	7	Wood Sawyer, Saw-miller	2
Clock, Watchmaker	7	Signalman	2
Plumber	6	Rubber-worker	1
Bootmaker, etc	5	Roadman	1
Shipwright, etc	5	School Pupil	1
Cooper	4	Lath-splitter	1
Tailor	4	Labourer	2
Bookbinder, Book-finisher	3	Hairdresser	1
Compositor	3	Gardener, Nurseryman	4
Die Engraver, Stamp Cutter	2	Farmer	1
Gilder	2	Fisherman	2
Marble, Stone Carver	2	Engine-keeper, Engineman	3
Musical Instrument Maker, Repairer	2	Butler, House Servant	3
Pattern Maker	2	Colliery Checker	1
		Pipe-Major, Royal Marine	2
			<u>34</u>

296 listed occupations of individual Artisan Section exhibitors [excluding Sheffield]

Table 4-4 Artisan Section exhibitors, occupations. Source: *Official Catalogue*

attribute: only six women, including Janet Fleming, a Motherwell teacher, exhibited in the Section. The great bulk of entries came from the skilled trades: workers in wood formed the largest grouping, followed by the metal trades, with glassworkers and masons also prominent. But the long tail of the occupational listings demonstrated the diversity of skills in the Edinburgh workforce, with gilders, silver chasers, and a heraldic artist typical of the city's specialised crafts.

Two organisations involved in technical education displayed the work of their students: the Edinburgh Social Union's Art Classes for Artisans showed examples of wood carving and metalwork (#1736); and many of the exhibitors of glasswork originated from the Glasgow Technical Class for Glass Manufacture. Some participants showed their own inventions or technical improvements: 'In not a few instances provisional protection has been secured against the articles being copied'.⁹⁰ Julius Coster's improvement to the Martini-Henry rifle (#1444) gained considerable attention and comment;⁹¹ and entries as varied as John and Robert Wood's patent pulp strainers (#1706) and John Watson's 'Unsinkable and Collapsible Canvas Canoe' (#1505)⁹² provided more examples of ingenuity with possible commercial application. Holding to the conception of the Trade as a community of craft, many artisan exhibitors submitted samples of their own occupational skills. Walter Dunn, a Dunbar blacksmith, showed hand-made horseshoes (#1513). Neil McLean, trade union organiser and Trades Council Secretary, displayed his own abilities as a tailor with 'Highland Dress, Doublet, and Vest. Lady's Trimmed Bodice. Specimens of Braiding and Trimming' (#1723). Plumbers, watchmakers, basketmakers and coopers similarly exhibited virtuosity in their various professions.

However, these demonstrations of trade skills took second place to the products of modern artisan leisure in the respectable fruits of rational recreation. The Artisan Section's exhibits provided evidence of the profound changes to occupational structures, spatial organisation, and social aspirations, 'the positive attraction of new styles of life and sources of social identity', discussed by R.Q. Gray in his exploration of Edinburgh's artisan culture.⁹³ The Section's contents illustrated the shift from the enveloping subcultures of

90 *Evening News*, 07 May 1886, p.2.

91 Coster had been apprenticed to the Edinburgh gun maker Alexander Henry, part-inventor of the Martini-Henry rifle, himself an exhibitor (#621); by 1886 Coster was partner in a business in Frederick Street, *Post-Office Edinburgh and Leith Directory, 1886-87*.

92 *Scotsman*, 17 May 1886, p.5.

93 Gray, *Labour Aristocracy*, p.95.

Trade associated with long working hours and residential proximity, to the more individualised domesticity of the artisan suburb centred round home, family and a clear distinction between work and leisure time.⁹⁴ Craft and community both assumed new forms in the voluntary organisation of recreation exemplified in social events such as the Tailors' soir e, in sporting clubs like the Meadows cricketers, or in artisan Flower Shows.⁹⁵ The development of the 'industrial exhibition' of the products of working-class leisure was yet another manifestation of this process.⁹⁶

In contrast to the commercial gigantism seen elsewhere in the Exhibition, and in an echo of the prestige objects in the Grand Hall, the artisan exhibits tended towards the miniature: a necessity, given constraints of material and domestic space. Miniaturisation and intricacy could however have their own rewards.⁹⁷ Mechanical skills acquired at work could be applied to modern leisure. Engineers or metalworkers produced an abundance of miniature steam engines and other detailed mechanical models 'exhibiting a fine power of constructing and adjusting all the parts of very powerful and complicated machines with very tiny bits of materials, and in marvellously small compass'.⁹⁸

However, the rationality and the virtue of recreation were best demonstrated, and especially praiseworthy, in activity unconnected with daily labours. 'The merit of the display is enhanced by the fact that many of the articles have been produced by men whose trade is not that with which the articles are properly classified'.⁹⁹ Leisure production embodied a modern disconnect between the Trade and domestic life; leisure activity became a means of self-expression. The spirit of place and local loyalties were evoked in architectural and

94 Trevor Griffiths, 'Work, Leisure and Time in the Nineteenth Century', in Graeme Morton and Trevor Griffiths (eds.), *History of Everyday Life in Scotland, 1800 to 1900*. (Edinburgh, 2010).

95 For example the Edinburgh Working-Men's Flower Show of August 1886: 'all the plants are grown at windows or in small garden plots, back greens, area garden, &c., where they have the benefit of little sunshine, and may have to contend with a smoky atmosphere', *Scottish News*, 09 Aug 1886, p.4. Cf. Gray, *Labour Aristocracy*, pp.142–43.

96 *Herald* 29 Apr 1886, p.5; above pp.78, 88.

97 For the attractions of the model see James Roy King, *Remaking the World: Modeling in Human Experience*. (Urbana, 1996); 'Models as Metaphors', *Metaphor & Symbolic Activity*, 6:2 (June 1991), p.103. Other models were displayed elsewhere: commercially, like Jamieson's Scott Monument, or J.&P. Coats's Paisley Abbey executed in 6,000 spools of grey and black thread (#305, NBDM, 20 May 1886); or informatively, like Fowler's Forth Bridge (#791A) or the War Department's Edinburgh Castle works (*Daily Programme*, 23 Jul 1886).

98 *Dispatch*, 13 May 1886, p.2.

99 *Dispatch*, 13 May 1886, p.2.

topographical models,¹⁰⁰ the pleasures and clutter of respectable Victorian domesticity in the production of fern-cases, aquariums—often ingeniously integrated, as in John Lindsay’s ‘Fernery, Aquarium, Grotto, and Aviary combined’ (#1529)¹⁰¹—fretwork and cork picture-frames, besides the more traditional pursuits of ship modelling and violin-making.¹⁰²

Meaningful rational recreation meant hard work. Gladstone ‘who maintained that recreation was nought but change of employment’ was the exemplar of these uses of leisure with his trademark enthusiasm for amateur tree-felling,¹⁰³ an activity appropriately captured by Thomas Fisher, a brass-finisher, in a ‘Small Model—Gladstone Felling a Tree’ (#1499). Characterised by intricacy and small compass, the work of artisan leisure could be solitary and individual, demanding effort and sacrifice. Thomas Killin’s Mauchline ware (#1701) was ‘the product, he tells us, of many an hour’s labour after his regular day’s work was finished, and most of it done by the fireside’.¹⁰⁴ This laborious, painstaking quality was most often achieved by the manipulation of prodigious numbers of tiny elements. Although an Edinburgh glassworker contributed a glass workbox, ‘containing 3600 pieces’ (#1560), and a lapidary a casket of ‘500 pieces of Scotch stone’ (#1619), this was *par excellence* the province of parquetry and fine woodwork: ‘fancy pieces of furniture that are made of as

100 Which included Melrose Abbey; Sir Walter Scott’s Monument; Scott’s Abbotsford; West Newington House, the home of Duncan McLaren; the Prince Albert Memorial; ‘Edinburgh in the time of Queen Mary’; the restored Mercat Cross; Calton Hill; two models of Holyrood Palace, by a grocer and a shoemaker; Hope Park U.P. Church; John o’ Groat’s House; Paisley Town Hall; and a cork model of Drumlanrig Castle by one of the Duke of Buccleuch’s house servants. *Scotsman*, 15 May 1886, p.9.

101 Examples of this genre of exhibit incorporated variously a live canary, a miniature engine, train and tunnel, and a figure turning a wheel: ‘better articles than the combination stands to interest, brighten, or instruct any household could hardly be chosen’. *NBA&LJ*, 26 Jun 1886.

102 The disconnect between work and leisure was illustrated by the occupations involved in typical pursuits. Violin-making was shown by three professional instrument makers; but also by three joiners, a mason, a photographic dealer, a signaller, and the curator of the Free Kirk College Museum in Aberdeen. The emblematic home handicraft of fretwork was exhibited by three joiners, but also a bootmaker, a clerk, a mason, a ‘post office employé’, an engine-keeper, a baker, a pattern-maker, a roadman, and a warehouseman. *Official Catalogue*, Artisan Section listings.

103 Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830–1885*. (London, 1978), p.78; Peter Sewter, ‘Gladstone as Woodsman’, in Roland Quinault, Roger Swift, and Ruth Clayton Windscheffel (eds.), *William Gladstone: New Studies and Perspectives*. (Farnham, 2012), pp.155–75. See p.43 above for Gladstone’s presentation axe at the Forestry Exhibition.

104 *Scotsman*, 17 May 1886, p.5.

many as 2000, 3000, 4000 and 5000 pieces of wood'.¹⁰⁵ Pride of place went to the Hamilton joiner Archibald Turner's inlaid table of 250,000 pieces (#1670), which 'represents an immense amount of labour, and is a speaking testimony of extraordinary application, patience and perseverance'.¹⁰⁶ Such effort, however, sometimes went unappreciated: 'the great object of the artisans seems to have been to [have] as many pieces of wood as possible in the articles they were to exhibit ... rather than to put themselves to bring out some new design'.¹⁰⁷ Patrick Geddes condemned the aesthetic quality of the artisan exhibits as a whole:

too commonly useless miracles of ugly or wasted labour; picture-frames of four thousand pieces of different-coloured wood, when what one wants is four pieces of the same; toy machines, and romantic models of cliff-perched castles under glass shades, are all there in abundance, yet for art or even science, as artists or scientific men understand these, one looks wholly in vain.¹⁰⁸

However welcome the idea of the Artisan Section, and despite the critics, however popular an attraction, the working-class presence tested the middle-class organisers' sense of inclusivity to its limits. A.C. Telfer had been effectively excluded from the Executive, despite his joint-convenership of the Artisan Committee; the Section had been omitted from the Exhibition classification scheme.¹⁰⁹ In the wake of these provocations the right of access to the Exhibition for artisan exhibitors became an issue of contention between the Executive and working-class representatives, in which the prickly consciousness of the Edinburgh artisan was evident.¹¹⁰ In contravention of their own regulations, the Executive refused to grant passes to artisan exhibitors, a move which brought protests from those excluded.¹¹¹ Six cheap tickets per head were offered in compensation. This miserliness stood in all-too-obvious contrast to the treatment of the more genteel art exhibitors, who had been granted passes: 'Surely there is something in this that looks unpleasantly like a

105 *Dispatch*, 13 May 1886, p.2.

106 *Scotsman*, 17 May 1886, p.5.

107 *Evening News*, 07 May 1886, p.2.

108 Geddes, *Industrial Exhibitions*, p.52.

109 pp.101, 119 above.

110 Gray, *Labour Aristocracy*, p.140 sees this artisan consciousness manifested in 'apparently trivial incidents', such as the contested uses of the Meadows.

111 ECA Acc.423/16: Minute Book 2, 19 May 1886; letters, *Scotsman*, 22 May 1886, p.7, 24 May 1886, p.9; NLS Acc.11177/6: Edinburgh United Trades Council, *Minutes*, 01 Jun 1886.

snobbish breach of faith on the part of the Committee'.¹¹² In the face of this protest, the Executive was compelled to reconsider.¹¹³

By July it was the turn of the Brassfounders Trophy Committee to feel aggrieved, this time over the fate of their Column. The Executive offered to trade a token twenty-four season tickets for ownership of the monument; the enraged Committee in turn valued their creation at £500, £100 of which represented their own labour. '[T]he Executive had followed the same course which men of such a type usually did follow, viz. that of using the working men as far as they were of service only'.¹¹⁴ The 'beggarly offer' was rejected and the Committee resolved to offer the Column on loan to the Museum at the close of the Exhibition.¹¹⁵

These heated disputes over the rights of artisan exhibitors questioned the Executive's good faith and the liberal attitudes initially praised by the workers' representatives. Over the run of the Exhibition, the patience of Trades Council delegates would be further tried by the intransigence of the Exhibition organisers in the face of demands for easier access for a popular audience.

Women's Industries

The organisers of the Women's Industries Section moved in rather different social circles. Their Committee, under its energetic secretary Christian Guthrie Wright, could count on the support and participation of the aristocratic conveners Ladies Aberdeen and Rosebery, and had spawned a London Committee which included members with purchase in the Liberal establishment.¹¹⁶ Access to social capital and resources produced a prestigious assortment of exhibits and exhibitors: a Loan Collection of embroidery to which upper-class contacts had contributed, and a General Collection which included collective displays by a range of organisations, from the emancipatory to the philanthropic, as well as work by individual exhibitors. The social origins of the exhibits and exhibitors were manifest in their geographical distribution. While a strong Edinburgh contribution was still evident, the Loan Collection and the collective exhibits showed a larger English, and particularly London,

112 *Dispatch*, 24 May 1886, p.2.

113 ECA Acc.423/16: Minute Book 2, 25 May 1886.

114 A.C. Smith, quoted *Dispatch*, 14 Jul 1886, p.2; NLS Acc.11177/6: Edinburgh United Trades Council, Minutes, 13 Jul 1886.

115 *Evening News*, 29 Jul 1886, p.2.

116 See p.94 above.

presence than the Exhibition's entries as a whole. The same phenomenon is evident when individual Women's Industries exhibitors are compared with Artisans.¹¹⁷ The Section also attracted a number, albeit small, of foreign entrants.

The Loan Collection of embroidery which greeted visitors to the Women's Industries court demonstrated precisely the project's social and geographical reach. 'To Lady Rosebery, who personally exerted herself in London, the section is largely indebted for some of the finest articles in the loan cases'.¹¹⁸ Lady Reay's Indian collection was only one of the attractions. The royal family were first among lenders: the Queen herself contributed Mary Queen of Scots needlework, though of doubtful authenticity;¹¹⁹ the Prince of Wales sent a 'curious but not at all attractive' troupe of Chinese costumed mannequins, a dubious legacy of the previous year's Inventions Exhibition.¹²⁰ Connoisseurship and dilettantism was evident throughout. Hannah Rosebery's cousin Ferdinand de Rothschild and London society figures such as Lady Charlotte Schreiber and Lady Dorothy Nevill provided antique exhibits; ecclesiastical vestments were received from Stonyhurst and St Aloysius Colleges and the Fishmongers' Company of the City of London.

origin	loan collection		general collection			
	no.	%	collective		individual	
			no.	%	no.	%
Edinburgh	11	23	7	19	47	34
Glasgow	3	6	2	5	11	8
other Scotland	10	21	4	11	39	28
Scotland	24	51	13	35	97	71
London	16	34	15	41	15	11
Rest of England	4	9	6	16	13	9
Ireland		0	2	5		0
other UK	20	43	23	62	28	20
rest of world	2	4	1	3	9	6
total exhibitors	47	100	37	100	139	100

Table 4-5 Geographical origins of Women's Industries Section exhibitors. Source: *Official Catalogue*

117 This is even more pronounced if the Sheffield Trophy is treated as a collective exhibit.

118 *Scotsman*, 14 May 1886, p.5.

119 *Scotsman*, 14 May 1886, p.5

120 *Dispatch*, 17 May 1886, p.2. Elsewhere described, with cheerful cultural imprecision, as resembling 'the Mikado company in confinement', *Scotsman*, 29 Apr 1886, p.5.

Other needlework pieces appealed to the popular imagination by association with famous historical characters: the Empress Marie Louise, Marie Antoinette, Louis XIV, Charles Edward Stuart, and yet again his ancestor Queen Mary. A relic of the executed Royalist Marquis of Montrose, contributed by Lady Napier and Ettrick, struck a macabre note:

The handkerchief, which is stained with his blood, is said to have actually been the cloth in which the heart of the great Marquis was carried after his dismemberment; but that is a detail which need not be insisted on.¹²¹

The Loan Collection's evident historical and ecclesiastical sympathies distinguished its contents from the austerities of the communion cups in the Grand Hall, or from the Covenanting narratives of Old Edinburgh. The Collection interposed an island of Anglo-Catholic and Jacobite symbolism into the Exhibition's otherwise presbyterian sensibilities.

The intentions of the Women's Industries organisers 'to show what women are doing in the industrial world of Great Britain' were manifested more clearly in the Section's General Collection.¹²² The debt owed by the Edinburgh undertaking to the preceding Bristol Exhibition of Women's Industries, held in the spring of 1885, is apparent.¹²³ As well as appropriating its title, the Edinburgh organisers espoused similar principles to those of the Bristol event, and the Edinburgh Section attracted a number of the same exhibitors.¹²⁴ Nevertheless the activist rhetoric evident at Bristol was more subdued in Edinburgh. There was no counterpart to the portrait gallery of exemplary women, or the lecture series on women's topics, or the suffrage propaganda which featured at the Bristol event.¹²⁵ However,

121 *Scotsman*, 14 May 1886, p.5: 'Apart from their own intrinsic value ... not a few of the articles shown have a history which, from a sentimental view at all events, greatly enhances the interest which surrounds them'. Cf. Peter Mandler, "'The Wand of Fancy': The Historical Imagination of the Victorian Tourist', in Marius Kwint, Christopher Breward, and Jeremy Aynsley (eds.), *Material Memories*. (Oxford, 1999), pp.125–41.

122 International Exhibition of Industry, Science, and Art, *Women's Industries*. [*A Handbook to the Women's Section*]. (Edinburgh, 1886); For a review of the Section see 'Women's Work in the Edinburgh Exhibition', *Englishwoman's Review*, CLVIII (June 1886), pp.241–47.

123 See p.92 above, although the connection was never made in Edinburgh reviews of the Section.

124 For Bristol exhibitors, see *Exhibition of Women's Industries, in Queens Villa, Queens Road, Bristol, 1885*. (Bristol, 1885).

125 Emma Ferry, "'A Novelty Among Exhibitions': The Loan Exhibition of Women's Industries, Bristol 1885', in Elizabeth Darling and Lesley Whitworth (eds.), *Women and the Making of Built Space in England, 1870–1950*. (Aldershot, 2007); though Miss Lynch's 'Dummies dressed hygienically' (#1940) contributed to the emancipatory Rational Dress debate: Stella Mary Newton, *Health, Art and Reason: Dress Reformers of the 19th Century*. (London, 1974), chap.6.

the emancipatory potential of waged work or creative independence, the ‘pull’ of women’s employment that animated the Bristol Exhibition, undeniably resonated also in the voluntary public sphere in Edinburgh. The activities of the Edinburgh Society for Promoting Employment of Women, the success of Guthrie Wright’s Edinburgh Cookery School, and the Edinburgh campaign for women’s higher education all demonstrated the aspiration to opportunity of middle-class women activists.

Prospects for women in modern areas of white-collar employment were highlighted by a number of Edinburgh exhibits. From Glasgow, the production of drawings and calculations at Denny Brothers Shipyard (#1934) and mechanical tracing at Neilson’s Locomotive Works (#1945) were on display;¹²⁶ from London, the Ladies’ Tracing Office (#1939) and the Type-Writing Office (#1943) took stands, and the cooperative Women’s Printing Society (#1946) showed samples of typesetting and proofreading.¹²⁷ Commercial wood-engraving, an area of opportunity for middle-class homeworking, was shown by the Society for Promoting Employment of Women and by the individual Edinburgh exhibitors Barbara McLaren and Eliza Burton.¹²⁸ Other creative professions were represented: Agnes Garrett, the pioneer woman interior designer and surviving partner of the firm of R.&A. Garrett exhibited designs (#1918) as did Fanny Wilkinson, the first woman professional landscape gardener (#1953).¹²⁹

Lynch exhibited at Bristol.

- 126 According to Nicolson, *Glasgow: Locomotive Builder*, pp.16–17, Henry Dübs began the employment of women tracers in the Glasgow locomotive industry in 1866; for Denny’s employment of women see Pollock, *Modern Shipbuilding*, pp.165–66; Denny Brothers (of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company, above) also exhibited at Bristol. The numbers of women employees were very small compared to male employment in these enterprises. For Denny as a progressive employer, *NBDM*, 08 May 1886, quoted Patrick Geddes, *On the Conditions of Progress of the Capitalist and of the Labourer*. (Edinburgh, 1886), pp.11–12.
- 127 The Ladies Tracing Office and the W.P.S. exhibited at Bristol. For the W.P.S. see Siân Reynolds, *Britannica’s Typesetters: Women Compositors in Edwardian Edinburgh*. (Edinburgh, 1989), p.151 n.33. As Reynolds demonstrates, female compositors were becoming established in the Edinburgh printing industry.
- 128 For a contemporary account of SPEW see ‘Finding Work for Women’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 13 May 1886, p.11. For McLaren, who exhibited at Bristol, see *Scotsman*, 17 Aug 1915, p.4. Burton was the daughter of the historian J.H. Burton and the niece of the housing reformer and suffragist Mary Burton, for whom see Ann Jones, ‘Burton, Mary (bap.1819, d.1909)’, *ODNB*.
- 129 Both Garrett and Wilkinson exhibited at Bristol. The Garrett family were prominent in campaigning for female suffrage and medical education for women; Wilkinson was a member of the Garrett circle. The Garretts were related, by marriage and through political conviction, to the Stevensons: Crawford, *Enterprising Women*, chap.1.

The careers of Garrett and Wilkinson, like the work of McLaren and Burton, were a model for middle-class craft activity: the beginnings of an Arts and Crafts sensibility, the creative attractions of making and doing and the adventure of studio work.¹³⁰ Craft production was displayed at Edinburgh by educational organisations such as the School of Art Woodcarving (#1909)—another Bristol exhibitor—and the Decorative Needlework Society, both of London. In parallel with its participation in the Artisan Section, the Edinburgh Social Union exhibited ‘Six Decorative Panels in oil monochrome, prepared for Ward 30, Royal Infirmary; Carving, etc.; all done by Ladies’ (#1939).¹³¹ Individual exhibitors also displayed their own craft work, evidence—like the woodcarving of Hannah Lorimer (#1979),¹³² or the needlework of the young Phoebe Traquair (#2051)—of the activity of gifted and committed artists working to a professional standard. But despite the Section’s avowed proscription of amateur work, much of the *Official Catalogue* listings appear to record the output of middle-class handicraft diversions, analogous in their way to the male working-class output of rational recreation seen in the Artisan Section: products of the bourgeois drawing room rather than the workman’s kitchen.

In contrast to the progressive and emancipatory impetus behind this display of creative activity, another thread in the Women’s Industries Section depicted the ‘push’ factor in women’s employment: work as an economic necessity. At one level, the relief of respectable penury, the need for many middle-class women to generate income reflected the demographic imbalance between the sexes and the resulting financial precariousness of the female breadwinner whose marginal status was often caused by family tragedy. Concealed genteel poverty was seen as a very middle-class social problem, one particularly resonant in Edinburgh with its large and predominantly female annuitant population.¹³³ For some commentators this issue defined women’s employment itself: ‘Who knows how many of the exhibits in this cheery, pleasant court are heavy with hope deferred—on how many of them depend, not merely comfort or luxury, but bare sustenance?’¹³⁴

130 Anthea Callen, *Angel in the Studio: Women in the Arts and Crafts Movement, 1870–1914*. (London, 1979); for the aesthetics of the handmade, see Elaine Freedgood, “‘Fine Fingers’: Victorian Handmade Lace and Utopian Consumption”, *Victorian Studies*, 45:4 (July 2003), pp.625–647.

131 Submitted by Patrick Geddes, as Secretary of the E.S.U. Art Department, *Official Catalogue* entry.

132 Sister of the architect Robert Lorimer.

133 For strategies to provide for female family members see Richard Rodger, *The Transformation of Edinburgh: Land, Property and Trust in the Nineteenth Century*. (Cambridge, 2001), pp.145–48.

134 *Queen*, 03 Jun 1886, p.26.

The relief of middle-class distress could be expedited through charities marketing anonymised handicraft products, thus avoiding any involvement in wage labour and a potentially catastrophic loss of 'caste'.¹³⁵ The Royal Edinburgh Repository for the Sale of Gentlewomen's Work, with 360 members undertaking 'all kinds of ladies' work ... from the darning of stockings to the firing of china and the highest art work' was a prominent exhibitor (#1921).¹³⁶ Its London counterpart, the Working Ladies Guild, founded in 1877 'for the purposes of aiding unmarried or widowed gentlewomen in need of employment or in temporary difficulty' also maintained a presence in the Exhibition.¹³⁷

Aside from these agencies of middle-class urban out-relief, another major focus for female employment lay in the development of home industries amongst the rural poor. The home industries movement originated in schemes established by philanthropic proprietors of landed estates, such as Ishbel Aberdeen herself on her Haddo properties, as a means of augmenting the family income of their tenantry.¹³⁸ By 1886 these schemes were becoming more professionalised: traditional production was enlivened with new designs and techniques and quality improved by training. Just as in the commercial world, presence at exhibitions could be an important element in branding and marketing. In the development of such an exhibiting strategy the philanthropic activities of Mrs Ernest Hart are exemplary. Hart's Donegal Industrial Fund exhibited at the International Health Exhibition in 1884, at the Bristol exhibition and the Inventions Exhibition in 1885, and simultaneously in the Women's Industries section at Edinburgh and at the Liverpool Exhibition in 1886.¹³⁹ The Donegal Fund's Kells embroidery provided luxury branding, and appropriately high pricing, for a professionally designed product of labour-intensive cottage industry.

Irish proprietors and philanthropists were particularly prominent in the developing home industries movement. At Edinburgh Lady Abercorn displayed 'Knitting and Embroidery by Irish Peasants' from her Baron's Court estates (#1923); and the London firm of Hayward's, the clearing house for Irish lace, also took space (#1907). The most conspicuous place however went to Lady Aberdeen's Irish Industries Stall 'the first selective,

135 Callen, *Angel in the Studio*, p.9.

136 *Scotsman*, 18 May 1886, p.5. The Repository also took space as a general exhibitor (#390).

137 Advertisement, *Official Catalogue*, p.350.

138 Janice Helland, *British and Irish Home Arts and Industries, 1880–1914: Marketing Craft, Making Fashion*. (Dublin, 2007).

139 Janice Helland, 'Working Bodies, Celtic Textiles, and the Donegal Industrial Fund 1883–1890', *Textile*, 2:2 (2004), pp.134–55.

methodical collection, catalogue and display for sale of Irish home industries',¹⁴⁰ one of the set-pieces of the Exhibition. Although the product of Aberdeen's short-lived tenure as Vicereine of Ireland and her Gladstonian commitment to Home Rule, the Irish Industries Stall expressed her continuing commitment to the encouragement of Irish industry and her patronage of Irish craft production.¹⁴¹

The Exhibition's coverage of rural home industries was by no means restricted to Ireland: other exhibits presented cloth 'spun woven and dyed by the women of Harris' (#1952), Buckinghamshire lacemaking (#2030), and Luton straw plaiting (#1931). The Swedish *Handarbetets Vänner*, under the direction of Mrs Derby (#1935), and Mrs Magnússon's exhibit of Icelandic crafts (#1922) showed peasant crafts from further afield.¹⁴² These diverse displays of rural craftwork were characterised by the use of performance to demonstrate the craft activity in action. Like South Kensington and Bristol before it, the Women's Industries Court was animated by living displays of craft dexterity by women costumed in appropriate peasant dress: Irish spinners from Alice Hart's Donegal or Aberdeen's Connemara; an old woman demonstrating Buckinghamshire lace; and Mrs Magnússon herself at her Icelandic spinning-wheel. The display of artificial flower making by the Flower Girl Mission (#1917) presented an urban twist on the philanthropic theme, its employment presented as a means of rescuing young women from life on the streets of London.¹⁴³

One stall stood out in this activity. The stand displaying Shetland and Fair Isle spinning, dyeing and knitting became one of the talking points of the Exhibition. Sponsored by George Thoms, Sheriff-Principal of Caithness, Orkney and Shetland and thus the long arm of the Edinburgh judiciary in the Northern Isles,¹⁴⁴ the exhibit's aim was not simply to promote local industry. Shetland products were a well-known commodity,

140 Nicola Gordon Bowe and Elizabeth Cumming, *The Arts and Crafts Movements in Dublin and Edinburgh: 1885–1925*. (Ballsbridge, 1998), p.12.

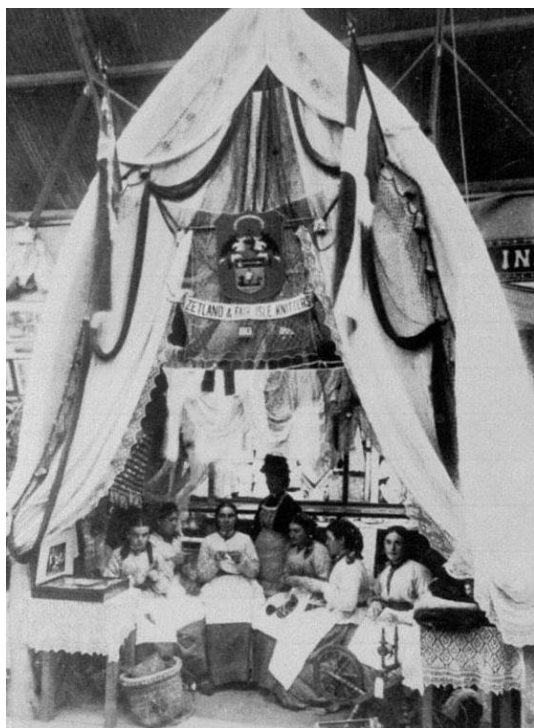
141 p.93 above; Ishbel Gordon, Lady Aberdeen, *Edinburgh International Exhibition, 1886, Women's Industries Section: Guide to Irish Exhibits*. (Dublin, 1886). 'Irish Industries', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 13 May 1886, pp.4–5, traces the movement back to the Mansion House lace exhibition of 1883; see also n.75, p.32.

142 Both Derby and Magnússon were exhibitors at Bristol; Mrs Magnússon's Icelandic crafts and her demonstrations of Icelandic spinning had been seen at the Health Exhibition.

143 Lord Aberdeen was president of the Mission.

144 For Thoms and an account of the Shetland knitters see Paul J. Sutherland, *Mirth, Madness and St Magnus and the Eccentric Sheriff Thoms*. (Kirkwall, 2013), pp.9–11.

presented elsewhere in the Exhibition by commercial suppliers.¹⁴⁵ The industry had, however, fallen on hard times: it suffered from competition from Switzerland and Germany, and its workers relied on an exploitative barter system for payment.¹⁴⁶ Charitable sales exhibitions had already been organised in Edinburgh as a means of cutting out the



Illus 4-7 The Shetland and Fair Isle knitters, within their canopy of whale bones and fishing nets. Shetland Museum and Archives

middlemen and providing cash income direct to the producers. Lady Aberdeen herself had opened one such show in 1885, where '[a]ll the goods brought to the warehouse and exhibition were paid for in cash, and this was the first time that that had been done almost in the memory of man'.¹⁴⁷

As well as providing another sales opportunity, Sheriff Thoms aimed at the Exhibition to educate the visiting Shetlanders in this modern cash economy:

it is to introduce the knitters to better commercial ideas and relations that they have

145 Most prominently, White's Shetland Warehouse (#321). Other Women's Industries products such as Harris tweed and Luton straw hats were also exhibited commercially.

146 *Evening News*, 11 May 1886, p.2; for a radical view of the barter system see Annie Besant (ed.), 'Zetland and Fair Isle Knitting', *Our Corner*. (October 1886), pp.222–25.

147 *Scotsman*, 26 May 1885, p.4. Cf, the Irish organisers' desire 'to secure the adequate remuneration of those whose labours are often but ill requited, while the middle men profit by the sweat of their brow', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 13 May 1886, p.5.

been brought south ... They go home with all their earnings, and what with these, the Parcel Post, and new commercial connections formed here, we may hope for a brighter future for the industry.¹⁴⁸

Relays of young women demonstrators, three from Shetland, three from Fair Isle, worked their crafts in traditional local costume within an evocative canopy of whale jawbones and fishing nets. Press and popular interest was stirred by this combination of the remote, the primitive, and the faintly exotic, further stimulated by accounts of the recent misadventures of Elizabeth Mouat.¹⁴⁹ Performance, visual branding and newsworthiness united to create one of the Exhibition's popular successes.

The handbook to the Women's Industries Section, edited by Hannah Rosebery and printed by Constable at the Exhibition printworks, was intended to further document the progress of women's employment as illustrated by the exhibits in the Women's Court. Echoing the aims set out by the Section's Committee the catalogue proclaimed itself a product of women's labour: 'This pamphlet is itself a specimen of women's work. The type has been set, the proofs have been read, and the cover has been designed, by women'.¹⁵⁰ The thirty-eight entries—including twenty from London, three from Edinburgh and six from the rest of Scotland—give examples and further information on the activities represented, but Rosebery's presentation reveals the inevitable limitation of the Section's coverage. Rural crafts, domestic out-relief, modern studio work and white-collar employment are jumbled together promiscuously. Premiums of £300 for high-class apprenticeships to R.&A. Garrett are juxtaposed to documentation of rural exploitation: 'often, so as to get an order finished by the time given, these poor women [Buckingham lacemakers] work twelve hours a day, and then only earn 1d an hour for the best beading'. Other entries verge on the bathetic: 'Miss Summervell has not earned anything by missal painting'.

148 *Scotsman*, 19 Aug 1886, p.6, quoted Sutherland, *Mirth, Madness*, p.11.

149 On the reputed exotic origins of Fair Isle patterns, supposedly learnt from Armada survivors, see Deborah Pulliam, 'Traveling Stitches: Origins of Fair Isle Knitting', *Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings*, 9th Biennial Symposium (Spring 2004). Mouat, herself a hand-spinner and knitter, drifted alone from Shetland to Norway on the abandoned smack *Columbine*, 30 January to 6 February 1886: T.M.Y. Manson, *Drifting Alone to Norway: The Amazing Adventure of Betty Mouat*. (Lerwick, 1986). The stall exhibited a shawl worked by Mouat, *Dispatch*, 17 May 1886, p.2, but this new-found celebrity could not be persuaded to visit the Exhibition.

150 *Women's Industries*, back cover; for the production of the catalogue see Rosemary Addison, 'Corporate Images, 1886: Advertising at the International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art', in Iain Beavan (ed.), *Images and Advertising: Four Essays*. (Edinburgh, 2002).

A larger world of employment was revealed by Rosebery's interjection that 'there are numberless other trades in which [women] take a large and active share. Our wholesale manufacturers, so largely represented in this Exhibition, employ a vast and increasing number of women'. The supporting description of the woollen textile industry of the Scottish Borders together with a statistical appendix of female employment in the UK and in Scotland only underlined the limited view presented by the Section's exhibits, and their detachment from any wider picture of women's labour.¹⁵¹ This lack of engagement did not go unnoted:

There is no court or corner of the Exhibition in which women are not in employment, and there is scarcely a court in which there are not exhibited some products of women's industries ... a special section for 'Women's Industries' may possibly mislead venerable and philanthropic ladies to overlook other extensive and important branches of women's work ... In other courts—where factory work goes on, where tobacconists display their goods, where numerous shop stands are set, and in the refreshment rooms, where weary girls wait on crowds from the very first to the very last hour of the Exhibition day—are to be seen the representatives of most of the city girls.¹⁵²

The Women's Industries Section's exhibits struggled not only to portray the realities of women's employment in the city of Edinburgh, but also to heed its omnipresence in the surrounding Exhibition. Beyond the confines of the Women's Industries Court, women were at work, and on display, throughout the show.

Performance, and the historic city

The craft workers in the Women's Industries Section were examples, from one area alone, of the use of performance as a display technique throughout the Exhibition. At Edinburgh as at other great exhibitions the presentation of manufacture as spectacle, the demonstration of working machinery and the making of things required labour for the theatre of production. The Machinery Department with its weavers weaving, its bakers baking and its printers printing was the prime location; but other examples, plain and exotic, were everywhere. In the Central Court the Broxburn Oil Company set up a working candle factory, three candle-making machines beside 'a Gothic temple composed of wax-candles, which looks exceedingly pretty' (#95). Further along at the Clydesdale Silk Manufacturing

151 *Women's Industries*, pp.33–34.

152 *Dispatch*, 17 May 1886, p.2.

Company's stand silk handkerchiefs were woven on a Jacquard loom, while human and non-human actants were incorporated into a display of the attenuated life-cycle of the silkworm (#301). 'The rearing of the worms and the reeling of the cocoons are carried on in the Exhibition by Italian peasants from the province of Como ... picturesquely attired in their native costumes'.¹⁵³

In some cases the demonstrators acted out a representation of artisanship and of a gendered division of craft and industrial labour. In a demonstration of silver chasing in the Grand Hall 'a young gentleman is seen busy with the graver, while a lady attendant polishes the articles after the chasing is complete';¹⁵⁴ the sheets produced by Constable's machinemen were finished by attendant women folders and binders.¹⁵⁵ In other cases technical advances graphically illustrated not only savings of skilled male labour but also its dilution by female. With George Stewart's labour-saving stationery machinery (#1244) 'the "Leader", which is tended by a girl, can turn out envelopes at the rate of 6000 an hour'; with Stewart's index-cutter 'now a girl at the machine can ... do in a day about six times the amount of work which a man could formerly accomplish with a ruler and knife'.¹⁵⁶ At Alexander Fraser's demonstration of his mechanical typesetting equipment developed for Neill & Co (#504) '[t]wo girls are at work in the Exhibition at these machines, one being engaged "setting up" copy for the "Encyclopedia Britannica"'.¹⁵⁷

While they acted out the increasing opportunities for women's employment which the Women's Industries Section had hinted at, these women workers could only personify the threat to male wage levels which was a constant preoccupation of the Edinburgh artisans and their representatives.¹⁵⁸ However the display of dilution seems to have gone unnoticed, except as evidence of the inevitable processes of political economy, 'the constant search of

153 Both examples, *Scotsman*, 08 May 1886, p.9.

154 *NBA&LJ*, 15 May 1886.

155 However Constable's female compositors, Reynolds, *Britannica's Typesetters*, chap.3, who had set Lady Rosebery's catalogue, were not on display.

156 *Scotsman*, 13 May 1886, p.5.

157 *Evening News*, 18 May 1886, p.2. Fraser's machine 'at one time threatened to extinguish the compositor altogether, but ... has proved nothing less than an interesting but expensive toy', *NBA&LJ*, 05 Jun 1886.

158 Neil McLean at the Industrial Remuneration Conference: 'those who were forced into competition with the labour of women knew that the tendency of employers was not to raise the wages of women to those of men, but it was rather to lower the wages of men to the level of women', Industrial Remuneration Conference, *The Report of the Proceedings and Papers Read ...* (London, 1885), p.211; for printing, Reynolds, *Britannica's Typesetters*, with discussion of Neill's composing machines p.70; for bookbinding, Gray, *Labour Aristocracy*, p.62.

capital for cheaper labour'.¹⁵⁹

But the very visible presence of these female actors implied a recognition of the inherent qualities of women as demonstrators, attendants, and, as would become clear, salespeople. Implicitly or explicitly, they met the gaze of the Exhibition spectators:

Messrs A.&R. Scott[’s] ... stand in the Exhibition is tastefully decorated with large coloured views of Edinburgh Castle, Leith Docks, &c; but its chief attraction is the presence of three or four girls in fancy costume, who are constantly employed in baking.¹⁶⁰

One Fair Isle spinner drew the journalistic eye ‘because the scarlet kerchief surrounds a fine featured face framed in glossy black hair, and the work of spinning shows a shapely foot clad in a white “rivelin”’.¹⁶¹ And nowhere was the employment of women as attendants more evident than in Old Edinburgh.

The historic city was recreated as a space for commerce. The shop premises concealed behind Sydney Mitchell’s picturesque façades were let out at premium rents in the expectation of profits for their tenants. These arrangements represented a double transgression of the great exhibition ethos as understood, particularly, in South Kensington: exhibitors should not be charged for the privilege of taking part in the show; and over-the-counter sales would not be permitted.¹⁶² Old London, Old Edinburgh’s South Kensington model, had included workshop accommodation within its structure. However, these internal spaces were used for strictly non-commercial purposes: for demonstrations of Guild-sanctioned craft activity, for the display of artifacts from the rich Livery Company collections, and for propaganda on the virtues of the Guilds who had sponsored this construction of history.¹⁶³ In order to heighten the desired authenticity effect, some approximation of period artisan costume had been proposed for the demonstrators—by their nature exclusively male—in the craft workshops. Its adoption proved to be uncoordinated and disorganised: ‘to flippant persons, like ourselves, the incongruous dresses adorning some of the artizans [*sic*] in the Old London Street seem excessively

159 *Dispatch*, 17 May 1886, p.2.

160 *Evening News*, 12 May 1886, p.2.

161 *NBA&LJ*, 22 May 1886. For rivelins see Sutherland, *Mirth, Madness*, p.10.

162 See p.71 above.

163 Wilson Smith, ‘Old London, Old Edinburgh: Constructing Historic Cities’, in Marta Filipová (ed.), *Cultures of International Exhibitions, 1840–1940*. (Farnham, forthcoming 2015), on which the following paragraphs draw.

funny'.¹⁶⁴

In their turn, the promoters of Old Edinburgh set out to emulate the Guild trappings of their London predecessor:

the various Tradesmen desiring space [in Old Edinburgh] will be located under the distinctive Corporation or Guild of the period pertaining to their Crafts, and the Attendants should wear the costumes of their respective Periods and Crafts. The Industries proposed to be represented in 'Old Edinburgh' will embrace Typefounding, Printing, Engraving, Lithographing and Photographing, Bookbinding, Furniture, Carvings, House Decoration, Tapestry, Silver and Gold Plating, Jewellery, etc., or such other Handicrafts as the Committee may approve.¹⁶⁵

The Edinburgh organisers took the aspect of costumed performance more seriously than their South Kensington counterparts. A stricter dress code was imposed from the outset; its specification of Stuart period costume indicated the prominent and gender-specific role that costume and performance would play in the historic city's retail environment. Six detailed clauses—such as 'Ruff to the throat:—its size to be proportioned to the length of the wearer's neck'—governed the dress of female attendants; the male equivalent was dismissed in a single sentence.¹⁶⁶

The edict of this 'Sumptuary Committee' allowed the *Evening Dispatch* an opportunity for levity on 'the summary and almost disrespectful way in which the "journeymen" are hustled out of the way ... compared with the curious and tender care with which each article of female attire is discussed'.¹⁶⁷ It was the wearers of this attire, the women shop assistants, who would be most prominent in the twinkling booths of Old Edinburgh:

Wanted at once. Two Attractive Young Ladies (English preferred) for a Fancy Goods Stall in the 'Old Edinburgh'. Barmaids might suit. Must be good Saleswomen, and wear the Fancy Dress provided ... Enclose photo.¹⁶⁸

164 *Fun*, 03 Sep 1884, p.108. At the following year's Inventions Exhibition, Old London's fitfully-costumed craftsmen were joined by Alice Hart's Donegal Irishwomen 'At Ye Signe of Ye Rose and Shamrocke' in traditional peasant dress. International Inventions Exhibition, *Official Catalogue*, pp.lx–lxii; Helland, 'Working Bodies', pp.139–40.

165 Edinburgh Exhibition *Official Catalogue*. p.23. Given what was to come, too much could be made of the anachronistic inclusion of lithography and photography.

166 ECL yT570.1886: Cowan Scrapbook contains the printed specification.

167 *Dispatch*, 08 Apr 1886, p.2, though Old Edinburgh's security staff, costumed by Kinloch Anderson's firm in the uniform of the antique City Guard, presented another example of historical male costume.

168 Advertisement, *Scotsman*, 03 May 1886, p.1. Cf. Peter Bailey, 'Parasexuality and Glamour: the

Their costume, and its associated performance, formed part of their conditions of employment.



Illus 4-8 Attendants of Old Edinburgh. Marshall Wane, *Old Edinburgh*

As late as March 1886, the aim for craft-based authenticity in Old Edinburgh's tenants was still being stressed: 'a judicious selection has been made with reference to the wares which are to be sold so that everything harmonises with the architect's ideas'.¹⁶⁹ And in the event, some exhibitors responded in this spirit. Edinburgh printers Ballantyne, Hanson & Co, the descendants of Walter Scott's first publisher, featured 'An old Hand Press at work showing Printing in the olden time' producing, for sale, a souvenir biography of Scott, 'with various specimens of old Printing, and Curiosities and Implements connected with the Art'.¹⁷⁰ However, it became clear that economic imperatives had trumped historical re-enactment. The dash for rental income had produced a glorious hotchpotch of stall-holders

Victorian Barmaid as Cultural Prototype', *Gender & History*, 2:2 (June 1990), pp.148–172.

169 *Scottish News*, 03 Mar 1886, p.2.

170 For Wilson McLaren's recollections of working Ballantyne's Old Edinburgh press see *Scotsman*, 07 Dec 1915, p.7.

offering a diverse and often incongruous range of wares: ‘Souvenirs of Exhibition, Scotch Dolls and Figures, Mechanical Toys’, ‘Fancy and Japanese Goods’, or ‘Oriental Curios and Novelties’.¹⁷¹ Mitchell’s meticulously re-created historical buildings formed the backdrop for a scene of commercial hubbub, animation and excitement.

The much-derided bazaar had materialised at the Exhibition, and its locus was the licenced retail enclave of Old Edinburgh. The Stuart costume of the attendants was part of the repertoire of sales techniques deployed as many of its tenants attempted to recoup their considerable outlay with the sale of souvenirs and kitsch, in an atmosphere of modern commercialism which subverted the attraction’s recreated antique charm:

That character [‘an old-world feeling’], however, belongs to the outside rather than to the inside of the shops and houses. There is not much that can be called antique either in the wares offered for sale or in the style and conduct of the attendants. It is for the most part a large toy shop—a big bazaar for the display and sale of very modern trinkets and fancy goods; and the persistence with which visitors are canvassed for their custom is far from pleasant.¹⁷²

As the Exhibition proceeded, it soon became apparent that the nuisances of over-enthusiastic commercialism could not be contained within the precincts of Old Edinburgh.

Commercial disputes: sales and medals

A notice posted throughout the Exhibition on 25 May, less than three weeks after its opening, drew attention to an issue which would figure as a matter of public controversy over the next few weeks and which continued as an undercurrent throughout the course of the event.

Visitors are informed that purchasing articles is only allowed in Old Edinburgh, and that they are liable to be stopped at the gates when removing such articles purchased in any other part. Orders can be given at any stall and paid for, but the goods ordered must be sent from establishments outside the Exhibition.¹⁷³

The attempt by a number of exhibitors to sell goods from their stalls demonstrated the potential of the Exhibition as a venue for commerce; the Executive’s firm statement

171 *Official Catalogue*, pp.293–94; ‘Shopkeepers and Tenants of Old Edinburgh’, *Scottish News*, 02 Apr 1886, p.2. ECA Acc.423/10: Old Edinburgh leases.

172 *Times*, 13 Jul 1886, p.12.

173 *Evening News*, 27 May 1886, p.2. Cf. ‘Instructions were given to the Manager ... to prohibit selling by a number of Exhibitors’, ECA Acc.423/16: Minute Book 2, 19 May 1886.

asserted their vision of the show as an educative and improving event untainted by these commercial pressures. The two sides disagreed on basic definitions of the enterprise's ethos and purpose: in the meantime, the notices were evidence that the bazaar atmosphere of Old Edinburgh had spread to the general Exhibition courts.

The conflict over direct sales dramatised a paradox underlying the theory and practice of the great international exhibitions. The exhibition movement had as one of its central aims the encouragement of the general ideal of Trade, while at the same time its commitment to the other high-minded abstractions of Peace, Education and Progress disdained the more overt and particular manifestations of commerce typical of the traditional fair, the modern institution's predecessor.¹⁷⁴ At first, this discouragement of any hint of commercialisation had been complete. The refusal of the Great Exhibition's organisers to countenance even the display of informative price tickets famously provoked an early controversy.¹⁷⁵ With the developing consumer economy and the growth of competition the branding and advertising evident in the Edinburgh Exhibition courts had come to characterise even the South Kensington exhibitions of the 1880s, with an increasingly commercial 'shop' atmosphere and exhibitors who could be dismissed as 'a disorganised throng anxious only to advertise their goods'.¹⁷⁶

The South Kensington authorities nevertheless stayed firmly committed to the prohibition of direct sales, to preserve both the decorum of the event and the goodwill of local traders threatened by potential competition. The Secretary of the Health Exhibition boasted that he had banned even the sale of Bibles.¹⁷⁷ This proscription could be softened at the edges: perishable goods were excluded, permitting the South Kensington fish market of 1883 and the Colonial produce market of 1886;¹⁷⁸ and the sale of goods produced as part of manufacturing demonstrations within the event was commonly permitted. The general prohibition nevertheless remained a fundamental of exhibition organisation.¹⁷⁹

174 Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, pp.16–25; discussed above p.28ff.

175 Auerbach, *Great Exhibition*, pp.118–19; Davis, *Great Exhibition*, p.111.

176 *Engineering*, 12 Feb 1886, p.160.

177 *Pall Mall Gazette*, 30 Oct 1884, p.10. In contrast to the Edinburgh organisers' permission of sales by the National Bible Society of Scotland, ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 24 Dec 1885.

178 *Scotsman* 28 Jun 1883, p.6, claims that the South Kensington fish market was explicitly intended to undercut expensive local suppliers—an 'improving' aim.

179 H. Trueman Wood, 'Exhibitions', *Nineteenth Century*, 20:117 (November 1886), pp.640–41. The ban was inevitably evaded in practice: see for example the case of Gustavus Hirschfield, *Times*,

However much they were overshadowed by the exhibition's positivistic rhetoric of progress and improvement, commerce and the vulgar matter of sales remained the central concern of most exhibitors. In the extractive industries or for the manufacturers of capital goods attention-grabbing displays were intended to elicit contracts.¹⁸⁰ As the Edinburgh notices acknowledged, selections from the increasingly predominating exhibits of consumer merchandise could be ordered for home delivery from warehouse stock.¹⁸¹ Potential customers might also be directed to a legitimate outlet outside the Exhibition, an arrangement to the advantage of local exhibitors such as the Edinburgh department stores, craft producers and other retailers and stockists whose stalls functioned as advertising for their main premises. A few exhibitors—among them the Clydesdale Silk Company of the unspooling cocoons, Thornton of Princes Street's 'Ye First Scottish Rubber Shop', and, collectively, the Women's Industries Section—went so far as renting additional space in Old Edinburgh to provide a *bona fide* outlet for wares displayed in the Exhibition courts.¹⁸²

The Executive's notices were intended to restate these acceptable limits of commercial activity to 'smallware' exhibitors who had allegedly come to the Exhibition with the specific intention of selling over the counter. Characterised as outsiders, these vendors competed unfairly not only with the tenants of Old Edinburgh, but also with non-exhibiting local businesses—and thus encouraged grumbling about the intrusion of the 'big shop'.¹⁸³ The Executive, and Hedley who as Manager was responsible for enforcing the policy, could quote the Exhibition Regulations, though these were curiously muted on this point. While Regulations 33: 'Exhibitors or their Attendants ... will not be allowed to press Visitors to purchase the goods, the Exhibition being intended primarily for purposes of display'; and 35: 'No exhibit can be removed before the close of the Exhibition without the special permission of the Executive Council', had the effect of banning outright sales, they hardly constituted a clear statement of a rigorous policy. And the Regulations as whole omitted any

02 Nov 1885, p.4, charged with dealing in plate without a licence at the Inventions Exhibition. Wood argued that regulations were harder to enforce on foreign exhibitors: 'M. Berger on the Chicago Exhibition', *Engineering*, 02 May 1890, pp.527–30, for his experiences in Paris in 1889.

180 p.32 above.

181 Houston of Greenock (#332) would supply direct orders at a discount of 30%: 'The attendant shows Patterns and takes Orders', advertisement, *Official Guide*, p.68.

182 Old Edinburgh exhibits #1, #34 and #25. Fourteen out of the forty-four Old Edinburgh exhibitors fell into this category.

183 Thus the petition of Old Edinburgh shopkeepers to the Executive, ECA Acc.423/16: Minute Book 2, 27 May 1886. See *Dispatch*, 16 Oct 1886, p.2, for the 'big shop' epithet.

reference to, or recognition of, the exceptional status of the Old Edinburgh shops.¹⁸⁴

The Executive's abrupt clarification of the Regulations brought forth a storm of protest at bad-tempered meetings of discontented 'selling' exhibitors.¹⁸⁵ Bluster and injured innocence were on show. The Exhibition regulations were unclear; the complainants had agreed to become exhibitors in good faith on the assumption that selling was within the rules.

If the prohibition to sell is strictly carried out, very great injustice will be done to many Exhibitors, who, at great cost, have erected elaborate stalls, helping to make the Exhibition what it is, under the impression that while they were not allowed to press visitors, were yet at liberty to dispose of such articles as visitors chose to purchase from their stalls.¹⁸⁶

The Exhibition management had been peremptory and high-handed, an accusation presumably directed against Hedley whose abrasive style was becoming notorious;¹⁸⁷ and—attack being the best form of defence—the prospect of Old Edinburgh, 'degraded by squeaking dolls and india-rubber toys' itself demeaned the Exhibition.¹⁸⁸

This unrestrained show of commercial frustration prompted contributions from exhibitors more sympathetic to the Exhibition management:

The Executive must not forget they have to look beyond the exhibitors to the general public and to the merchants in the city, and it will be a sorry day if they permit the triumph of those who in the beginning declared it would be just a big bazaar.¹⁸⁹

This more conciliatory tone prevailed at a further 'lively' meeting of exhibitors on 7 June, where it was resolved to set up a formal Exhibitors' Association, a successor to the similar

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- 184 *Official Catalogue*, pp.17–18. Both the Inventions (Reg.37) and the Liverpool (Reg.34) Exhibitions explicitly forbade invitations to purchase, *Regulations* of the exhibitions concerned.
- 185 *Evening News*, 28 May 1886, p.2, 01 Jun 1886, p.2. The *Evening News*, 27 May 1886, p.2, reported a claim that 200 exhibitors were affected.
- 186 An Exhibitor and a Guarantor, *Scotsman*, 29 May 86, p.6. Accusations from both sides were necessarily cloaked in anonymity; movers in the agitation included William Eglin 'American Manufactures and Inventions' of Glasgow (#1064) and A. Anderson of the Waterbury Watch Co, whose 'Twelve hundred [mass-produced American] Watches in cases' (#1321) were eminently sellable.
- 187 *Scotsman*, 04 Jun 1886, p.5, for Hedley's threat to stop transgressors' passes. See poem, 'He is a big, stout strong lump of a highly intelligent Londoner ...', *The Queen at Our Owneries*. (Edinburgh, 1886).
- 188 *Dispatch*, 01 Jun 1886, p.2.
- 189 Another Exhibitor and Guarantor, *Scotsman*, 31 May 86, p.5. See p.62 for the emergence of the 'bazaar' issue.

organisation of Forestry exhibitors. In this, the Executive had a representative body with which they could engage; one stressing the community between management and responsible exhibitors whose common interests could be realised in a successful Exhibition.¹⁹⁰

In the short term, it appeared that Hedley's clampdown on unauthorised sales had some success. A number of offending exhibitors were ejected, to the Exhibition's general improvement:

It seems as if the action of the Executive in preventing those exhibitors who persisted in selling from introducing fresh goods were to have the desired effect in putting a stop to a practice which was loudly complained of by shopkeepers in the city. Several of the 'selling' exhibitors having sold off their stock, have been unable renew it, and their stands are now left empty. ... It is almost needless to add that the Exhibition is not a whit the worse because of their absence. One of the displaced exhibitors has taken refuge in Old Edinburgh, where he is allowed to vend his wares unmolested.¹⁹¹

There were however indications that selling continued apace: 'in certain of the courts [it] has become little short of a nuisance, visitors being solicited to buy, and even importuned and even laid hold of in the passages'.¹⁹²

A *Dispatch* review implicated local firms as well as out-of-towners.¹⁹³ The jewellery trade had ignored the prohibition on selling to satisfy 'an illimitable demand for cheap and tastefully got up ornaments, usually of Scottish design (supplied mostly by the 'flash' trade of Birmingham)'. A tweed-maker reported that 'two stalls owned by members of the Committee have been selling more than any three put together'. A 'Continental merchant' was alleged to have taken eight or nine stands in different names: "Now I leave it to anyone's common sense to say whether this foreign gentleman paid for all that stand accommodation, not to speak of attendants' wages, for the purpose of promoting 'science art and industry' or with the object of making money by the sale of his wares".

The Exhibitors' Association meanwhile settled down to concern itself with practical issues such as cheap meals, and toilet facilities for their female employees, though further grumbling and allegations of bad faith on the part of the Executive could still be heard amidst the more constructive, emollient sentiments. Mutual self-congratulation at their respective parts in the Exhibition's success was sealed at the Association's dinner on 27

190 *Evening News*, 07 Jun 1886, p.3.

191 *Evening News*, 05 Aug 1886, p.2.

192 *NBA&LJ*, 07 Aug 1886.

193 *Dispatch*, 16 Oct 1886, p.2; following quotes come from this article.

October, chaired by the George Street jeweller James Crichton, a veteran of the Dobie's Saloon meeting, an exhibitor and a guarantor, and a member of the Fine Art Committee. The assembly was addressed by Gowans, at his most ebullient, with Hutchison, Martin and Hedley in attendance. In the midst of the speeches and toasts, the bonhomie and expressions of goodwill, the croupier James Shepherd's 'good-humoured' but pointed remarks on the Exhibition's long-delayed award of medals indicated this was the point at which another Exhibition row was about to break.¹⁹⁴

From their origins exhibitions had been arenas of competition where progress was demonstrated and excellence rewarded. The premiums of the Select Society from which the Edinburgh publicists were keen to trace a lineage, and the awards of the French National exhibitions were early examples. But the model in this respect, as in so many other aspects of exhibition practice, was the Great Exhibition of 1851 where the process of jurying, judging and the award of medals were central to the event's significance—especially for successful exhibitors.¹⁹⁵ The paraphernalia of jurying and awards were, as yet, inseparable from the idea and purpose of the large-scale exhibition.¹⁹⁶

Recognition in the form of an exhibition medal or diploma could translate into business success. William Bertram's enthusiasm for the Edinburgh Exhibition, and his willingness to commit his own time to its committees and his firm's resources to its infrastructure, reflected the belief that G.&W. Bertram owed their reputation to their *coup* at the London Exhibition of 1862 where the installation of a complete papermaking mill had won the firm a medal and much attention.¹⁹⁷ Such confidence in the efficacy of exhibition awards was widespread. In an increasingly competitive business climate, with the growth of product differentiation and marketing, exhibition medals became tokens of excellence: to be displayed proudly at head office and reproduced in letterheads, trade publicity, and advertisements.

'An exhibition is, of course, an enormous advertising agency' in the opinion of Henry Trueman Wood, Secretary to the Society of Arts and one of the eminences of British

194 *Scotsman*, 28 Oct 1886, p.6; *Scottish News*, 28 Oct 1886, p.3. Shepherd was the proprietor of a Kirkcaldy linoleum firm. For Crichton, a prominent Freemason and aspiring Conservative Councillor, see *Scotsman*, 15 Sep 1892, p.4.

195 Davis, *Great Exhibition*, pp.162–66. See p.58 above for Gowans's 1851 and 1862 medals.

196 Wood, 'Exhibitions', pp.642–45 for a contemporary analysis of the jurying process.

197 *Within a Mile of Edinburgh Town: The History of Bertrams Limited*, pp.8–9; Robert Mallet (ed.), *The Record of the International Exhibition, 1862*. (Glasgow, 1862), p.369, fold-out plate of Bertram's machine.

exhibitions. In this world ‘the value of the medals, their actual trade value, proved to be very high, probably much higher than anticipated’.

New firms are anxious to get on a level with, or ahead of, their rivals of established reputation, and old firms ... are afraid of their rivals being able to say they are surpassed and beaten at last. ‘This means a difference of hundreds a week to my firm’ is a remark that has been made more than once in the case of a disputed award.¹⁹⁸

The development of an exhibition circuit was paralleled by the elaboration of business strategies in exhibiting, and the circulation of exhibitors, technology and artifacts between events.¹⁹⁹

Given resources and commitment, firms would exhibit where they could see a commercial advantage in sales or esteem. The Clyde shipbuilders whose models decorated the Grand Hall were faced in 1886 with a choice between the Edinburgh and Liverpool Exhibitions, the latter event ‘being the chiefest attraction for exhibitors in [these] industries’; *The Engineer* ascribed the paucity of marine engineering and shipbuilding exhibits it detected at Edinburgh to this competition.²⁰⁰ Strategies would be tailored to circumstances. The Edinburgh engineering firm Herbert and Law (#245) exhibited flour milling equipment at the Exhibition:

Messrs. Herbert and Law are paper machinery manufacturers, but they do not exhibit in this class. Their connection in it is chiefly abroad; so they do not exhibit at home. This appears to be an evidence of one of the inscrutables which actuate manufacturers in their line of action with regard to exhibitions. There seems to be still existing very various opinions as to the probable effect of exhibiting more or less fully at exhibitions. Some firms are afraid to exhibit, while others court very full examination of everything.

‘Perhaps’, *The Engineer* concluded enigmatically, ‘both are right’.²⁰¹

Presence at often far-flung exhibitions could assist attempts to gain traction in wider markets. The Glenboig Union Fire Clay Company (#62), part of the Scottish industrial ceramics industry whose products merited a place amidst the art pottery and other high-

198 Wood, ‘Exhibitions’, pp.641–42. For Trueman Wood, brother of Annie Besant, see R.T. Smith, ‘Wood, Sir Henry Trueman Wright (1845–1929)’, *ODNB*.

199 Alexander Geppert’s exhibitionary networks, p.95 above.

200 *Engineer* 07 May 1886, p.350; see also 21 Jul 1886, p.388 for the depression in shipbuilding. For Denny’s exhibit at Liverpool see ‘Scottish Exhibits in the Liverpool “Shipperies”’, *Scotsman*, 03 Jun 1886, p.5.

201 *Engineer*, 16 Jul 1886, p.55.

class exhibits in the Grand Hall,²⁰² had gained ‘many distinguished medallic honours’ in four London shows and in exhibitions in Paris, Amsterdam, Calcutta, Melbourne, and Santiago de Chile. The company was awarded gold and bronze medals at Antwerp.²⁰³ The Broxburn Oil Company (#95, #96) whose model candle factory entranced onlookers in the Central Court was one of several representatives of the booming Scottish shale-oil industry. Established in 1877, the enterprise had enjoyed ‘an immediate and phenomenal success’, paying dividends of twenty-five per cent for several years. In a heavily-capitalised extractive industry with a range of industrial and consumer products, its sales strategy was founded on heavy advertising for a branded product range in which, like the other shale-oil companies, exhibition played a major role. The firm was another Antwerp gold medal winner.²⁰⁴

As the use of exhibition success in marketing and advertising became more and more pervasive the processes of jurying and awards grew increasingly contentious, especially since these processes and the criteria they were based on were often obscure. Losers’ dissatisfaction became more strident as the perceived rewards became greater. The Edinburgh Forestry Exhibition provided a foretaste: exhibitor dissatisfaction had compelled Lothian and the somewhat ineffective Forestry Executive to re-run the entire process and award a second set of medals ‘with the result that everybody got his medal, and no one went unrewarded’.²⁰⁵ The increasing biliousness and bad feeling, though met with weary resignation by exhibition commentators, could only tarnish the exhibition ideal; the outcome of the 1886 exhibitions—at Edinburgh, and more so at Liverpool—would amplify the concerns of critics.

In the wake of the uproar over unauthorised sales, the arrangements for the award of medals seemed to confirm that in their dealings with exhibitors the Exhibition management had lost some of the competence demonstrated in the organisation of the event. The jurying process was long drawn out and opaque. It was apparently intended that the Edinburgh Jury Commission should be appointed by the Scottish Secretary, but no evidence

202 ‘The Scottish Firebrick Industry’, *Engineering*, 09 Jul 1886, p.40.

203 *Glasgow of To-day, the Metropolis of the North*, p.107. Their tally later included silver medals at both Edinburgh and Liverpool in 1886.

204 And won a gold medal again at Edinburgh. John H. McKay, *Scotland’s First Oil Boom: The Scottish Shale Oil Industry, 1851 to 1914*. (Edinburgh, 2012), pp.31, 182. The other shale firms exhibiting at Edinburgh were the Burntisland (#227), Linlithgow (#111), and Pumpherston (#283) Companies.

205 ‘The Vanity of Exhibitions’, *Saturday Review*, 62:1618 (October 1886), p.578. See above p.45.

of this official status was forthcoming.²⁰⁶ The trio of Lothian, Gowans and Clark were joined on the Commission by William McOnie, Lord Provost of Glasgow and one of the Exhibition vice-presidents; Art and Science were represented by Sir William Fettes Douglas, P.R.S.A, by Colonel Murdoch Smith, Director of the Museum of Science and Art, who had assisted in drawing up the Exhibition classification, and by John G. McKendrick, Professor of Physiology at Glasgow University.

The sixteen juries were not empaneled until September. Their 170 members brought expertise from industry, commerce, higher education, and the professions of architecture and engineering to bear on the task of judgement, but the pool was once again overwhelming local: 81 of the 170 jurors came from Edinburgh, Leith or Portobello, thirty-one from Glasgow and another twenty-five from the rest of Scotland. Fully four-fifths of those selected were therefore Scottish in origin.²⁰⁷ Once appointed, the Edinburgh juries' deliberations were far from speedy. The main batch of the long-delayed and awaited results was eventually announced on 26 October with a final supplement on the 29th, the penultimate day of the Exhibition: 'for some reason it was exceedingly difficult to induce [the Executive] to part with the list'.²⁰⁸

The outcome revealed a fitting grasp of diplomacy on the jurors' part. Diplomas of Honour went to Ladies Aberdeen and Reay for their contributions to the Women's Industries Section; and to Gowans for the Model Tenement, with another Diploma of Honour collectively awarded for the Masons' Pillars.²⁰⁹ Amongst the Exhibition's prominent exhibits, gold medals were given for each of the railway locomotives. Douglas and Grant's Corliss engine received a gold medal; Bertram's horizontal engine a silver, though the firm were awarded a gold medal for their exhibit of papermaking machinery. Constable's model printworks also merited a gold medal, while Bishop's ceremonial organ received two silvers.

206 International Exhibition of Industry, Science, and Art, *List of Jurors*. (Edinburgh, 1886), from which the following analysis is drawn, makes no mention of a Royal Commission or any other official recognition.

207 The juries varied in size from 30 members of Jury C, Chemistry, Pharmacy and Food to only three making up Jury N, Electrical Appliances. There was a degree of jury cross-membership: 23 members sat on two juries, five (including the leading Edinburgh architect Rowand Anderson and Professor Dittmar of the Anderson College Glasgow) were members of three; and Allan Brebner, an Edinburgh engineer, took a seat on no fewer than five. The presence of academia is noteworthy, given its previous lack of involvement in the Exhibition project.

208 *Dispatch*, 26 Oct 1886, p.2. *Scotsman*, 27 Oct 1886, p.6; 30 Oct 1886, p.9 for the complete Awards List. The announcement of the Liverpool Exhibition awards was only slightly less tardy, on the 15th: *Liverpool Mercury*, 16 Oct 1886, p.6.

209 Though Gowans's display of improved tramway rails and fittings (#760) went unrewarded.

The electric lighting contractors were awarded silver medals apiece, except for Richard Miller's Thomson-Houston installation which won gold and thus the victory in the contest for the electric light.²¹⁰ The list as a whole was notable for its length: the 1,140 awards to general exhibitors included 13 Diplomas of Honour, 231 gold and 346 silver medals.²¹¹

Despite the jurors' generosity, the announcement provoked a vociferous wave of complaint at the injustice of the judgements and the procedural inadequacies of the juries, of the kind which had become familiar. 'Here and there is a croon of satisfied content by those whom the jury has done the justice of recognising their superiority; but it is lost in a howl of anguish and denunciation'.²¹² The letters columns of the *Scotsman* were peppered with accusations, typified by the assertions of Walter Neilson & Co and John M. Shaw of Glasgow that the Kitchen Range Jury O had been packed with representatives of their competitors.²¹³ Dissent reached as far as the Executive with A.B. Brown's allegations that his fellow-member James Park had persuaded the Electric Lighting jury to reduce King, Brown's original gold medal to silver.²¹⁴

There were nevertheless few if any of the allegations of outright bribery of jurors which were current at Liverpool, where a particularly flagrant case led to a bitter complaint by the North British Rubber Company of Edinburgh.²¹⁵ At Liverpool the integrity of the process was brought further into question by the activities of exhibition 'agents', the most prominent of whom was Vincent Riordan, who offered their services as exhibitors' representatives before jury panels on a payment-by-results basis. These intermediaries also pursued their dubious calling at Edinburgh: Riordan maintained a shadowy presence, while it was alleged that the clients of Ernest Barker, a former aquarium manager turned agent,

210 For an analysis of the awards for the small number of electrical exhibits see *Telegraphic Journal and Electrical Review*, 05 Nov 1886, p.451.

211 *Scotsman*, 27 Oct 1886, p.6, 30 Oct 1886, p.9.

212 *Dispatch*, 28 Oct 1886, p.2.

213 See *Scotsman*, 28 Oct 1886, p.7 (Neilson) and 01 Nov 1886, p.9 (Shaw). The paper dismissed such disputes as 'an invariable circumstance at all Exhibitions', 01 Nov 1886, p.6 before closing the correspondence, 03 Nov 1886, p.9.

214 ECA Acc.423/16: Minute Book 2, 28 Oct 1886, 18 Nov 1886. Park's firm James Dove & Co received only an Honourable Mention for its fire extinguishers (*Official Catalogue, Complimentary List*).

215 Correspondence, *Liverpool Mercury*, 29 Oct 1886, p.6 and 30 Oct 1886, p.6; reprinted, *Scotsman*, 30 Nov 1886, p.11, 01 Nov 1886, p.8. The N.B. Rubber Company exhibited both at Liverpool and Edinburgh (#329, Gold Medal).

had enjoyed a 'singular run of luck' in their consideration by Exhibition juries.²¹⁶

To seasoned observers the awards controversy at Edinburgh, and at Liverpool, confirmed the exhibitions' descent into commercialism and the tawdriness of the awards procedures. The *Saturday Review's* condemnation of 'organised hypocrisies' caught the tone.

The Edinburgh jury has been so prodigal of recognition that that it is almost a distinction to be undistinguished. Here all men are equal, or thereabouts. Renown has descended in a shower of printed gold and silver upon all the arts and manufactures alike.²¹⁷

Such criticism influenced the policy of future exhibitions, which began to abandon the show of rewarding excellence which had been one of the very reasons for the exhibition movement's existence. Neither the Manchester Exhibition of 1887 nor the Glasgow Exhibition of 1888 made jury awards 'and it is not believed that any exhibitors were kept away by the fact'.²¹⁸ But by dispensing with a central element of the Great Exhibition formula, exhibition organisers could only reinforce the move away from the austere principles of 1851 to the inescapable triumph of the exhibition as an entertainment venue.²¹⁹

Unlike their Forestry predecessors, the Exhibition management held firm under the shower of complaints from dissatisfied exhibitors. However, having weathered the comparatively brief storm of criticism over the awards procedures they faced a drawn-out campaign over the physical form of the prizes, in which James Shepherd's jokey but barbed remarks at the Exhibitors' dinner were only an early sally. For, rather than offering real metal, the Executive had decreed that the awards should come in the form of 'Diplomas for Gold, Silver and Bronze Medals and Honourable Mention': paper medals.²²⁰ In this they managed to offend medal winners, rather than losers. The trivial quality of the proffered certificate, with its embossed foil representation, contributed to the disillusion with the whole medal system: 'With these mournful simulacra, these miserable shadows of precious

216 *Scotsman*, 01 Nov 1886, p.7, for the workings of this area of exhibitionary enterprise. For Riordan at Liverpool see Steele and Benbough-Jackson, 'Civic Pride', p.189. For Barker's progress to Burnbank, see p.277 below.

217 'The Vanity of Exhibitions', p.578; reprinted in part in *Dispatch*, 30 Oct 1886, p.3, and quoted in Geddes, *Industrial Exhibitions*, p.13.

218 Wood, 'Memorandum', p.905.

219 See 'Education *versus* entertainment', p.226ff below.

220 Regulation 34, *Official Catalogue*, p.18.

metals, it is a fact that dear old Scotland teems'.²²¹

For many winners real medals appeared to possess a totemic significance as objects in themselves, quite apart from the reputational value which the award conferred. Encouraged by talk of the huge profits accrued by the Exhibition, from its close to the final winding-up of affairs a party of aggrieved medal-winners, in which the jeweller Crichton was a moving



Illus 4-9 Paper medals: John Bartholomew's gold diploma. NLS Acc.10222: Bartholomew archive

spirit, used their status as guarantors to pressure the Executive through the Exhibition Association with demands to transmute their paper facsimiles into real metal.²²² They had been promised medals at the outset,²²³ they had contributed to the success of the Exhibition, as guarantors, as rent-payers, and in the merit of their exhibits, and that merit now deserved a reward more tangible than a paper certificate. The medal-winners' demands would join the tail of more or less realistic proposals for the disbursement of what turned

221 'Vanity of Exhibitions', p.578.

222 See p.82 above for the Exhibition Association and its legal status.

223 There was some truth in this: the Executive had amended the wording of the original regulation at Hedley's suggestion, ECA Acc.423/17: Minute Book 1, 06 Oct 1885.

out to be, in the aftermath of the Exhibition, a rapidly-diminishing surplus.

The Exhibition had called its exhibitors into being as a body. And, as a body, their predominant geographical origins reinforced the self-definition of the event's organisers: this was a Scottish exhibition where national character and achievements were on display. The strong showing of Edinburgh exhibitors—among them a sprinkling of public enterprises, but with an emphasis on the city's high-quality consumer industries and retail outlets—reflected the characteristics of the real city in its representation in the Exhibition courts. The Artisan Section fulfilled the promise of working-class inclusion in this public arena held out by the Exhibition organisers, though this could be grudging in practice. The Women's Industries Committee, longer in reach and higher in status, mounted a wider-ranging display on an issue of abiding interest to the city's circles of women's activism. These specialised courts once again depicted aspects of the city's social life in action. However the less edifying intrusion of commercialism, the spirit of the bazaar, evident in Old Edinburgh and the general Exhibition courts provided at Edinburgh an instance of a widespread tendency in the late Victorian exhibitions: the assertion of the commercial interests of exhibitors over the improving educative ethos of the exhibition pioneers. This tendency underlay the Edinburgh organisers' struggle with direct sales and the controversies over medals. But growing commercialism was paralleled by another exhibitionary tendency: the increasing salience of entertainment over education in attracting visitors. It is these visitors, and their experience at the Edinburgh Exhibition, that are the subject of the next chapter.

5. 'The great resource of Edinburgh sightseers and pleasure-seekers': visiting the Exhibition

With the Exhibition buildings complete and populated by the exhibitors and their often spectacular wares, only the arrival of the visitors was required to transform the Fairy Palace into a place of animation and excitement. Visitor numbers were important in themselves: the raw tally of recorded visits was the single most telling indicator of success or failure for the Victorian exhibitions, and the Edinburgh event's final total of more than 2,750,000 stood creditable comparison with its contemporaries. The breakdown of this raw tally however reveals much more about the size and composition of the Exhibition crowd. Affluent middle-class season-ticket holders demonstrated a solid base of subscriber support for the undertaking. The Exhibition's addition to the city's visitor attractions was shown by the growing number of excursionists. And, even after these categories are deducted, the remaining count represented several visits per head of the Edinburgh populace—despite the management's initial, and much-criticised, reluctance to provide much in the way of cheap entry for a popular audience.

The Exhibition's career is a story of growth: in visitor numbers, in the confidence of the event's management and its ability to deal with these numbers, and in the provision of more and varied amusements to attract them. Along the way the Exhibition developed from a genteel pleasure garden into a site of mass entertainment. The Queen's visit of mid-August was a moment of civic ceremonial for Scotland's capital, if, like the opening ceremony performed by her grandson, a test of competence for the Exhibition organisers. It also marked a turning point in its entertainment policy. Before, the pleasures of the Exhibition's contents and the promenades under electric light were enhanced by music—and by the somewhat dubious attraction of celebrity visitors. After, with management encouraged by healthy takings at the gates and persuaded to initiate regular cheap entrance days, the attractions of music and illumination were augmented by firework displays, sports tournaments including a series of football matches, balloon ascents, and a Highland Gathering. These delights attracted the enthusiastic and generally well-behaved crowds which attended Exhibition's latter days, despite the deleterious impact on the often rain-sodden Meadows. The event had conjured up its own mass audience.

Counting visitors

From the beginning exhibitions were measured in visitor numbers. The total of six million for the Great Exhibition in 1851 was prodigious enough; the progressively increasing attendance figures at subsequent events such as the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876 and the Paris Exposition of 1878 confirmed the rise of the exhibition as a medium of mass participation.¹ Visitor numbers also pointed up the competition between events, where exhibitions that did not fit into the narrative of growth—such as the London International of 1862, where the attendance barely surpassed that of the Great Exhibition—could be dismissed as comparative failures. In the quickening pace of the 1880s such considerations weighed on the organisers of the smaller-scale British exhibitions whose success became a mark of local prestige. So it was with Edinburgh in 1886. The city's newspapers scanned detailed attendance figures and cumulated totals to conjure up favourable comparisons between the performance of the local event and its contemporaries at Liverpool and South Kensington.² The Edinburgh Exhibition's count of 2,769,632 visits for the 153 days of opening between 6 May and 31 October came as a comforting measure of the undertaking's success, outstripping Liverpool and, in comparative terms at least, a respectable match for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition.³

The Exhibition's gatekeepers provided more detailed information on the different types of tickets taken, and these can be used to give a day-to-day picture of the makeup of attendance.⁴ The season ticket holders, 13,256 in number, came from the strata of Edinburgh society that could afford the outlay of a guinea each, the better part of an

1 9,910,966 and 16,032,725 visits respectively. John Allwood, *The Great Exhibitions*. (London, 1977), pp.180–85 for figures for these and other large-scale exhibitions.

2 *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, 11 May 1886, p.4, calculated the first four days' attendance at the London and Edinburgh exhibitions as a proportion of population (1–2% and over 20% respectively); cf. the *Scotsman's* analyses of visits for the first forty-seven and seventy-one days of the Edinburgh, Liverpool and South Kensington exhibitions, 10 Jul 1886, p.6, and 29 Oct 1886, p.5.

3 Give figures: see Table 6-1 p.280 below.

4 See Table 5-1 to Table 5-3, p.214ff. Convention dictated that the Exhibition remain closed on the Sabbath; the *Dispatch* was a lone advocate of Sunday opening, 19 Jun 1886, p.2. Attendance figures were otherwise published (almost) daily with some gaps, generally on days of high attendance when detailed counts could not be returned. Data has been collated from reports in the *Scotsman*, *Scottish News*, and *Edinburgh Evening News*. Ticket types reported were: season, railway, cash at turnstile, children, and shilling tickets (that is, purchased in advance).

artisan's weekly wage.⁵ Season tickets constituted more than a third of all admissions,⁶ providing a solid backbone of privileged attendance and confirming the event as a venue for upper- and middle-class sociability. This predominance was most evident at the beginning of the Exhibition. Of the twenty-five days when season-ticket holders formed an absolute majority of counted visitors, eighteen fell in the first six weeks, 5 May to 12 June. With the onset of the middle-class holiday season, these visits fell proportionately and absolutely to a trough in August, excepting the two days, 18th and 19th, of the Queen's visit. Even in high summer it was nevertheless evident that some middle-class families had foregone their habitual exodus to summer quarters:

Indirectly the Exhibition tended to make matters duller [for house-painters], as in some cases the people, instead going to the country as usual, and having their houses cleaned and painted, stayed on in town and had little or no cleaning done.⁷

Season-ticket holders returned to the Exhibition in the autumn, forming the majority of visitors again on five days from 29 September and high absolute numbers of season-ticket visits were counted as attendances reached a peak in the last few weeks of the Exhibition.⁸

The season ticket allowed its possessor to come and go at will. On average sixty-five visits were made by each ticket-holder,⁹ opening up the Exhibition facilities to relaxed, spontaneous use. By one, no doubt exaggerated, recollection '[t]he large majority of season-ticket holders ... resided near the Exhibition and visited it on an average twice a day, many of them using the grounds as a thoroughfare to and from their business'.¹⁰ Besides the privileges it conferred, season ticket purchase was a gesture of support, another opportunity for upper- and middle-class patronage of the undertaking. In return, for many purchasers it conferred the sense of ownership, verging on entitlement, that was evident in the demand for access to the event's grand set-piece ceremonies. At the same time, the elite presence in the daily promenades of the Exhibition provided a visible demonstration of social status

5 Another 1,347 half-guinea tickets were issued to 9- to 14-year-olds. Totals reconstituted from Exhibition Accounts, ECA Acc.423/13: Exhibition Association Minutes, 28 Dec 1887.

6 37% given a total of 1,016,507 season ticket admissions, *Edinburgh Evening News*, 01 Nov 1886, p.3.

7 *Evening News*, 25 Dec 1886, p.2.

8 Boosted by the sale of 1,915 five-shilling season tickets valid for October only.

9 That is, shared between an adjusted total of 14,928 ticketholders.

10 *Dispatch*, 14 Jun 1890, p.2.

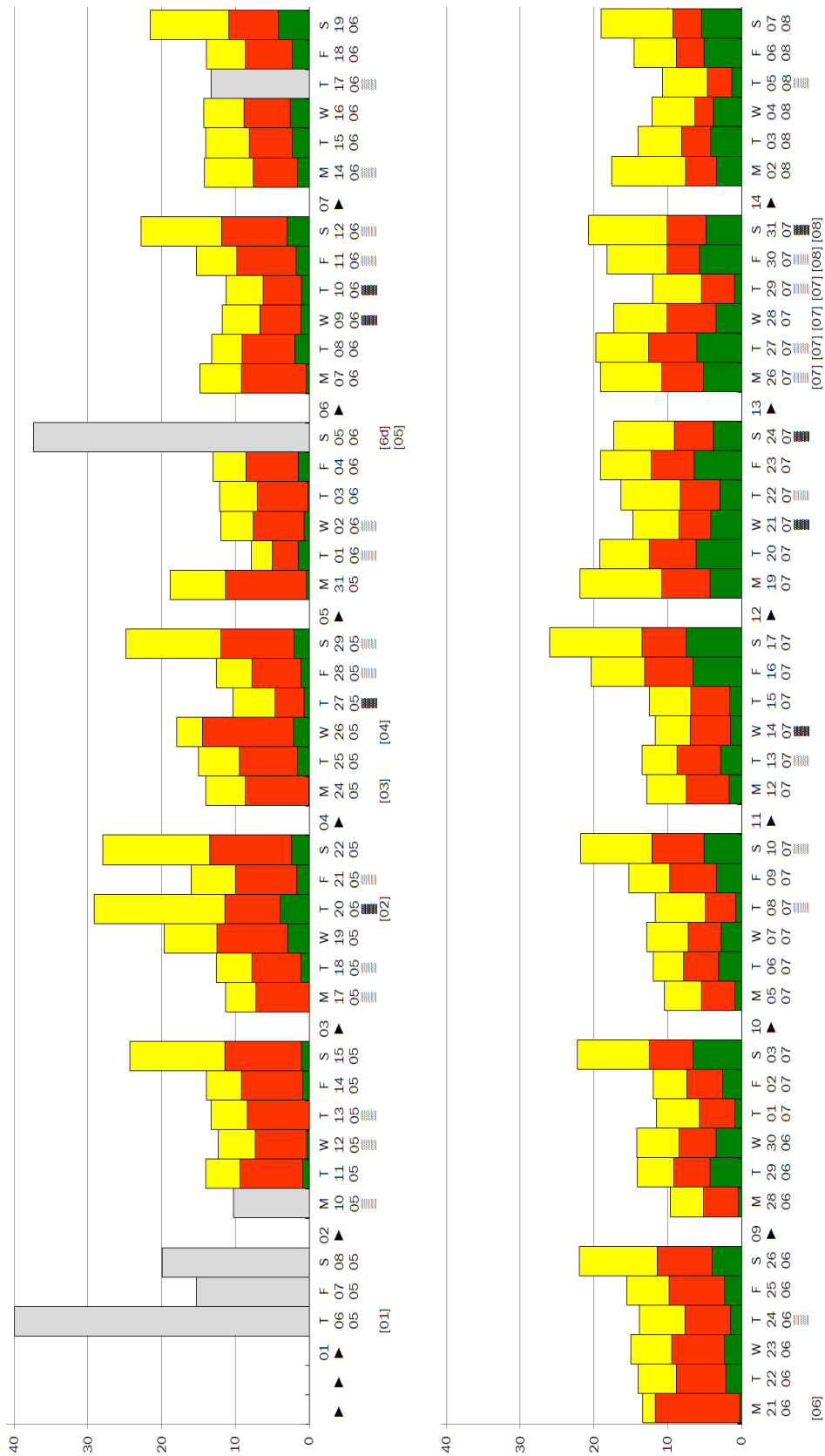


Table 5-1 Exhibition attendance (thousands) weeks 1 to 14. Source: Scotsman, Scottish News, Edinburgh Evening News

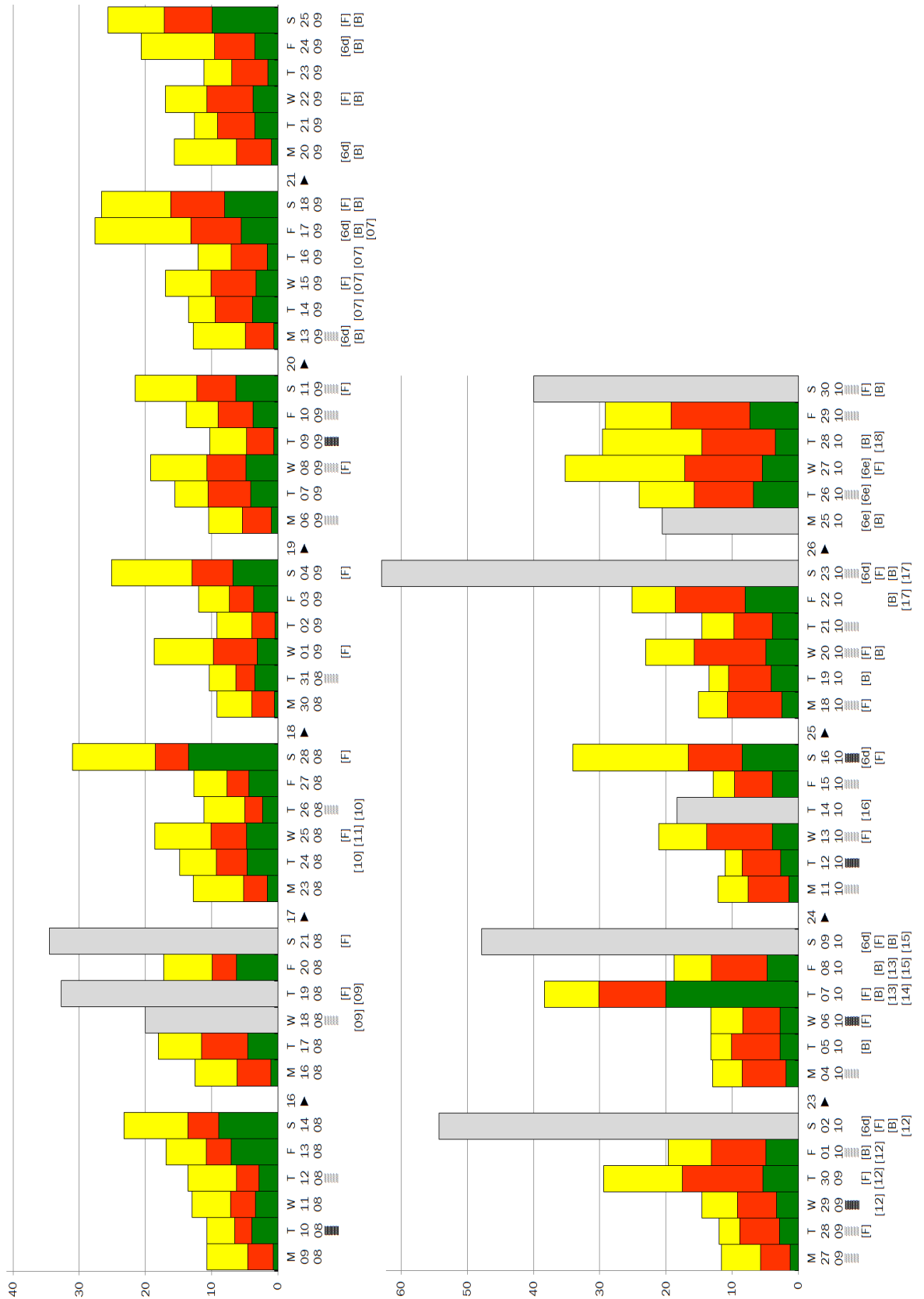


Table 5-2 Exhibition attendance (thousands) weeks 15 to 26. Source: *Scotsman, Scottish News, Edinburgh Evening News*

	Ordinary admissions [Turnstile, Children, Shilling Tickets]	[06] Second Special Day: W.E. Gladstone, 21 June
	Season ticket admissions	[07] Lawn tennis tournaments, 26–29 July, 14–17 September
	Railway ticket admissions	[08] Edinburgh Trades Holiday, 30–31 July
	Not reported	[09] Queen's visit, 18–19 August
	Rain	[10] Colonial and Indian Delegation visit, 24 and 26 August
	Heavy rain	[11] French Workmen's Delegation visit, 25 August
[6d]	Cheap day	[12] Highland Gathering, 29 September–2 October
[6e]	Cheap evening	[13] Football Tournament, 7–8 October
[B]	Balloon ascent	[14] Glasgow Holiday, 7 October
[F]	Fireworks	[15] Wrestling match, 8–9 October
[01]	Opening ceremony, 6 May	[16] Prince of Wales's visit, 14 October
[02]	Queen's birthday holiday, 20 May	[17] Brass Band Competition, 22–23 October
[03]	Visit of Marquis Tseng, 24 May	[18] Edinburgh Sacramental Fast Day, 28 October
[04]	First Special Day: Lord High Commissioner Thurlow, 16 May	
[05]	Artisan Day, 5 June	

Table 5-3 Exhibition attendance: key

and leadership.¹¹

The total of 542,472 admissions by railway ticket, twenty per cent of the total visitor count,¹² records a proportion of the visitors drawn to the event from outside the city. There was agreement that the exceptionally busy character of the city that summer was a result of the Exhibition, ‘the magnet attracting a larger influx of strangers than Edinburgh has ever before had to entertain in the same space of time’.¹³ The holders of the half-million tickets issued through the railway companies formed the majority of these visitors, but they were

11 For the promenade see Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority in the English Industrial City, 1840–1914*. (Manchester, 2000), p.76; and, though in a very different context, David Scobey, ‘Anatomy of the Promenade: The Politics of Bourgeois Sociability in Nineteenth-Century New York’, *Social History*, 17:2 (May 1992), pp.203–27.

12 *Scotsman*, 01 Nov 1886, p.7.

13 *Scotsman*, 01 Nov 1886, p.6. Edinburgh’s busyness was confirmed by tramway receipts. Hutchison noted of the ESTC that ‘had it not been for the exceptionally good traffic they had had of late owing to the Exhibition they might have been meeting the shareholders with a lower dividend’, *Scotsman*, 31 Jul 1886, p.5. Takings rose 28% for the twenty-six weeks of the Exhibition over the same period for the previous year; the equivalent revenue of the Glasgow company fell by 2% in the same period, amidst continuing complaints of depressed conditions. Analysis of weekly tramway receipts, *Scotsman*, *passim*.

by no means the only strangers in town: the *Scotsman* estimated that another quarter-million visitors had arrived ‘who did not avail themselves of the special railway facilities’.¹⁴ These independent travellers reinforced Edinburgh’s status as a destination for affluent tourists. From broadly the same social strata as the local season ticket holders, they patronised Edinburgh’s high-class hotels so prominently featured amongst the Exhibition’s guarantors, and which clearly profited from the traffic generated by the undertaking.¹⁵

The holders of railway tickets came from a more mixed and generally humbler background. The development of the nineteenth-century exhibition paralleled the development of railway travel: the mass of aspiring visitors had created, and been created by, mass travel. Thomas Cook’s rise to prominence through excursions to the Great Exhibition of 1851 was only the best-known example of the opportunities for tourism presented by the exhibition phenomenon.¹⁶ Thus the Edinburgh Exhibition management took early steps to appoint excursion agents: Thomas Cook and Son, Gaze and Co; Swan and Leash, Campbell and Co, ‘each having a distinctly defined section of the Railway system to operate upon’.¹⁷ After a sluggish start, numbers picked up as the summer progressed: ‘The excursion season has commenced most auspiciously for the Exhibition, which is becoming more and more attractive the better and wider it is known’.¹⁸ The daily count of railway visitors first exceeded 5,000 on 3 July; this figure was almost certainly surpassed on thirty-one other days. Saturday, increasingly devoted to leisure activity, was the most popular excursion day. Sixteen out of the twenty-six Exhibition Saturdays can be assumed to have seen more than 5,000 railway-ticket visitors. Nine Fridays also exceeded this figure. The largest number of railway tickets, 20,022, was taken on Thursday 7 October, when the Glasgow autumn holiday coincided with the appearance of two Glasgow teams in the Exhibition football tournament.¹⁹

Excursion trains departed from stations in Scotland and the North of England. On

14 *Scotsman*, 01 Nov 1886, p.6.

15 *Dispatch*, 16 Oct 1886, p.2, reported a ‘splendid season’ for hotel-keepers, with hotels ‘overflowing’. *Scottish News*, 05 May 1886, p.3, helpfully provided tariff details for Bailie Robert Cranston’s New Waverley Hotel: double bedroom at 2s.6d, ‘Boots and service 1s per person’. Cranston was a £100 guarantor.

16 Jack Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*. (London, 1991), pp.274–77; John Robert Gold and Margaret M. Gold, *Imagining Scotland: Tradition, Representation and Promotion in Scottish Tourism Since 1750*. (Aldershot, 1995), chap.3.

17 ECA Acc.423/16: Minute Book 2, 05 Nov 1885.

18 *Scottish News*, 19 Jul 1886, p.3.

19 *Scotsman*, 08 Oct 1886, p.4. See n.34 below for assumptions about ‘uncounted’ Saturdays.

one Saturday, 17 July, when railway ticket admissions totalled 7,488:

A considerable proportion [of excursionists] were from Glasgow. The numbers of others and their districts were as follow:—600 from Fencehouses (Newbottle Co-operative Society's Excursion); 1000 from Sunderland, Newcastle, &c.; 500 from Carlisle, &c.; 300 from Sheffield; 1200 from Aberdeen; 400 from Falkirk (Callendar Coal Company's employes); and 1500 from Dunfermline, &c., and Burntisland.²⁰

Excursion tickets were offered by the railway companies themselves as well as by agents. The Caledonian Railway offered reduced second-class return fares from Aberdeen at 7s.3d. and from Dundee at 3s, with an additional 9d. for the Exhibition ticket.²¹ After appeals by the Exhibition Executive excursion fares from Glasgow on both Caledonian and North British Railways were reduced to 2s.6d, including admission to the Exhibition, in September.²²

Excursion trains catered for the popular market: they were notorious for their slow pace, lack of comfort, and potential danger.²³ The discomforts were at their worst in the so-called 'moonlight excursions' requiring an early morning start in order to cram the return journey into a single day. On 17 July:

Today a large number of special excursions, some of which are 'trades', are expected. These are to start just from their destinations, in some cases, a few minutes after midnight, arriving in the city as early as 5.30 a.m. The Executive has made special arrangements to permit such excursionists to enter the grounds on arrival, and the refreshment rooms have been requested to open, so that an early breakfast may be provided for them.²⁴

In the event few excursionists took advantage of the Executive's largesse, and the offer does not seem to have been repeated.²⁵

20 *Scotsman*, 19 Jul 1886, p.4. Fencehouses is a village near Sunderland.

21 *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 09 Jul 1886, p.1; *Dundee Courier*, 26 Aug 1886, p.4. Steamer tickets from Aberdeen could be had at 4s. return, including admission to the Exhibition, *Evening Express*, 16 Jul 1886, p.1.

22 Advertisements, *Scottish News*, 15 Sep 1886, p.1. The standard Caledonian 'cheap' return had been 3s.8d, including Exhibition admission.

23 Cf. accounts of excursion travel from Dundee on the N.B. and Caledonian, *Dundee Courier*, 14 Jun 1886, p.3 and 30 Aug 1886, p.2; for Victorian excursion trains generally see Simmons, *Victorian Railway*, chap.12, 13.

24 *Scotsman*, 17 Jul 1886, p.7. The overnight trains included a Caledonian Railway excursion from Aberdeen organised by Aberdeen United Trades Council, leaving at 12.30 a.m. Advertisement, *Evening Express*, 16 Jul 1886, p.1.

25 *Evening News*, 17 Jul 1886, p.2.

Between the privileged season ticket holders on one hand, and the various strangers to the city on the other, lay of the balance of the Exhibition's clientele. Edinburgh citizens who presented their cash or tickets at the turnstiles generated the remaining one-third of admissions,²⁶ representing an average of four visits by every inhabitant of the city. Around twelve per cent of these could be attributed to children, on family outings or school and group parties like the 200 pupils of New Street School admitted on 7 June 'through the kindness of Miss Flora Stevenson'.²⁷ Such philanthropic initiatives aside, the social composition of the remaining Exhibition visitors was still biased towards Edinburgh's more comfortably-off citizens; the standard ticket price of one shilling was enough to discourage casual attendance by artisans and their families.

From 1851 onwards exhibition propagandists had sought to encourage working-class visits as a demonstration of the movement's promise of popular education, inclusion, and socialisation.²⁸ At the outset, heartened by the Edinburgh organisers' inclusive gesture in promoting the Artisan Section, the Trades Council looked forward to the same encouragement: 'We trust that the Executive will see the wisdom of giving every inducement to the artisan class, and thus promote the true aspect of such exhibitions, viz. to educate and elevate the masses of the people'.²⁹ The Executive, protective of its ticket revenue and no doubt the social tone of the undertaking, was reluctant to offer any such regular inducement beyond a single Artisan Day granted on Saturday 5 June. Half-price entry vouchers were distributed through employers and the Trades Council itself, with its indefatigable Secretary Neil McLean officiating.³⁰ The outcome demonstrated the potential popular audience for the Exhibition: an estimated 25,000 cheap tickets were sold boosting attendance to 37,375, the highest figure since opening day. 'The scene inside the Exhibition was of the most animated description ... Family parties were very numerous. The behaviour of this large crowd of people was most exemplary'.³¹

26 35%, after season ticket holders (37%), railway tickets (20%) and the *Scotsman's* estimate of other tourist visits (9%).

27 *Scotsman*, 08 Jul 1886, p.4. 12% represents the proportion of children to all ordinary tickets on counted days.

28 Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: the Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs*. (Manchester, 1988), pp.18–22; cf. Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*. (London, 1995), pp.99–102.

29 NLS Acc.11177/35: Edinburgh United Trades Council, *Annual Report 1885–86*.

30 Advertisement, *Evening News*, 03 Jun 1886, p.1.

31 *Scotsman*, 07 Jun 1886, p.4.

Despite its obvious success, the Artisan Day stood as an isolated experiment. The summer months came and went without any further attempts at broadening access, to the growing frustration of a Trades Council already dismayed by the treatment of artisan exhibitors. With September, and the Executive in a more expansive mood, regular half-price entry was at last instituted. However, the chosen Mondays and Fridays only provoked Trades Council delegates further:

the Executive had systematically excluded workmen from taking advantage of the Exhibition by charging too high a tariff ... and now they carried on their system of excluding working men by inviting them to come on days on which they could not go without losing a day's or half a day's pay. It was scandalous that the working classes of Edinburgh should be treated in such a manner.³²

The *Dispatch* sympathised: '[the] "cheap day" arrangements were illustrations of "how not to do it"'.³³ In the face of such criticism the Executive substituted half-price entry on the first four Saturdays in October. The result was striking. With cheap admission, a strengthened programme of attractions and reduced-price season tickets, three of the four Saturdays recorded the event's highest attendance figures: 54,248 on 2 October; 47,809 on the ninth; and a peak of 62,981 on the 23rd. Although only nine cheap days were instituted, it is probable that half-price entry accounted for one in six of all paying visits by Edinburgh inhabitants.³⁴ Late in the day, the Executive had revealed the Exhibition's potential as a venue for mass participation.

Distinguished guests

Another, rather different, class of visitor remains to be examined. A procession of distinguished celebrities paraded through the Exhibition courts. Foreign and colonial

32 J.C. Mallinson, quoted *Dispatch*, 22 Sep 1886, p.2; see also *Evening News*, 22 Sep 1886, p.2.

33 *Dispatch*, 22 Sep 1886, p.2. Attendance increased on the four days in question, though not to the levels seen on 'cheap days' before or after.

34 On three of the four cheap Saturdays, as on other high-volume days the large numbers overwhelmed the turnstiles and no breakdown of attendance was published. Assuming a combined total of 20,000 season and railway ticket admissions on each of these Saturdays and accepting the figure of 25,000 artisan tickets for 5 June gives an estimated total of 190,448 half-price admissions over the nine 'cheap' days, or 16% of the total 'ordinary' attendances for the entire run of the Exhibition. As the 'ordinary' total includes the independent strangers discussed above, this if anything *underestimates* the proportion of half-price day visits by Edinburgh residents. Half-price evening tickets were also issued Monday 25 to Wednesday 27 October.

dignitaries such as the Chinese diplomat the Marquis Tseng, the Thakore Sahib of Gondal, and the sons of the Khedive of Egypt included the Exhibition in their Edinburgh itineraries. Minor royals such as the Princesses Victoria and Louise of Schleswig-Holstein were entertained.³⁵ Aristocratic notables such as the Roseberys and the Aberdeens put in appearances. These celebrity visits were orchestrated by the Exhibition management and faithfully reported by the local press: the distinguished guests honoured the undertaking by their presence, and this presence added to the Exhibition's prestige.

On two occasions the event's organisers attempted to profit more directly from celebrity appearances. Two Special Days were called to coincide with visits by notables. The first, on 26 May, was announced as a 'State Visit' by the Lord High Commissioner Lord Thurlow, the lacklustre successor to Lord Aberdeen as the Queen's emissary to the General Assembly of the Established Church. Thurlow's quasi-regal presence at the Exhibition had been prominently advertised and was carefully packaged: 'Special arrangements had been made ... and an order of procession drawn up, by which means it was expected the distinguished party would not be subjected to any unpleasant crowding in their progress through the buildings'.³⁶ The specialness of the Special Day was reflected in an increase in the price of admission from the normal shilling to 2s.6d.

The second Special Day, once again with a half-crown entry charge, was even more opportunistic. Taking advantage of W.E. Gladstone's presence in Edinburgh, the Executive announced a visit by the Prime Minister on 21 June. Gladstone, in the throes of the Home Rule General Election campaign, was fighting for his political life: his schedule could scarcely accommodate the demands of the Edinburgh Exhibition whose prospects he had lauded a few months before.³⁷ The Prime Minister had had a busy weekend. On Friday evening he had addressed a packed meeting in the Music Hall. On Saturday, mobbed by an adoring crowd, he had had to seek refuge in an ESTC tramcar. For Monday's Special Day the Exhibition Executive and the expectant crowd had to make do with a morning visit from Mrs Gladstone, and a little more than perfunctory appearance by the Grand Old Man himself, plainly exhausted after his second Music Hall meeting.

In consideration of Mr Gladstone's arduous efforts, no attempt was made to show him over the different courts of the Exhibition, but he was taken down the central avenue to Old Edinburgh, the crowd pressing closely round him and cheering and booing all

35 *Scotsman*, 30 Sep 1886, p.3.

36 *Scotsman*, 27 Jun 1886, p.5.

37 See p.129 above.

along the line, the demonstrations of enthusiasm, however, largely predominating.³⁸

Despite this enthusiasm, the two Special Days were less than rewarding for the Exhibition organisers. On both occasions the spectators consisted overwhelmingly of season ticket holders providing no additional entrance revenue. While middle-class Edinburgh turned out to observe Thurlow and Gladstone at close quarters, the number of visitors prepared to pay their half-crown for the privilege was limited. Only 3,445 paying admissions were counted on Thurlow's visit, and, more strikingly given the popular adulation, only 1,647 on Gladstone's. The experiment in raising high-price ticket revenue from celebrity presence was discontinued; no further Special Days were announced.³⁹

The visits by foreign dignitaries brought a touch of the unaccustomed exotic to a city whose inhabitants were sensible of otherness and remarked on it. The Marquis Tseng, a diplomat of European stature undertaking an inspection tour of British industries at the end of his ambassadorial posting, was naturally conducted through the Exhibition on his Town Council-hosted visit to Edinburgh. The public progress of Tseng and his party excited the characteristic curiosity of its citizens: 'Being attired in their native costume, and wearing the long braided queues characteristic of their race, the visitors attracted considerable attention'; 'Along the route the distinguished foreigners were readily recognised by their Oriental costume and Mongolian features'.⁴⁰ The easy identification of Tseng and his companions with the readily-available stereotype of the 'Heathen Chinee', amongst others by the Exhibition's organisers themselves, presented a less than attractive response to cultural difference.⁴¹ A few months later a humbler group of the Marquis's compatriots, a

38 *Scotsman*, 22 Jun 1886, p.4. For the tramcar incident see *Scotsman*, 21 Jun 1886, p.4; for Gladstonian politics Ewen A. Cameron, *Impaled Upon a Thistle: Scotland since 1880*. (Edinburgh, 2010), chap.3. In another manifestation of Gladstonolatry, the *Builder* later noted that a bronzed stucco sculpture of the G.O.M. 'has been twice deprived of the fingers of the right hand. This was brought about by admirers shaking hands with the image', 30 Oct 1886, p.622.

39 Ticket sales for Gladstone's visit were the lowest on any day of the Exhibition, those for Thurlow's eighth lowest. Conversely, season ticket admissions for Thurlow were the highest recorded, and for Gladstone the fifth highest, not exceeded until 30 September.

40 *Scotsman*, 24 May 1886, p.5; 25 May 1886, p.5. Tseng visited the Exhibition on the afternoon of 24 May. For his visit to Edinburgh see also Madgin, Rebecca, and Richard Rodger, 'Inspiring Capital? Deconstructing Myths and Reconstructing Urban Environments, Edinburgh, 1860–2010', *Urban History*, 40 (2013), pp.507–508.

41 W.E. Lockhart, *Ye Gilty Goddess: A Doleful Ditty, By One of the Committee*. (Edinburgh, 1886); cf. *Bailie*, 19 May 1886, p.10. For the 'Heathen Chinee' see Gary Scharnhorst, "'Ways That Are Dark': Appropriations of Bret Harte's 'Plain Language from Truthful James'", *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 51:3 (December 1996), pp.377–99.

crew of fifteen Chinese seamen marooned in Leith Sailor's Home, had to endure the less respectful attentions of the Edinburgh crowd:

On their recent visit to the Exhibition they were practically mobbed, and as similar treatment follows their appearance almost anywhere beyond the precincts of the Home, they have to forgo their desire to witness the sights of the city and neighbourhood.⁴²

A much larger group of distinguished overseas guests arrived in Edinburgh on 24 August, only a few days after the festivities of the Queen's visit, to which, in its celebration of State and Empire, the visitors could be seen to form a pendant. Some 200 delegates from the Empire and Colonies had been invited to the Colonial and Indian Exhibition and subsequently sent on a British tour. The progress of these notable citizens and representatives of imperial administration through the Mother Country provided evidence of the variety, and the loyalty, of colonial populations; they confirmed the South Kensington Exhibition's significance as a vehicle for imperial publicity. The arrival of the colonial party in Edinburgh once again excited the frank curiosity of the citizens' gaze. On this occasion diversity of appearance and culture provided proof of the extent of imperial rule:

Swarthy cheeks and bronzed visage pointed to long exposure to tropical skies; the broken accent bespoke a delegate of other than British extraction, though now the representative of a portion of Her Majesty's dominions: while one of two ladies and gentlemen of colour gave emphasis to the widespread and thoroughly representative character of the gathering.⁴³

The Colonial delegation's appearance at Edinburgh's own Exhibition, 'which, if less extensive and varied than their own in the metropolis, must have presented to them many features of novelty and interest',⁴⁴ featured the customary crowds, speeches of welcome, progress through the courts, and presentation copies of the *Book of Old Edinburgh*. The centrepiece of the colonists' visit lay elsewhere, in the formal banquet provided by the Town Council. The occasion's exotic nature permitted the transgression of Edinburgh's customary mores: it was 'unique, in so far as it was graced by the presence of ladies at the table, a sight rarely witnessed at a public dinner in Edinburgh'.⁴⁵ Rosebery, out of office

42 *Scotsman*, 13 Aug 1886, p.4.

43 *Scotsman*, 25 Aug 1886, p.7.

44 *Scotsman*, 25 Aug 1886, p.6.

45 *Dispatch*, 26 Aug 1886, p.2.

after the Liberal defeat in the July General Election, charmed the audience with his vision of Imperial Federation. Toasts in Colonial wines and ‘the national beverage’ provided the opportunity for further expressions of imperial fervour and extravagant national and Scottish patriotism.⁴⁶

On 25 August, the day of the Colonial delegation’s banquet, another very different deputation arrived in Edinburgh. The *Délégation ouvrière parisienne aux expositions anglaises* had been dispatched in haste by the radical *Chambres syndicales ouvrières* to report on the abundance of British events in that summer of exhibitions. Its twenty-one artisan members were avowedly republican and socialistic in composition: ‘18 are Possibilists, two Anarchists of a mild type, and one is a Guesdist’.⁴⁷ The *Délégation* continued another element of working-class co-option into the great exhibition project which, like the encouragement of a mass audience, had featured from its beginnings. With the aim of encouraging technical education and facilitating industrial innovation, artisan delegations were despatched to exhibitions to inspect the new techniques and products on display, to reflect on their relevance to their own trades, and to report back. In Britain, such visits were sponsored by the Society of Arts: under its auspices an Edinburgh delegation of eleven ‘artisan reporters’ had visited the Paris Exposition of 1878.⁴⁸ The French workers’ delegations had originated in the corporatist and paternalistic labour régime of the Second Empire; the 1886 *Délégation* continued that tradition in very different political circumstances.⁴⁹

The delegates represented the highly-skilled artisan craft industries of Paris, a background they shared with their counterparts in the Edinburgh Trades Council acting as

46 *Scotsman*, 26 Aug 1886, pp.6–7.

47 ‘The French Workmen in London’, *Spectator*. (August 1886), pp.7–8, summarising London press reports. The delegation had been packed off by the Parisian local authorities to forestall a rival deputation backed by the more conservative national government.

48 The lithographer James Dowie contributed ‘Jottings’ of the trip to the *Scotsman*, 14 Sep 1878, p.7; 23 Sep 1878, p.3; and 30 Sep 1878, p.3. The 1878 delegates included John Cubie, cabinetmaker, trade unionist and future Town Councillor, and glassmaker James Brown, both members of the 1886 Artisan Section Committee.

49 For Jacques Rancière and Patrick Vauday’s use of the reports of the delegations to the 1867 Exposition to reconstruct a French artisan *mentalité* see ‘Going to the Expo: The Worker, His Wife and Machines’, in Adrian Rifkin and Roger Thomas (eds.), *Voices of the People the Politics and Life of ‘la Sociale’ at the End of the Second Empire*. (London, 1988), pp.23–44; see also Leora Auslander, *Taste and Power: Furnishing Modern France*. (Berkeley, 1996), pp.231–42. For the Expositions and French social policy see Wolfram Kaiser, ‘Vive la France! Vive la République? The Cultural Construction of French Identity at the World Exhibitions in Paris 1855–1900’, *National Identities*, 1:3 (1999), pp.232–33.

their hosts and guides. However their political affiliations and rhetoric were considerably more combative than those of their Edinburgh comrades: ‘Nous terminerons en engageant les groupements ouvriers a saisir toutes les occasions pour nouer des relations internationales, pour y propager nos idées émancipatrices en faveur du Proletariat universel. Vive l’Internationale des Travailleurs!’⁵⁰ The French workers’ view of Edinburgh revealed in their *Rapport* was hardly uncritical. Complaints about food—and drink—abound: ‘une détestable tasse de café au lait et une tranche de pain pour 2 pennys’ (p.144); ‘Le vin ne coûtait pas moins de 4fr.50 la bouteille, et c’était de pur vinaigre!’ (p.145). And the lack of it: the Scottish trade unionists’ preference for Temperance premises mystified the Frenchmen. Wages and working conditions observed on their visit to the typefounders Miller and Richard were roundly criticised: ‘Les ateliers, bas et mal aérés, sont imprégnés de cette odeur malsaine de graisse, de plomb et d’exhalaisons humaines’ (p.151).

On the other hand, their minute inspection of the Exhibition prompted compliments on the work displayed in the craft areas where the delegates’ expertise lay. Edinburgh furniture, while unremarkable for elegance and style, displayed ‘un goût plus élevé pour le beau et pour le fini que chez leurs confrères anglais’ (p.230). The Scottish jewellery on show in the Grand Hall and the fine leatherwork from Princes Street stores came in for similar praise; while in coachwork ‘[l]a peinture est également bien faite, ainsi que la garniture en général, et l’un et l’autre ne serait reniée par les meilleurs ouvriers parisiens’ (p.278). The *Rapport*, however, was prepared to raise issues of the relations between labour and capital unremarked on by other observers. The laborious products of the Artisan Section demonstrated creative potential in production rather than recreation:

les chefs d’oeuvre qui y sont accumulés démontrent une fois de plus ce dont sont capables les producteurs si les moyens de fabrication étaient mis a leur disposition, sans avoir besoin, pour nous diriger, des patrons ou Compagnies incapables, n’ayant d’autre valeur que celle de posséder les capitaux avec lesquels il se procurent, à vil prix, les éléments nécessaires à l’industrie qu’ils veulent exploiter (p.230).

While the Lockwood leather scourer⁵¹ provoked musings on the effects and benefits of mechanisation:

50 Délégation ouvrière parisienne aux expositions anglaises, 1886, *Rapport d’ensemble*. (Paris, 1887), p.vii; the following page numbers in parentheses refer to this publication. While the Trades Council expressed class-conscious views when so moved, its members’ fundamentally liberal outlook is demonstrated by a comparison of their own delegation’s reports from the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, serialised *Scotsman*, October–November 1886, with the *Rapport*.

51 Illus 4-4 p.167 above.

Ainsi qu'on le voit, tout le bénéfice de ce progrès est pour le patron; l'ouvrier devrait en bénéficier, soit en allégeant son travail ou en diminuant sa durée, c'est le contraire qu'arrive. Mais plus le progrès ira en s'accroissant, plus vite et fatalement les travailleurs deviendront possesseurs des machines, et non seulement des machines ... (p.259).

Despite its socialistic complexion, the *Délégation* was treated to the customary Town Council tea-and-cake reception in the Council Chambers. To a grateful Trades Council the Councillors' 'civility and liberal manner ... showed the democratic tendency of the age'; equally, this was an instance of the municipal hospitality that the Town Council was keen to bestow on any notable group of visitors to the city, *gauchiste* workers or Colonial dignitaries.⁵² The occasion allowed the hotelier Bailie Robert Cranston a moment to relive his Chartist youth:

The Bailie went on to speak of Frenchmen having taught Kings that they did not rule by Divine right, but the people should rule themselves, and was loudly applauded—one of the deputies making a remark about *le rouge drapeau*.⁵³

Cranston afterwards treated the delegates to dinner at his New Waverley Hotel and hosted a discussion meeting between the French artisans and Trades Council representatives.⁵⁴ Despite everything the *Délégation* departed for Glasgow apparently appreciative of Edinburgh hospitality: 'nowhere had they received so kind and sympathetic a greeting'.⁵⁵

Education versus entertainment

Their educative purpose was considered to be the prime public benefit of the great exhibitions. At one level the exposure of advances in manufacturing technology or of new consumer goods facilitated the dissemination of knowledge and stimulated competition

52 *Dispatch*, 08 Sep 1886, p.2; Richard Rodger, 'The "Common Good" and Civic Promotion: Edinburgh 1860–1914', in Robert Colls and Richard Rodger (eds.), *Cities of Ideas*. (Aldershot, 2004), pp.144–77.

53 *Dispatch*, 26 Aug 1886, p.3. Cranston later extricated himself by excepting *Queens* from his strictures. For Cranston see Perilla Kinchin, 'Cranston, Robert (1815–1892)', *ODNB*; Elizabeth M. Mein, *Through Four Reigns. The Story of the Old Waverley Hotel and Its Founder*. (Edinburgh, 1948).

54 *Dispatch*, 08 Sep 1886, p.2; *Evening News*, 27 Aug 1886. Cranston was a well-known abstainer, and his were Temperance premises: 'nous fûmes obligés de nous résigner à boire en mangeant du café au lait ou du thé, cependant la surprise fut moins désagréable que le premier jour', *Rapport*, p.156.

55 NLS Acc.11177/5: Edinburgh United Trades Council, Minutes, 07 Sep 1886. But see 'Socialism "en Fête"', *Scottish News*, 01 Sep 1886, p.6, for Tory condemnation of the *Délégation*.

amongst the various technical and expert communities of interest attracted to the show. The international electrical exhibitions of the 1880s demonstrated the promotion and diffusion of technical advances within the ambit of the specialised trade fair.⁵⁶ Even at a more general event like Edinburgh noteworthy exhibits were scrutinised by peers and competitors and written up in the technical and trade press.⁵⁷

The mass viewership called into being by the Great Exhibition and its successors expected and enjoyed a different level of engagement with the objects displayed before them. Amongst the public institutions of popular education dedicated to the Victorian ‘science of learning by looking’ the exhibition took its place beside the art gallery and the museum.⁵⁸ Like many such events, the Edinburgh Exhibition encompassed museum-like collections. Visitors to the Picture Galleries, or those examining Marshall’s collection of historic church plate, or the Loan Collection of embroidery were expected to engage in that mode of rational or aesthetic contemplation appropriate to the museum- or gallery-goer.

The industrial and commercial displays that defined the exhibition genre demanded a different scrutiny: of objects that, rather than having achieved a museum-like terminal state, were enjoying a temporary sojourn before engaging in the sphere of production or consumption.⁵⁹ The apposite engagement was that of the interested citizen wishing to reach a fuller understanding of these modern worlds:

In these days of gigantic scientific and mechanical progress and achievement the division of labour is carried to a point unknown before, and though the system yields magnificent material results it has its disadvantages, one of which is that men’s taste and culture, like their faculties become specialised and in a manner lopsided. They know and do their own work, but very many of them have seldom an opportunity of knowing what the rest of the world is doing. Such an opportunity is supplied by a representative collection of objects of art, ingenuity and industry like that brought together in the Edinburgh Exhibition.⁶⁰

56 p.125 above.

57 These included: *Engineer and Engineering, passim*; *British Architect*, for sanitary ware; *Watchmaker, Jeweller and Silversmith*, July, September, October, 1886; *Journal of Decorative Arts*, September 1886, p.953ff, for painting and decorating.

58 Graeme Davison, ‘Festivals of Nationhood: The International Exhibitions’, in S.L. Goldberg and F.B. Smith (eds.), *Australian Cultural History*. (Cambridge, 1988), p.158; Bennett, *Birth*, chap.2.

59 Cf. Kevin Hetherington’s discussion of the museum as a site of disposal: *Capitalism’s Eye: Cultural Spaces of the Commodity*. (London, 2007), chap.7.

60 *Scotsman*, 01 Nov 1886, p.6. The paper earlier contrasted the ‘aesthetic pleasures’ of the Exhibition’s art galleries with ‘the seriously utilitarian and educational features’ of the side

This was the same desire for improving information that lay behind the rise of the literature of Victorian popular education, the most notable example of which was the Edinburgh-published *Chambers's Journal*.⁶¹ The characteristics of many of the industrial or commercial exhibits were anything but museum-like; they involved, for the spectator, more than simply an opportunity to contemplate a passive object on display. Like their proprietors, exhibits competed for the viewers' interest. Through their imposing physical presence, their noise, smell, animation or performance, they jostled for attention.

The impact of these spectacular displays showed that exhibition visitors had come to expect sensation and amusement as well as education. The South Kensington events had confirmed the attractions of the large-scale exhibitions as an entertainment medium.⁶² Notwithstanding the efforts of the Forestry Exhibition management to provide such entertainment, more ambitious things were expected of the Executive of 1886:

The educative influences of an exhibition have hitherto been to sternly enforced by exhibition managers in Edinburgh, and the lighter attractions, necessary alike to contribute to the pleasure of visitors, and the success of the finances, have been somewhat neglected ... This year, however, the popular taste for exhilarating entertainment is being studied.⁶³

It was this taste that the Exhibition's Entertainment Committee, under the vice-convenership of the sociable Councillor John Clapperton, was charged with satisfying.⁶⁴

The Edinburgh Exhibition's entrance policy was straightforward: the visitor's ticket allowed access to all entertainments within the grounds. Though stands were erected for special events and additional charges made for privileged seating, some form of standing room was available at no charge. These arrangements contrasted with the model adopted by

courts, 07 May 1886, p.4.

61 Cf. 'What Goes to the Making of a Silk Gown', *Chambers's Journal*, 3:140 (September 1886), pp.575–76, prompted by the Clydesdale Silk Company's display at the Exhibition.

62 Paul Greenhalgh, 'Education, Entertainment and Politics: Lessons from the Great International Exhibitions', in Peter Vergo (ed.), *The New Museology*. (London, 1989), pp.74–98. Cf. *Glasgow Herald*, 08 Oct 1886, p.6: 'To the mass of visitors an Exhibition is a pleasant place of holiday entertainment, where band performances are cheerfully intermixed with scientific instruction, where balloon ascents and manufacturing processes claim attention in cheerful alternation, and where fire-works and fine arts combine to stimulate the curiosity and tickle the intellectual capacity of the observer'.

63 *Daily Review*, 17 Mar 1886, p.2.

64 For Clapperton, Convener of the Town Council Parks Committee, see 'The West Meadows', p.72ff, above; obituary, *Scotsman*, 20 Dec 1894, pp.4–5. He shared the convenership with John Macrae of John Taylor & Sons, Princes Street.

the Liverpool Exhibition organisers, and common thereafter, of levying additional charges for attractions within the venue's perimeter: 'There is a shilling charge for the Lighthouse, another shilling for the Indian village, and other charges for other sights. Money may be made this way, but visitors are likely to grudge the extra charges'.⁶⁵ In this respect Liverpool and the later exhibitions prefigured the modern funfair.⁶⁶

On the other hand, with its single entrance charge the Edinburgh Exhibition like its South Kensington counterparts recalled the pleasure garden, an institution familiar and at times notorious in London though unknown in Edinburgh. In South Kensington 'London had got what it long wanted—an outdoor lounge at once pleasant and respectable; Vauxhall or Cremorne without the doubtful characteristics of either'. After the small-scale trial of the Forestry Exhibition the model also proved attractive to an Edinburgh public.

They have seen ['Continental ways'] in London now for a length of time which has been enough to prove that *al fresco* life has as much attractions for us as for our foreign neighbours, and this year the same truth has been abundantly illustrated in the grounds of the Edinburgh Exhibition. A well-arranged arid well-financed Exhibition, with good gardens, attractive music and cheap prices, has been proved to be quite as attractive in Scotland as in England.⁶⁷

The landscaped grounds accordingly became one of the most obvious attractions of the 1886 event, the often atrocious weather conditions of the summer notwithstanding. In its

65 *Herald*, 27 Oct 1886, p.4. A similar policy was adopted at the disastrous 1890 Edinburgh Exhibition under the ex-Liverpool manager Samuel Lee Bapty. Georg Simmel, reviewing an 1896 exhibition, credited these 'small sacrifices' with enhancing the excitement of the visit: 'The Berlin Trade Exhibition', in David Frisby and Mike Featherstone (eds.), *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings*. (London, 1997), p.255. Commentators in 1886 were more critical: 'It is not so much the amount one begrudges in a case like this as the deception practised to wheedle you out of it. The exhibition is advertised ... to be seen for one shilling: when you get you find you must pay extra for all the novelties amongst the sights worth seeing', 'Shop or Exhibition?', *British Architect*, 16 Jul 1886, p.56.

66 Canadian Tobogganing at Liverpool was thus the first of many spectacular exhibition rides: Greenhalgh, 'Education, Entertainment'; A single admission charge covering all rides was made by the Edinburgh *ur*-funfair the Royal Patent Gymnasium, Trevor Griffiths, 'Work, Leisure and Time in the Nineteenth Century', in Graeme Morton and Trevor Griffiths (eds.), *History of Everyday Life in Scotland, 1800 to 1900*. (Edinburgh, 2010), p.186. Well past its prime in 1886, the Gymnasium had become a venue for sporting events and circuses.

67 *Herald*, 27 Oct 1886, p.4; for Cremorne, closed in 1877, see Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon*. (New Haven, 2000), sec.2 chaps.4 and 5. Cf. the popular pleasure gardens incorporating, significantly, redundant exhibition buildings: the Crystal Palace, Sydenham, Alexandra Palace and the Albert Exhibition Palace, Battersea. For C.E. Lindsay's involvement with the last of these see p.106, above.

quieter and more exclusive moments the ‘outdoor lounge’ must have recalled for middle-class promenaders the walks of West Princes Street Gardens before their municipalisation, or the other private gardens deep within the New Town. However, the nurserymen’s demonstration plantings of rare trees and shrubs, and the frequent opportunities for refreshment, such as Van Houten’s Orientalist cocoa pavilion transported from the Antwerp Exhibition, added unfamiliar and exotic touches.⁶⁸

The Electric Railway laid along the northern edge of the grounds provided the single exception to the rule that attractions should be provided free for visitors. By the close of the Exhibition an estimated 85,000 passengers had paid their 2d. to travel along the quarter-mile of track.⁶⁹ The railway was the closest the Exhibition came to a fairground ride, although the ostensible purpose was educative rather than entertaining: to demonstrate the potential of electric traction and to satisfy ‘the interest taken by visitors in being carried along by electric power’.⁷⁰ This experience of silent and apparently invisible locomotion was as yet unfamiliar enough to make it a popular attraction. Like the electric light itself, the principles of electric traction were well understood, though few practical installations had been built; exhibitions provided a convenient arena in which to demonstrate the new technology.⁷¹ In Edinburgh, H.B. Binko’s electric railway had already carried passengers at the Forestry Exhibition.⁷² The International Exhibition organisers improved on this model; short as it was, the new railway was constructed to more professional standards than Binko’s lightly-built precursor.

Let down by their first choice for the Electric Railway concession, the Executive fell back on their own considerable resources. The track was laid by Gowans, using the patent tramway rails displayed in his own exhibit (#760). A.B. Brown’s subsidiary King, Brown, already one of the lighting contractors, provided the electrical equipment; their locomotive proved powerful enough to easily draw the two cars loaned by the North Metropolitan Tramway Company of London. The railway demonstrated Gowans’s ingenuity and

68 *Scottish News*, 31 Mar 1886, p.2.

69 *Scotsman*, 01 Nov 1886, p.7, though this figure does not tally exactly with the takings given in Exhibition Accounts.

70 James Gowans, *Model Dwelling-Houses*. (Edinburgh, 1886), p.59.

71 Singer (ed.), *A History of Technology: Volume V, the Late Nineteenth Century c.1850 to c.1900*. (Oxford, 1958), p.346; Beauchamp, *Exhibiting Electricity*. (London, 1997), pp.138–39. For a popular contemporary account see ‘Electric Locomotion’, *Chambers’s Journal*, 2:72 (May 1885), pp.316–19.

72 *Scotsman*, 18 Jul 1884, p.4.

innovativeness, playing to his long-standing interest in the controversial use of mechanical power on tramways;⁷³ but it also put his stamp on the Exhibition's infrastructure. From the Grand Entrance, with the Gowans-designed Masons' Pillars and Prince Albert Victor memorial sundial, visitors could glide silently along Gowans's patent rails to the door of his Model Tenement.⁷⁴ For long the leading figure in the event's organisation, Gowans had become the public face of the Exhibition.

The Entertainment Committee set out from the beginning to satisfy public expectations of musical entertainment with an ambitious programme of daily performances.⁷⁵ Recitals were given on the majestic Bishop organ in the Grand Hall, where band concerts, choral works and occasional oddities such as Professor Mccann's [*sic*] performance on the Patent Duet Concertina were also staged.⁷⁶ The Band Stand in the grounds acted as a venue for outdoor band music. Music also permeated the Exhibition courts as exhibitors used performance as yet another device to attract visitor interest.⁷⁷ Opportunistic music-sellers hawked tunes with a fashionable theme:

Another piece commemorative of our International Exhibition is the Industries Waltz ... By the introduction of the vocal refrain proclaiming the praises of 'Labour, of Science, and of Art', the composer has sought to give the waltz some visible connection with the Exhibition.⁷⁸

In a world where mechanical reproduction of musical performance was almost unknown, this fugitive commodity could come at a high price. In total the Entertainment Committee spent almost £6,300 on booking performers, almost three-quarters of all expenditure on entertainments.⁷⁹

Simon Gunn has analysed the place of classical music, performed within an exclusive 'concert-hall world' as a central constituent of the bourgeois high culture of the Victorian

73 See for example Gowans's advocacy of steam traction on the Portobello route, *Dispatch*, 24 Aug 1886, p.3. Binko's motor powered a test run by an ESTC tramcar on the public highway, *Scotsman*, 13 Oct 1884, p.4, with Hutchison in attendance—but not Gowans, who had fallen out with the Company over the maintenance contract.

74 These examples of Gowansiana are documented in his *Model Dwelling-Houses* pamphlet.

75 Robert A. Marr, *Music and Musicians at the Edinburgh International Exhibition, 1886*. (Edinburgh, 1887) on which much of the following is drawn.

76 '[B]y no means an unmusical or ineffective instrument', *Scotsman*, 15 Jul 1886, p.5.

77 For example *Dundee Courier*, 30 Aug 1886, p.2, on violin and piano music gathering an audience.

78 *Scotsman*, 19 Oct 1886, p.6.

79 Exhibition Accounts. The Band of the Royal Horse Guards was paid £400 per week during their tour, *Scotsman*, 04 Oct 1886, p.6.

English provincial city.⁸⁰ Edinburgh society had its equivalent events, such as the Richter Concerts held in the elite confines of the Music Hall, though *aficionados* felt that the lack of a suitably modern concert venue held back the city's musical culture.⁸¹ The Entertainment Committee's focus was somewhat different. The moving figure behind the Exhibition music programme, the accountant Robert A. Marr, was at once an enthusiast for serious music and an ardent advocate for popular musical education and its place in the national culture.

The more nearly such [popular] performances can be brought within the reach of the mass of the people, the better it will be for the art; and thus there will be provided for the people a source of enjoyment and instruction that will make their life brighter, and will, in the end, greatly improve us as a nation.⁸²

This is not the world of the Music Hall but of the concerts 'for the people' staged in the Waverley Market, and of the developing programme of municipally-funded music in the city's public parks.⁸³

The music provided for entertainment at the Exhibition followed the precedent set by these popular public performances. At its centre lay the rendition of selections from the light classical repertoire by a succession of military bands. In all, the bands of eleven British Army units from the Queen's Hussars to the Royal Horse Guards and Royal Artillery played for Exhibition audiences on engagements of a week or more. The Army's auxiliary role in providing music for civilian entertainment illustrates the familiar military presence in Victorian social life, while at the same time confirming a banal presence of Empire.⁸⁴ Although few bandmasters could have matched the conductor of the band of the Seaforth Highlanders, 'hold[ing] the Afghan Medal with two clasps; the Bronze Star of the march from Cabul to Candahar; the Egyptian Medal, with Tel-el-Kebir clasp; the Star of the Khedive of Egypt, and the Long Service Medal', the undercurrents of martial history that ran through Marr's musical catalogue invited identification with imperial exploits.⁸⁵

80 Gunn, *Public Culture*, chap.6.

81 Advertisement, *Scotsman*, 22 Oct 1886, p.1; F.B., *Scotsman*, 02 Apr 1885, p.7.

82 Marr, *Music*, p.x. For Marr see *Scotsman*, 29 Oct 1907, p.8. Other musical figures on the Entertainment Committee included the brewer Ralph Marshall, secretary of the Edinburgh Choral Society, and the conductor Carl Drechsler Hamilton.

83 For the first popular promenade concert series, *Scotsman*, 01 Jan 1877, p.6.

84 'The banality of the global', p.170ff above.

85 Marr, *Music*, p.4 and *passim*, including p.13ff for the Indian exploits of the 4th Hussars. See pp.xvi–xxvii for the organisation of Army music: many bands were in fact 'stationary' units who never saw active service (p.67), playing orchestral instruments and including string and reed sections.

These regular regimental bands were matched by ensembles that appealed to more local loyalties. The band of the Queen's Edinburgh Rifle Volunteer Brigade, 'consist[ing] entirely of working men', played two concerts.⁸⁶ The Edinburgh Municipal Police Band was composed of ex-Army military bandsmen; it had been created by the Town Council in 1882 to officiate at the Waverley Market Concerts. 'They gave it its birth, and they continue to provide for its sustenance',⁸⁷ sustenance also provided by the Exhibition's music bookers. Seizing on the popular idiom, a group of theatre musicians formed an Edinburgh Professional Military Band which also found regular employment at the Exhibition.

The Grand Hall, the Exhibition's own Concert Hall, proved itself a fine venue for musical performance.⁸⁸ The military bands performed indoor concerts in its spectacular surroundings; crowds assembled for the twice-daily recitals on Bishop's Grand Organ.⁸⁹ The Hall also provided a setting for choral music. Concerts were given by children from Edinburgh Board Schools and by a choir of fifty pupils from the Royal Blind School. Pride of place went to the Edinburgh Choral Union, an institution founded more than a quarter century before and a prestigious element in Edinburgh's middle-class amateur music circles.⁹⁰ While the Choral Union staged a concert of its own in the Grand Hall, its most prominent performances, and the measure of its status in the city's elite circles, were programmed into the Exhibition's royal ceremonials, occasions for civic spectacle and pride that must be considered as another type of visitor attraction.

Royal ceremonial

Royal visits were occasions for elaborate civic ceremonial, for public spectacle, and for extravagant displays of loyalty to the monarchy by both the municipal authorities and the citizens who formed the crowds eager for a glimpse of the royal persons and the chance to

86 Marr, *Music*, p.80. The band of the Midlothian Coast Artillery Volunteer Corps also played the Exhibition; for Edinburgh working-class support for the Volunteer movement see Robert Q. Gray, *The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh*. (Oxford, 1976), pp.102–103.

87 Marr, *Music*, p.46.

88 'Musicians had found it one of the finest halls for music', Gowans quoted *Scotsman*, 22 May 1886, p.9—though Gowans was hardly neutral on the virtues of the Hall.

89 Although the *Evening News* claimed that 'the players were not selected by any committee, and the organ was open practically all comers, the performances were occasionally more excruciating than entertaining', 01 Nov 1886, p.2.

90 James Waddell, *History of the Edinburgh Choral Union*. (Edinburgh, 1908).

cheer them on.⁹¹ The Exhibition provided the stage for two such set-piece events: the opening ceremonial on 6 May at which the Queen's grandson Prince Albert Victor officiated; and the visit of Victoria herself on 18 and 19 August. The undertaking's other royal patron the Prince of Wales undertook a third, nominally private, visit in October. The Exhibition space was the arena in which their rituals were performed, and those visitors granted admission gained a privileged view of this performance.⁹²

The choice of Prince Albert Victor to officiate at the Exhibition's opening represented something of a slight to Edinburgh's civic pride. Despite the best lobbying efforts of the Executive the two royal patrons proved unable—or unwilling—to attend: 'When the Queen turns a deaf ear the Prince of Wales oftentimes pleads a prior engagement and the Royal countenance cannot be commanded at all'.⁹³ Responsibility instead devolved to the gauche and inexperienced Prince, at twenty-two undertaking his first public duty in Scotland; he nevertheless performed the choreographed observances satisfactorily enough.⁹⁴ He received the Freedom of the City in the Council Chambers; he progressed to the Exhibition in procession with representatives of Edinburgh institutions; he formally unlocked Shillinglaw's doors with Chubb's ornamental key.⁹⁵ His appearance in the Grand Hall was accompanied by organ music and the 250 voices of the Choral Union. In Old Edinburgh, the bashful Prince received a presentation from four young women accoutred in Mary Stuart costume. The planting of a commemorative tree with a spade of silver from the Duke of Buccleuch's Wanlockhead mines appropriately concluded the ceremonials.⁹⁶

91 Rodger, "Common Good", pp.155–58.

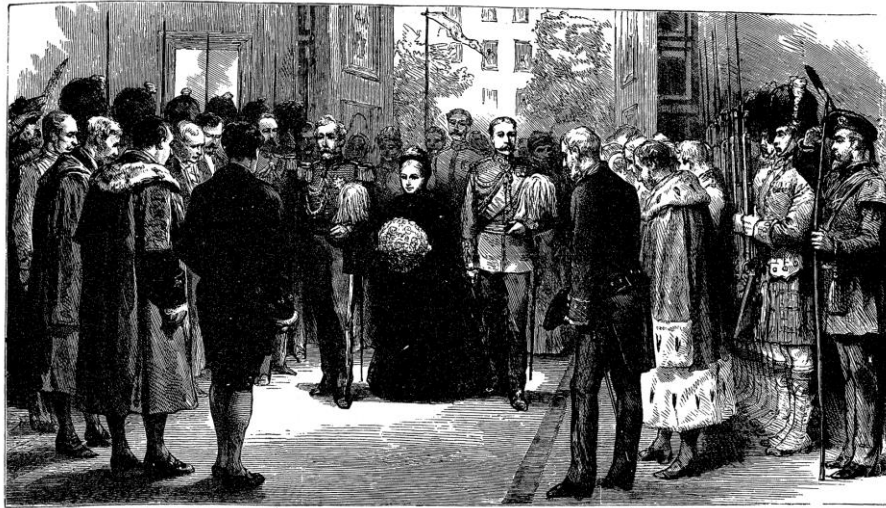
92 The unassuming nature of the third royal visit, that of the Prince of Wales in October, was on the other hand praised for its restraint: 'The Prince of Wales has set a good example. He had a laudable desire to see the Exhibition. He went and saw it with as little fuss as possible under the circumstances. The city has been saved great expense, and the Prince and his family have extracted greater pleasure out of their visit than if the occasion had been kept with all the pomp and show of a gala day'. *Evening News*, 15 Oct 1886, p.2. Cf. the Prince's visit to the Forestry Exhibition, p.43 above.

93 *Daily Review*, 07 May 1886, p.2. For the Executive's London deputation see ECA Acc.423/16: Minute Book 2, 20 Mar 1886, 01 Apr 1886. Victoria opened both the Colonial and Indian and the Liverpool Exhibitions, 4 and 11 May respectively.

94 Albert Victor, 'Prince Eddy', was later ennobled as the ill-fated Duke of Clarence, Andrew Cook, 'The King Who Never Was', *History Today*, 55:11 (November 2005), pp.40–47.

95 Chubb & Son (#647) customarily provided such keys for great exhibition doors.

96 *Scotsman*, 07 May 1886, pp.4–5. The tree was supplied by John Methven; the spade, made by James Crichton, was bent by the hapless Prince's over-enthusiastic shovelling. The visit was commemorated by the erection of Gowans's sundial, *Building News*, 25 Jun 1886, p.1057.



RECEPTION OF HER MAJESTY AT THE MAIN ENTRANCE OF THE EXHIBITION BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

Illus 5-1 Victoria at the Exhibition. *The Graphic*, 28 Aug 1886, p.209. Gowans third from left, Marchbank fourth, a Royal Archer far right

The official visit of the Prince's grandmother Queen Victoria in August was an even grander affair. As well as expressing pride in the Exhibition as a civic undertaking, the occasion allowed Edinburgh's municipal leaders once again to celebrate the city's place as the Scottish capital, playing host to the fifteen other burghs invited to participate in the observances.⁹⁷ The Sovereign's visit raised questions of, and anxieties about, etiquette, procedure, and in particular dress for those admitted to the royal presence.⁹⁸ The 150 municipal representatives turned out in a gorgeous array of municipal robes, legal gowns, military uniforms and Court dress, Provost Macandrew of Inverness defying convention to appear in Highland costume. The dignitaries were joined by Executive and Committee members 'fearfully and wonderfully got up in levee dress—cut-a-way [*sic*] coat, white vest, knee-britches, cocked hat, and the rest of it'.⁹⁹ The elaborate rituals of homage in the

97 Details, *Scotsman*, 19 Aug 1886, p.5. Only the Corporations of Glasgow, Aberdeen, Perth and Leith had attended the opening ceremony. Victoria had paid official visits to Edinburgh in 1876 and 1881, but made more frequent unofficial stops at Holyrood *en route* to Balmoral. For the choreography involved see Charles McKean, *Edinburgh: Portrait of a City*. (London, 1991), pp.180–81; for Victoria and Scotland, Richard J. Finlay, 'Queen Victoria and the Cult of Scottish Monarchy', in Edward J. Cowan and Richard J. Finlay (eds.), *Scottish History: The Power of the Past*. (Edinburgh, 2002), pp.209–24.

98 See for example NRS GD40/9/492/29: Hedley to Lothian, 03 Aug 1886 for advice on levée dress, and GCA DTC6/201: Depute Town Clerk file, Hedley's instructions to Glasgow Corporation members..

99 *Scotsman*, 19 Aug 1886, p.5. The overdressed Councillors and officials made an easy target for the satirists, see *The Queen at Our Omneries*. (Edinburgh, 1886); and *Hits and Misses, or Random*

Grand Hall were marked by the presence of the upper-class amateur soldiery of the Royal Company of Archers, the Queen's ceremonial bodyguard in Scotland.¹⁰⁰ The pomp and majesty of the proceedings was again heightened by organ music and a performance of the Choral Union which included a hymn by Sir Herbert Oakely composed for the occasion.¹⁰¹

And once again the royal party processed afterwards to Old Edinburgh, for the presentation of Exhibition officials and local notables, the much-coveted reward of royal visits that conveyed honour and prestige to those presented. Through the historic city the Queen was escorted into the Women's Industries Section by its four lady vice-conveners for an extended inspection of a department in which she had expressed a personal interest, confirming the salience of the issues of women's employment and of home industries in upper-class circles. Here there were more presentations,¹⁰² and the bestowal of gifts from devoted stall-holders. Victoria's tour of the buildings ended in the lavishly decorated reception room adjoining the Women's Court where the elaborate furnishings included work by the women exhibitors and hangings from Lady Reay's collection of Indian embroideries. Royal approval of the Women's Section was sealed by Victoria's return for a private visit next day.

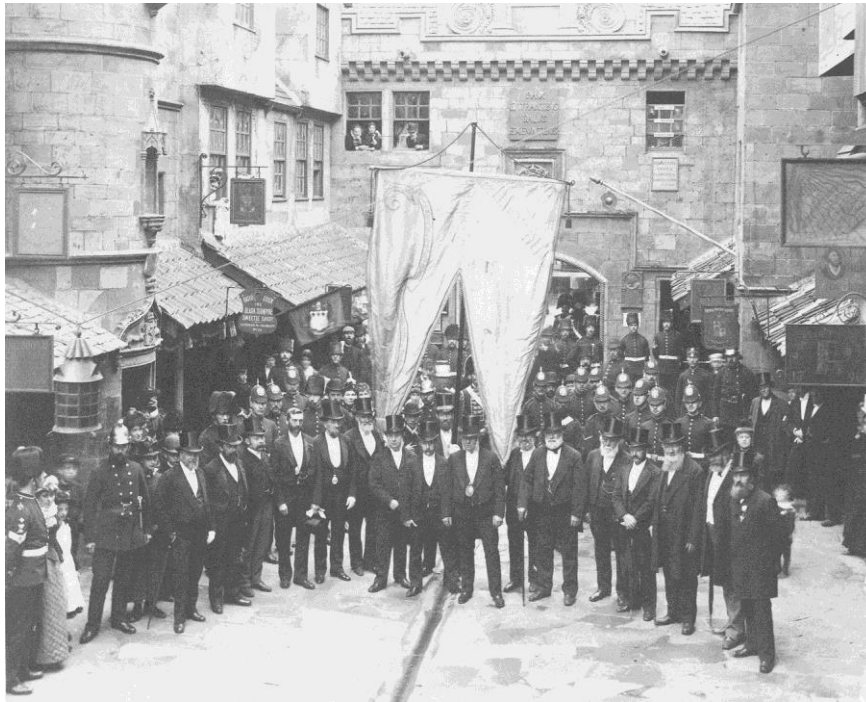
For Gowans and Clark royal approval brought personal rewards. The pair received the call to Holyrood on the afternoon of the 16th, Gowans to receive a knighthood and Clark a baronetcy. Gowans's honour, the summit of his public career, recognised his leadership of and personal commitment to the Exhibition project; Clark's improvement on the customary Lord Provost's knighthood reflected the civic prestige that the Exhibition had conferred on the city.

Shots at the Exhibition. (Edinburgh, 1886).

100 Lothian was the Archers' Captain-General, see NRS GD40/9/485/20: Lothian papers, for the royal visit muster and the minutia of the ceremonial arrangements. For the Archers as an invented tradition see Stuart Kelly, *Scott-Land: The Man Who Invented a Nation*. (Edinburgh, 2010), pp.204–205.

101 For internal opposition to the selection of Oakeley, Reid professor of Music at Edinburgh University and another eminence of the city's music culture, see NRS GD40/9/492/27: Hedley to Lothian, 30 Jul 1886.

102 For Lady Aberdeen's refusal to allow Alice Hart to be presented, and their resulting enmity, see Janice Helland, *British and Irish Home Arts and Industries, 1880–1914: Marketing Craft, Making Fashion*. (Dublin, 2007), p.45. This was also the occasion for Sheriff Thoms's plea for the Shetland knitters, p.192 above.



Illus 5-2 The Incorporated Trades pose with the Blue Blanket in Old Edinburgh during the Queen's visit. ECL yT570.1886: Cowan Scrapbook

The royal visits presented challenges to the Exhibition managers. The task of the Admissions Committee was to control access to these prestigious events, and to generate income from them if possible; that of General Manager Hedley and his staff to keep control of the ensuing crowds. Prince Albert Victor's opening ceremony tested the inexperienced team. While admission to the grounds and the Exhibition courts charge was set at 5s, entrance to the Grand Hall and therefore the ceremony itself was restricted to season ticket holders and the bearers of copiously-distributed complimentary tickets. The outcome proved that public order could barely withstand the ardent loyalty of middle-class Edinburgh. Barriers isolated the Grand Hall from the Exhibition courts beyond: 'behind the barriers an immense crowd pressed in their anxiety to obtain a view of the ceremony'.¹⁰³ At the front of the building

The main entrance was besieged ... by the crowd outside, and a scene of some disorder ensued. A rush was made at the main door, and it was forced open in spite of the efforts of Volunteers and policemen, who were powerless for a time to resist the effort of the crowd.

103 *Scotsman*, 07 May 1886, p.5, from which the following quotations are taken; see also the vigorous description in *Dispatch*, 06 May 1886, p.3: 'The arrangements for keeping back the crowd completely broke down'.

Some degree of control was restored, at the cost of slamming the great doors in the faces of the Scottish Secretary Lord Dalhousie and his wife and the Countess of Aberdeen and Mrs Clark.¹⁰⁴ Meanwhile, the distinguished platform party was almost mobbed by the encroaching throng. ‘It was useless to attempt to force the intruders back to their places’, though order was somehow maintained and the ceremonials continued.

For Victoria’s visit the stakes were inevitably higher and the organisers took a different tack. Places behind the dignitaries in the Grand Hall were reserved for a restricted number of season ticket holders drawn by ballot.¹⁰⁵ The resulting howls of protest from disgruntled losers revealed the sense of ownership of the Exhibition and entitlement to a share of its privileges held by at least a proportion of season ticket holders. An attempt was made to set up yet another representative body to speak for this interest group. After a bilious correspondence in the *Scotsman*, a chaotic meeting of 400 assembled in the Oddfellows Hall to protest against the bad faith of the Executive and the iniquity of the seat allocations.¹⁰⁶ After more grumbling and bad feeling the movement inevitably fizzled out as the contentious ceremony came and went.

If the Executive had braved middle-class wrath to ensure an orderly audience for the pomp and majesty of the Grand Hall, their handling of spectator facilities in the Exhibition grounds was less sure. Once again a 5s. entry charge allowed visitors to join the unsuccessful season ticket holders inside the perimeter.¹⁰⁷ Stiff additional charges were proposed for places in the stand accommodation that had been erected along the line of royal progress: half a guinea for the grandstand by the entrance to the Grand Hall; 5s. and 2s.6d. for the stands along the North Promenade. The Executive had however misjudged their market. Even with these prices cut by more than half take-up was poor, and on the day itself members of the scanty crowd of promenaders were allowed into the stands free: ‘The erection of stands and the letting of windows along the line of route at a cheaper rate is

104 Provoking a stern rebuke from Dalhousie and an abject apology from James Marchbank; see Dalhousie to Gowans, ECA Acc.423/16: Minute Book 2, 13 May 1886, for the closure of the correspondence.

105 1,180 out of the 1,700 places in the Hall, drawn from 7,000 applications, *Scotsman*, 09 Aug 1886, p.4.

106 *Scotsman*, 17 Aug 1886, p.6, and a scathing editorial, p.4. For the even more chaotic continuation meeting, at which the Chairman constantly referred to season ticket holders as ‘shareholders’, *Scotsman* 18 Aug 1886, p.7.

107 The standard charge of 1s. applied after 7:00pm on 18 August, and after 2:00pm on the 19th.

supposed to explain the public disinclination to purchase Exhibition tickets'.¹⁰⁸

These alternative viewing arrangements were part of the festivities that engaged the wider city in the royal visits. The spectators of the Queen's progress enjoying the elevated view from the sublet windows of Brougham Place or Lonsdale Terrace, or even perched precariously on the tenement roofs, were the most obvious signs of the public enthusiasm that gripped the city centre. While for Prince Albert Victor's visit and the Exhibition opening, '[n]othing extensive was attempted in the way of decorations with the exception of the proximity to the Council Chambers and in Brougham Street',¹⁰⁹ for his grandmother's appearance three months later the city centre was adorned with the customary trappings of such an occasion. In an echo of Old Edinburgh's Nether Bow a triumphal arch 'shaped after the fashion of the portals of an old city gate' was erected at the entrance to Brougham Street;¹¹⁰ and flags, flowers, banners and bunting festooned private and commercial buildings. These patriotic effusions decorated not only the stores, hotels and clubs of Princes Street but also the tenements, workshops and industrial premises of the Old Town, far from the route of the royal procession.¹¹¹ In the evening of the 18th, the city was spectacularly illuminated. Thousands of padella lights and Broxburn candles burned on the Castle and along the ridge of the Old Town:

In no other home of living men ... could so fine effects of height, of space, of romantic boldness and variety of outline be found; nowhere the stature, the air and the majesty to carry and to grace those jewelled robes of many-coloured lights.¹¹²

The effect was crowned by a firework display in the Queen's Park by the Edinburgh specialist Thomas Hammond, promising as a finale an 'ascent of 200 ... rockets, forming a grand and beautiful bouquet of all colours known in the pyrotechnic art'.¹¹³

On the following evening the Exhibition Executive celebrated the conclusion of the

108 *Scotsman*, 18 Aug 1886, p.7; cf *The Queen at Our Onneries*: 'For it seems the Committee fell back on the caper / in theatrical parlance of "filling with paper"'.
109 *Evening News*, 06 May 1886, p.2.
110 *Evening News*, 18 Aug 1886, p.2.
111 Cf. McKean, *Edinburgh*, p.181. Among the breathless press descriptions of the decorated city see especially *Evening News*, 18 Aug 1886, p.2.
112 *Dispatch*, 19 Aug 1886, p.2. Though the *Evening News* considered that the show 'did not rival in extent, in variety, or in brilliance the display at the University Tercentenary', 19 Aug 1886, p.2. For details of the arrangements, including an order for 4,000 Broxburn candles see ECA SL123/1/6: ETC Subcommittee on Queen's Visit, 29 Jul 1886, 03 Aug 1886. Padella = 'a type of lamp made from a small pan or dish filled with oil or fat', *OED*.
113 *Scottish News*, 19 Aug 1886, p.4.

royal visit with a spectacle of their own. The display of the electric light was augmented to give a total of 909,800 candlepower, 'the whole producing the MOST BRILLIANT and WONDERFUL DISPLAY ever seen in Scotland'.¹¹⁴ The electrical illuminations were coupled with another firework display from the London firm of James Pain and Sons. Set-piece arrangements included the ascent of ornamental balloons, pyrotechnic waterfalls, the Burmese Elephant and the Flying Dragon and concluded with a patriotic fire-portrait of the recent guest of honour, the Queen herself.¹¹⁵ With this novel combination of electricity and fireworks the Exhibition entered a new phase in its provision of popular entertainment.

More and varied entertainments

The success of the Queen's visit marked a turning point in the Exhibition's programme of entertainments. Before, the attractions had been ambient: the instructive and sensational qualities of the exhibits themselves, the pleasures of the promenade, the novelty of the electric light, and the pervasive accompaniment of music. Afterwards the Entertainments Committee, growing in experience and confidence, embarked on an increasingly ambitious schedule of special events. The Edinburgh public's appetite for entertainment had been whetted by the royal festivities: 'it is to be hoped, now that the long evenings are setting in, that the outdoor attractions of the Exhibition will be varied more frequently than hitherto by occasions on which there are special illuminations'.¹¹⁶

The visitor numbers proudly trumpeted as the measure of the Exhibition's success had of course another significance; they underpinned the financial health of the undertaking. Although other sources of income—principally space rents from exhibitors—had contributed to the finances, ticket sales provided the main source of revenue and were therefore crucial to profitability. Average daily and weekly drawings, income and expenditure totals and estimates of projected surplus were assiduously reported to Executive Council by its 'careful treasurer' the accountant Thomas Gaff, 'who, by a wise system adopted at the beginning, was able to tell them night after night the earnings of the day'.¹¹⁷ Conversely, this

114 Advertisement, *Scotsman*, 14 Aug 1886, p.1. From this point Exhibition advertisements increasingly employ the superlatives of Victorian entertainment posters.

115 *Evening News* estimated the audience at almost 30,000, 20 Aug 1886, p.2. For Burma in the news, see p.173 above.

116 *Evening News*, 20 Aug 1886, p.2.

117 Gowans, quoted *Scotsman*, 28 Oct 1886, p.6. For reports see ECA Acc.423/16: Minute Book 2, *passim*.

concern with prudent finances resulted in a cautious approach to expenditure in the Exhibition's early days: it no doubt underlay the Executive's reluctance to jeopardise income with any easing of admission charges, and the resulting accusations of parsimony and snobbishness. Once confidence and managerial experience was gained and Gaff's careful accountancy revealed the underlying financial soundness of the enterprise, a more relaxed policy was discernible to an expectant public. The healthy surplus now being forecast left room for increased expenditure on entertainments.¹¹⁸ This changing programme, together with the cheap day admissions also proposed, maintained the momentum of the exhibition by encouraging both new and repeat visits.¹¹⁹

The Exhibition's programme of spectacular attractions increasingly appealed to a mass audience. Regular firework displays were instituted. Pain had given such satisfaction in celebrating the Queen's visit that the firm was invited back to put on another twenty-four shows, including one for every Saturday evening of the remaining course of the Exhibition. Pain's spectacular effects incorporated a variety of familiar topical and patriotic emblems in the pyrotechnics. His fire-portraits of Gladstone and the Prince and Princess of Wales, and his depictions of the Lion Rampant, the Royal Yacht 'with Revolving Paddle Wheels, the whole portrayed in coloured fires', a 'Grand Naval Combat between two Men-of-War, which appear floating in a sea of silver fire', and 'the Siege of Peking' provided a banal iconography within which the appetites of the Exhibition expectations for sensation and wonder could be satisfied.¹²⁰

Another spectacular attraction was secured with the engagement of the balloonist 'Captain' William Dale, returning to Edinburgh two years after his outing at the Forestry Exhibition to undertake ascents from the Exhibition grounds.¹²¹ From his first appearance on 13 September to the close of the Exhibition Dale made some twenty ascents

118 *Evening News*, 10 Aug 1886, p.2.

119 Cf. Cllr Pollard, Finance Committee vice-convenor's motion at Executive Council, 2 September, that a joint meeting of Admissions, Traffic, Lighting, Entertainment and Finance Committees 'should be held to consider what means should be adopted for keeping up the attendance till the close of the exhibition, and further what inducements should be offered in the way of reducing the charge for admissions or otherwise'. ECA Acc.423/16: Minute Book 2, 02 Sep 1886.

120 These examples extracted from the *Daily Programme*. £1104 5s. was spent on the firework displays, Exhibition Accounts.

121 '[He] was not a captain, but he assumed the title': Rebecca Dale his wife, quoted *Scotsman*, 02 Jul 1892, p.12. For Dale's engagement, first proposed in early August, see ECA Acc.423/16: Minute Book 2, 05 Aug 1886, 02 Sep 1886.

accompanied by a variety of individual passengers.¹²² The flights of up to ninety minutes took the aeronaut as far as Carluke and Carstairs to the southwest, and Milnathort and the Fife coast to the north. Some pretensions to scientific purpose were indulged: the taking of meteorological readings was proposed, but not proceeded with, though Arthur Silva White, secretary to the Scottish Geographical Society, took a place as Dale's companion on two flights.¹²³ The ascents functioned primarily as spectacle; the glimpse of Dale's balloon in the sky above was 'one of the best perambulating advertisements the Exhibition has received'.¹²⁴

Dale's reliance on Edinburgh's town gas for lifting power necessitated an upgrade to the site's infrastructure. The 28,000 cubic foot capacity of his brand-new *Edina* demanded that 'specially large gas pipes were laid ... for the inflation of the balloon'.¹²⁵ On the ground, the ritual of filling constituted part of the performance of the ascent. Even with the enhanced gas supply inflation took hours, all the time under the eyes of expectant spectators. The unpredictable take-off itself promised thrills and potential spills as the ponderous aerostat barely cleared 'the spires of Old Edinburgh' while showering visitors with ballast on one occasion; or damaged 'Mr Sutherland's tobacco divan' and brought down electricity cables on another.¹²⁶ A much-heralded race, claimed to be only the second ever held, between Dale's *Edina* and his reserve balloon *Sunbeam* on 2 October tested the Exhibition infrastructure to its limits. The supply of gas proved inadequate to fill the two balloons, which were forced to take off half-inflated before a restless and impatient crowd.¹²⁷ After limping over the city they were forced to descend into the borderlands

122 Dale's contract specifically forbade charging his passengers, ECA Acc.423/16: Minute Book 2, 06 Sep 1886.

123 The detailed description of cloudscapes observed on their flight to Carluke, *Scotsman*, 20 Oct 1886, p.6, is surely Silva White's. For the aerial view see Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, sec.1 chap.6; for ballooning culture, Elaine Freedgood, 'Groundless Optimism: Regression in the Service of Egos, England and Empire in Victorian Ballooning Memoirs', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 20:1 (1997), pp.61–80.

124 *Scotsman*, 01 Nov 1886, p.7.

125 *Scottish News*, 07 Sep 1886, p.5. For the use of coal-gas in ballooning see L.T.C. Rolt, *The Aeronauts: A History of Ballooning, 1783–1903*. (London, 1966), pp.117–20. The great size of envelope required to generate lift from the relatively heavy gas added to the spectacle. The purity of Edinburgh town gas further reduced its lifting power according to *Scotsman*, 27 Aug 1884, p.6.

126 *Scotsman*, 18 Sep 1886, p.6; *Evening News*, 06 Oct 1886, p.2.

127 The first 6d. Saturday, with the second largest attendance of the Exhibition. For the balloon race and its aftermath see *Dispatch*, 02 Oct 1886, p.3, 04 Oct 1886, p.3, and 06 Oct 1886, p.3.

between Edinburgh and Leith, where the aeronauts were beset by a throng of threatening roughs ‘wanting to “help”’. The mob reduced the *Sunbeam* to shreds before Dale’s eyes, a casualty of ‘his never-to-be-forgotten trip to Pilrig’.¹²⁸ The balloonist undertook his remaining ascents in *Edina*, braving the prospect of a dip in the Forth to complete his engagement.¹²⁹

Besides the spectacular pleasures of fireworks and ballooning, the Entertainment Committee looked to the growing popularity of organised sport to provide attractions for the Exhibition visitor. A start was made with a lawn tennis tournament held on 26 to 29 July. Tennis had established itself as a middle-class enthusiasm and an emblem of affluent—or aspiring—sociability.¹³⁰ The matches attracted only a limited degree of support: ‘if the public of Edinburgh had known the game better they would have turned out in very much larger numbers to witness it’.¹³¹ A second tournament on 14 to 17 September passed almost without notice.¹³² This lack of popular enthusiasm was not repeated for the Entertainment Committee’s major foray into sports promotion, the Association Football tournament.

Football, as a working class sport in the process of developing a mass following and a club structure that reflected and channelled local loyalties, had already gained the dubious reputation for over-enthusiastic play and support largely responsible for the Town Council’s ban on its play in the Meadows.¹³³ The Committee was nevertheless persistently lobbied by enthusiasts seeking the game’s inclusion in the respectable arena offered by the

Silva White, accompanying Dale for the first time, was credited as correspondent.

128 *Dispatch*, 08 Nov 1886, p.2. The Executive awarded Dale only £50 in compensation, despite Silva White’s intercession. The balloonist claimed to be £150 out of pocket as a result.

129 Dale was almost forced into the Forth on his penultimate flight, 29 October, *Evening News*, 30 Oct 1886, p.2. After a previous ascent from the Forestry Exhibition Dale, his wife and a companion had been rescued from the sea off the Isle of May, *Scotsman*, 22 Sep 1884, p.4. Dale died in 1892 in a catastrophic accident at the Crystal Palace: *Scotsman*, 30 Jun 1892, p.5; *Times*, 30 Jun 1892, p.9. His widow Rebecca’s inquest testimony describes the husband-and-wife economy of the aeronaut’s profession, *Times*, 02 Jul 1892, p.11; *Scotsman*, 02 Jul 1892, p.12.

130 Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830–1885*. (London, 1978), p.86. The ideal is perfectly caught by Glasgow Boy John Lavery in his painting *The Tennis Party*, 1885, Aberdeen Art Gallery.

131 William Martin quoted *Scotsman*, 30 Jul 1886, p.3.

132 The tennis tournaments ‘fell rather flat’, *Evening News*, 01 Nov 1886, p.2.

133 p.77 above. For the development of football see T.C. Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People 1830–1950*. (London, 1987), pp.152–55; Bailey, *Leisure and Class*, pp.148–52.

Exhibition.¹³⁴ While there was some support within the Committee, initially ‘the majority seemed to think the game was not class enough (!) and it would damage the grounds’.¹³⁵ The lobbyists nonetheless prevailed in the organisers’ push for crowd-pleasing attractions and three matches were arranged for 7 and 8 October. The teams selected demonstrated the territorial basis of football loyalties: the Glasgow sides 3d Lanark Rifle Volunteers, Rangers and Renton were matched with the local teams Hibernian, St Bernards and Heart of Midlothian respectively.

The seventh was a Glasgow holiday Thursday; large numbers of visitors descended on Edinburgh, many intent on the football. The first two Exhibition games were played before an estimated 20,000 spectators among whom partisanship was evident, especially in a ‘rowdy element’ travelling with the Glasgow contingent.¹³⁶ The obligatory cups were presented to the winning teams, the footballers were treated to dinner in the Exhibition dining-room, and commemorative silver badges were presented to all. In deference to their strictly amateur status there was no cash reward to the victors, although payment in kind was apparently acceptable: ‘Messrs Andrew Beveridge & Co will present a case of Pickles and Sauces to each member of the team making the most goals in the Tournament’, a tribute from the Exhibition’s industrialised food sector to the mass entertainment medium of football.¹³⁷ With its patronage of the game the Exhibition organisers had tapped into a specialised audience, while football had been admitted to a prestigious and visible venue.¹³⁸

The Highland Gathering held over 29 September to 2 October appealed to national

134 Chief of the lobbyists was Matthew D. Davidson, Secretary of Heart of Midlothian F.C. with which Gowans, always the Tory paternalist, had been associated, for example *Scotsman*, 11 Mar 1882, p.8.

135 *Evening News*, 16 Aug 1886, p.4, emphasis in original.

136 *Evening News*, 08 Oct 1886, p.4. 20,022 railway ticket admissions were recorded on this day, by far the largest number in the course of the Exhibition. The Glasgow holiday had been a Sacramental Fast Day; its change of designation reflects the process of secularisation of this aspect of Scottish leisure. The Edinburgh equivalent, still clinging to the Fast Day title, was 28 October, *Scottish News*, 29 Oct 1886, p.6.

137 *Daily Programme*, 07 Oct 1886. Beveridge was a Glasgow exhibitor (#207) with an eye for publicity; see p.168 for his Rosebery Sauce brand. For professionalism in football, see Bailey, *Leisure and Class*, pp.149–50.

138 Another sporting tournament, the regional specialism of Cumberland and Westmoreland Wrestling, was held 8 and 9 October featuring ‘in every respect the beau idéal of muscular men’, *Scotsman*, 09 Oct 1886, p.6. Attempts to stage a cycling contest showcasing the modern sport whose suppliers featured prominently in the Exhibition, which Gowans supported ‘with characteristic enthusiasm’, were defeated by the condition of the grounds, *Dispatch*, 09 Oct 1886, p.2.

rather than local or team loyalties in its athletic, musical and cultural performances. The event mobilised the romantic vision of Highland culture as the essence of Scottishness: a vision presented in the ‘national jewellery’ and costume exhibits in the Grand Hall. Some were prepared to question the customary substitution of a part for the whole of Scottishness, and its place in the modern confines of the Exhibition:

What prizes for the ‘Best Dressed Highlander’, for the dancing of the Shantrews, and for the Tossing of the Caber, have directly to do with the encouragement of art, science and industry is almost as difficult a question as that of the historic grounds on which Edinburgh may claim to be the spot most fit for the display of Highland costumes and accomplishments.¹³⁹

Others simply revelled in the opportunities the occasion presented for kitschy Celticism. The printers Constable decided to bind their programme of the Gathering in a tartan cover ‘and make it attractive and gaudy’.¹⁴⁰

The opening parade of sixty pipers from the Castle to the Exhibition grounds located the event firmly within the tradition of spectacular Highlandism. It was not only ‘[t]he GREATEST NATIONAL GATHERING ever held in SCOTLAND’;¹⁴¹ it was celebrated by Gowans as the first held in Edinburgh ‘since the last great Highland Gathering ... in 1822’ famously orchestrated by Sir Walter Scott for the visit of George IV. Since then ‘they had had no gathering of kilted men in their city equal to the present one ... He had not counted them, but he believed they had had “a hundred pipers an’ a’ an’ a”’.¹⁴² But for Gowans this display of tartantry was linked to a misty evocation of romantic Tory paternalism:

He did not like to see the good old hardy character of our countrymen rubbed away altogether, and nothing in his opinion would do it sooner than the gap which seemed to be widening between the heads of the clans and their men.¹⁴³

139 *Dispatch*, 29 Sep 1886, p.2. The literature on Highlandism is of course voluminous, from the pioneering, and notorious Hugh Trevor-Roper, ‘The Invention of Tradition: the Highland Tradition of Scotland’, in E.J. Hobsbawm and T.O. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*. (Cambridge, 1992), pp.15–41, to an update and a corrective: Matthew P. Dziennik, ‘Whig Tartan: Material Culture and its Use in the Scottish Highlands, 1746–1815’, *Past and Present*, 217:1 (January 2012), pp.117–47.

140 NLS Ms.23508/411: T.&A. Constable to George Stephen, 15 Sep 1886. The programme, with its tartan cover, is preserved in ECL yT570.1886: Cowan scrapbook.

141 Advertisement, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 25 Sep 1886, p.14.

142 *Scotsman*, 01 Oct 1886, p.3. For George IV’s visit see p.25 above.

143 *Scotsman*, 04 Oct 1886, p.10. This Gowans speech conflates Highland iconography with Bonnie

For all this, the Gathering was conducted within a codified framework which, however much it might be based on invented tradition, could stake a claim to Celtic authenticity.¹⁴⁴ The proceedings were overseen by officials from the Northern Meeting, Inverness, and the Birnam Games. There were piping competitions, Gaelic singing contests—among whose judges was the ubiquitous Edinburgh public intellectual Professor John Stuart Blackie, who addressed the audience in Gaelic¹⁴⁵—and Highland dancing. Outdoor events included the signature hammer-throwing and caber-tossing, though most contests consisted of the running, throwing and jumping of more generic athletics. And while some parts of the proceedings, in particular the rain-sodden amateur day,¹⁴⁶ were less than perfectly conducted good weather brought crowds of spectators. The Gathering could be judged to have ‘added another to the list of Exhibition successes’.¹⁴⁷

These Exhibition successes, the Entertainment Committee’s set-piece events, were instrumental in creating and maintaining interest in the Exhibition as a place of excitement and novelty, ‘the great resource of Edinburgh sightseers and pleasure-seekers’.¹⁴⁸ It was a matter of comment that the diversions of the Exhibition had displaced the customary charms of bourgeois Edinburgh:

Both citizens and visitors go there to spend their money and their evenings. The theatres and other places of entertainment are half deserted. The favourite evening promenade is no longer Princes Street, but the North Walk of the Exhibition, with its festoons of variegated incandescent lamps and its courses of music.¹⁴⁹

And among these, the theatre was held to have suffered most.

Prince Charliery and Jacobitism: cf. the more austere Covenanting sympathies of Clark and the Dunlops, p.136 above.

144 Grant Jarvie, *Highland Games: The Making of the Myth*. (Edinburgh, 1991) though focussed on geographically Highland events; for the development of Gymnastic Games generally see Griffiths, ‘Work, Leisure and Time’, pp.183–84.

145 *Scotsman*, 01 Oct 1886, p.3. For Blackie see Stuart Wallace, *John Stuart Blackie: Scottish Scholar And Patriot*. (Edinburgh, 2006).

146 *Scotsman*, 02 Oct 1886, p.7: ‘The caber-tossing was of a rather extraordinary kind. There was only one competitor among the lot ... who could handle the ponderous length of fir in the regulation fashion; the others merely tottered under its weight, and had ultimately to get 18 inches sawn off it’. Contestants were disqualified at the slightest hint of professional status, detracting further from the quality of performance.

147 *Scotsman*, 01 Oct 1886, p.3.

148 *Scotsman*, 01 Nov 1886, p.6. The Brass Band contest held 22 and 23 October, described in Marr, *Music*, pp.147–62, completes the list of special events.

149 ‘The Edinburgh International Exhibition’, *Saturday Review*, 14 Aug 1886, p.216.

Considering that the advent of the exhibition brought matters theatrical almost to a standstill in Edinburgh, it seemed rather a fine piece of irony to call upon the lessee of one of the theatres, at a dinner given by the Executive Committee, to propose ‘Success to the Exhibition’.¹⁵⁰

The introduction of cheap tickets however had a greater effect on visitor numbers than any individual event. It was the sixpenny Saturdays in October that finally realised the Exhibition’s potential as a site of mass popular entertainment, with music, balloon ascents, evening fireworks, and whatever special events that were programmed contributing to the attractions for the Exhibition visitor.

The music of humanity: the Exhibition experience

The Exhibition presented its visitors with a magical, extra-ordinary space that existed as a transient moment in Edinburgh’s social life. The temporary enclave offered the experience of the museum, the trade fair, the factory, the concert hall, the sports field, the historic quarter and the pleasure garden within its confines.¹⁵¹ Within this fleeting microcosm the social relationships of the city outside were acted out by the thronging crowd. The Exhibition formed a social observatory within which gradations of status were apparent and even heightened within the imagined community of visitors. Amongst the promenaders in the Grand Hall, the Central Avenue and the Exhibition grounds the contemporary interest in the distinguishing of social types could be indulged: ‘In the crowd last night many different classes of people mingled—clergymen ... medical men, professional gentlemen, artisans, tradesmen and clerks, and enjoyment was depicted in every face’.¹⁵²

Amidst this happy throng the eye might fall on the transgressive figure of the masher, with his affected English accent, *outré* dress, and impecunious means. For a Glasgow

150 *Dispatch*, 16 Oct 1886, p.2. The toast in question was given by J.B. Howard of the Lyceum Theatre, a contact of Gowans, at the dinner of 21 May.

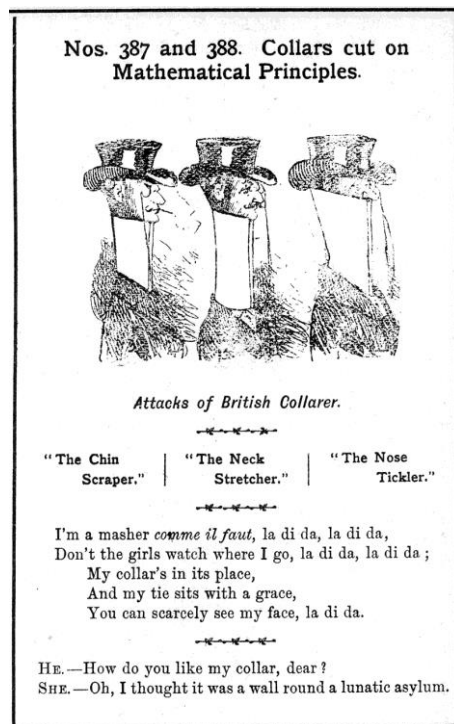
151 This categorisation of the ‘extra-ordinary’ can be related to the (somewhat elusive) concept of heterotopia: for example in Bennett, *Birth*, Introduction, and esp. pp.1–4 on the transience of heterotopias. The relationship of utopics—cf. the perfect city, p.103 above—to heterotopic space is explored in Kevin Hetherington, *The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and Social Ordering*. (London, 1997), though Hetherington reserves analysis of the Great Exhibition to his work on spaces of consumption. See also Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*. (London, 2003), pp.219–24 on the heterotopic meanings of public parks.

152 *Daily Review*, 13 May 1886, p.4; the same paper later (26 May 1886, p.2) noted that in the Exhibition ‘the Assemblies have a formidable rival for the attendance of the divines’. For social types see Gunn, *Public Culture*, pp.66–71; for the promenade, see n.11 p.213 above.

observer

Edinburgh, great in male ‘masherdom’ at any time, had ... evidently made a supreme effort to ‘exhibit’ in this line in the Meadows. I saw more natty coats, *recherché* buttonhole bouquets, swell canes and umbrellas, to say nothing of unexceptionable kid gloves, excruciatingly tight boots, and cheap cigars, than I see here in a twelvemonth.¹⁵³

For the observer of youth subcultures the masher might, however, metamorphose into a



Illus 5-3 Masherdom. Stronach, *Our Own-eries*

vision of *jeunesse dorée* under the electric brilliance of the Central Avenue:

[The ‘nineteenth century masher’] in the morning ... goes forth as a ‘masher,’ and returns in the evening as a ‘flirt’... He strolls into the central avenue with his companion clinging to his arm—as if she were some radiant humming bird just fresh from the southern climes. Her dress is beautiful as a glass of golden wine held in the sunlight: her jewels are not numerous, but nice in their arrangement: and as for her pretty countenance, a poet can only do it justice ... Think of thousand such maidens as that, with a thousand such swells as I have instanced, multiply this gay concourse by

153 *Quiz*, 25 May 1886, p.115. For mashers, see Gunn, *Public Culture*, pp.67, 69. Their ambiguous lower-middle class status perhaps accounts for their alleged predominance in Edinburgh with its large retail and clerking workforce. A topical allusion was provided in Forsyth’s (#388) jokey display of gigantic shirt collars: ‘The Coming Man’ and ‘The Masher King’, *Scottish News*, 15 Oct 1886, p.4, which features in Illus 5-3.

hundreds of middle-aged men and women, put on a repeating number of older worthies, and then draw your conclusions as you gaze upon the sum total of the scene, and listen to the music of humanity, which is perhaps even more enticing than that overture by Beethoven presently being played by the band of the Royal Artillery in the Pavilion.¹⁵⁴

Nothing illustrates the enticement of the Exhibition's human comedy and its attractions as a venue for middle-class sociability than the sense of loss at its passing. Like its counterparts in South Kensington, 'the recent exhibition was to many the revelation of a new want',¹⁵⁵ and a proposal by the solicitor John Hume was intended to perpetuate these sociable benefits:

the experience of the past six months has proved to demonstration [*sic*] in the case of the late Exhibition on the West Meadows, not so much as an exhibition, as a place where the public can resort to for the purposes of obtaining fresh air and exercise, meeting their friends, seeing and being seen, listening to music, engaging in games, watching displays of fireworks or ascent of balloons, and enjoying themselves in countless other ways.¹⁵⁶

Hume's planned Recreation Hall and Ground to take the Exhibition's place was backed by elite Edinburgh figures: John Stuart Blackie, the surgical luminary Professor John Chiene, and the Reverend Dr Cameron Lees, minister of St Giles, representatives of the social strata who had played little part in the organisation of the Exhibition but who had evidently enjoyed its facilities greatly. Despite this upper-class backing the proposal soon ran into practical difficulties and the unmet appetite for amusement and recreation went unsatisfied.¹⁵⁷

Whatever the attractions of the Exhibition as a habitual resort for bourgeois promenaders, visiting the event could be a tiring business. The great exhibitions with their overabundance of things and their assault on the senses were overwhelming experiences. As succeeding events inevitably came to resemble one another, international tourists with the means to visit each one could become jaded. Thus travellers such as Rosebery and Lord

154 *Dundee Courier*, 13 May 1886, p.3: one of nine articles by 'Jornan' published in May and June which provided vivid descriptions of the Exhibition crowds.

155 *Dispatch*, 16 Nov 1886, p.2.

156 John Hume, *Dispatch*, 08 Nov 1886, p.2.

157 After scouting locations in Warriston and Bruntsfield, Hume settled on the unattainable and totally unsuitable Lauriston Cattle Market as a site. Draft prospectus for the proposed joint-stock company, *Scottish News*, 09 Nov 1886, p.3; report of meeting *Scotsman*, 16 Nov 1886, p.5; Eureka, *Evening News*, 16 Nov 1886, p.2, on the drawbacks of Lauriston.

Provost Harrison affected a *blasé* weariness about the exhibition phenomenon in general.¹⁵⁸ For less privileged visitors, the weariness was more immediately physical. Despite the *Official Guide*'s detailed itinerary, an attempt to see everything would plainly be a fatiguing experience. Repeat visits were advised, an easier and more relaxed matter for the affluent season ticket holder than for the time- or cash-pressed purchaser of entry at the turnstile. Weariest of all was the excursionist intent on making the most of a single visit, 'rushing from the railway station in the morning in hot haste' and ending up 'thoroughly fagged out, and wearied both in body and mind, seemingly glad the hour of departure at last approaches'.¹⁵⁹ A different attitude to an outing to 'fair Edina' was taken by a Dundee correspondent: a circuit of the Old Town tourist attractions punctuated by breakfast and lunch, leaving only an hour and a half for a hurried visit to the Exhibition to peruse the booths of Old Edinburgh, before a dash for the train home.¹⁶⁰

Visitor discomfort was compounded by the Exhibition buildings' performance, particularly when large crowds thronged the courts. From the beginning deficiencies in ventilation had been apparent.¹⁶¹ Even the Grand Hall, with its generous proportions, could heat up uncomfortably on packed ceremonial occasions,¹⁶² and the mass attendance typified by the sixpenny Saturdays produced even more overcrowded conditions: 'towards the evening locomotion in the more attractive parts of the Exhibition became next to impossible'.¹⁶³ These effects were amplified by the natural forces of Edinburgh's changeable and unpredictable weather. In what turned out to be an 'exceptionally rainy summer', rain was recorded on no fewer than sixty-one days out of the Exhibition's 153-day run.¹⁶⁴ Heavy

158 p.40 above. For 'exhibition fatigue' see Alexander Geppert, *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*. (Basingstoke, 2010), pp.206–16. The operation of Geppert's 'exhibitionary networks' (pp.3–4)—of personnel, exhibitors, things, and concepts, p.95 above—was the driver behind this tendency to isomorphism. For a local example of international exhibition tourism see the steamer passages for the Antwerp Exposition, at £4 return, advertised *Scotsman*, 21 Sep 1885, p.8.

159 *North British Advertiser & Ladies' Journal*, 05 Jun 1886.

160 *Dundee Courier*, 14 Jun 1886, p.3.

161 For example calculations by Rob Roy, *Scottish News*, 11 May 1886, p.7.

162 On the Queen's visit: 'But worse was plight of the hapless elect / compelled as the price of success, to retire / to the Turkish-bath gloom of the Hall, where the heat /—or perhaps was their loyalty—made them perspire', *The Queen at Our Owneries*.

163 *Dispatch*, 25 Oct 1886, p.2.

164 *Scotsman*, 01 Nov 1886, p.6; analysis of *Scotsman* weekly weather reports. Cf. 'wet days' recorded at the South Kensington exhibitions: fifty at the Colonial and Indian, 1886; forty-four for the Inventions Exhibition, 1885; five at the Health Exhibition 1884; and seventeen at the Fisheries

rain took a toll on the temporary and quickly-constructed Exhibition courts. The organisers repeatedly faced compensation claims for water damage to exhibitors' goods.¹⁶⁵ In Old Edinburgh, open to the elements, Mitchell berated his builder over the structure's rainworthiness: "The roofs or walls on both of the "Old Edinburgh Street" houses have been leaking most shockingly. The place is thoroughly discreditable to you as Contractors'.¹⁶⁶

Weather effects were naturally more evident outside the Exhibition buildings. Bad weather marred scheduled events: like the Highland Gathering, disrupted by a torrential downpour on its opening day.¹⁶⁷ The cumulative effect of continual rain and the movement of increasingly large crowds of promenaders resulted in deterioration of the carefully laid out parkscape.¹⁶⁸ As a result of the Highland Gathering deluge 'the walks were an inch or so deep with liquid mud ... The entrances to some of the courts from the promenade were absolutely impassable'.¹⁶⁹ On the Saturday of the largest attendance

The grounds, indeed, were in a deplorable state. The continuous rainy weather has reduced them to a perfectly sodden condition; and with so many feet treading on them, the more frequented parts were literally churned into mud half a foot in depth.¹⁷⁰

The imperfect drainage of the Meadows was reasserting itself against the interventions of the Exhibition landscapers.

The generally good behaviour of the Exhibition crowds can be taken as one more instance of the oligoptic, contemplative, self-disciplining public for the exhibitions, museums and the other institutions of Tony Bennett's exhibitionary complex.¹⁷¹ Yet no matter how self-disciplined the spectators, within the extra-ordinary setting of the Exhibition Edinburgh's customary relationships of social ordering were acted out, with the predominating middle-class visitors setting the example required in parks and other public

Exhibition 1883, *St James's Gazette*, 13 Nov 1886, p.13.

165 ECA Acc.423/9: Exhibition correspondence, contains extensive legal correspondence on damage to exhibits, for example resulting from a 'flood of water' from the roof in Court 3, 06 Oct 1886. £282 was booked to 'damage to exhibits' in Exhibition Accounts.

166 ECA Acc.423/9: Mitchell to Gilroy & Co, 21 May 1886.

167 *Scotsman*, 30 Sep 1886, p.3. Rain also affected the third day of the Gathering; the event had to be extended by a day.

168 Nurserymen demanded compensation for damage to their plants during firework displays, ECA Acc.423/16: Minute Book 2, 02 Sep 1886.

169 *Dispatch*, 29 Sep 1886, p.3.

170 *Scotsman*, 25 Oct 1886, p.7.

171 See discussion at p.27ff above.

spaces.¹⁷² A place was even made for the utopic depiction of Edinburgh's residuum, the Old Town's underclass otherwise excluded from the festivities, and the stratum of the city least able—at least in the view of social authority—to exercise self-discipline. On two occasions bands of miserable and ragged 'street Arabs' were marched in formation to the Exhibition, to which they were admitted more as human displays than as spectators. Singing for their proffered bun and mug of cocoa, they provided a pitiable display of Edinburgh charity in action. 'After having done ample justice [to their refreshments], they formed up in the open and sang two hymns, all the poor creatures could give in barter for the kindness shown to them by all and sundry'.¹⁷³

Good behaviour and the stability of social ordering was not however universal. With its swirling crowds, the Exhibition provided a locus for a certain amount of outright criminality—though it was in nobody's interest, neither organisers, publicists, nor the police themselves, to emphasise this unduly. Pick-pockets, bag-snatchers and other casual thieves predictably made the most of the prospects presented by such a large assembly:

The Exhibition brought large number of country people to the city, and naturally thieves took advantage of the greater opportunities than usual thus afforded of plying their nefarious calling. The temptations to youths and loafers in the city were also greater than usual, and many articles usually more ornamental than useful were removed from the Exhibition.¹⁷⁴

The high proportion of not-proven verdicts in the resulting parade of cases through the city's Police Court indicated an interventionist approach to suspicious characters and actions by the watching police. Isolated cases of vandalism were reported: most seriously the cutting of electric cables left the grounds in darkness on at least two occasions.¹⁷⁵ Prostitution, another surreptitious activity in Victorian crowds, was unmentioned, and unmentionable, in the respectable confines of the Exhibition, although suspicions of its

172 Cf. p.78 above, for social discipline and ordering in Edinburgh's public spaces. A hegemonic interpretation can be applied here: just as the Exhibition buildings formed a utopic representation of the city itself, the promenades constituted an ideal representation of Edinburgh social relationships within this extra-ordinary space.

173 *Dispatch*, 05 Oct 1886, p.2; see also 27 Sep 1886, p.2, for the first group of 150 children 'gathered from the slums of Edinburgh'.

174 *Evening News*, 31 Dec 1886, p.2; cf John Gulland's attribution of increased crime in 1890 to that year's Exhibition, *How Edinburgh Is Governed: A Handbook for Citizens*. (Edinburgh, 1891), p.20.

175 Cables were cut on the 2 October, a cheap Saturday with a large attendance: 'This it seems is the second time the same blackguardly act has been committed', *Dispatch*, 04 Oct 1886, p.2.

presence had been raised at South Kensington.¹⁷⁶ Police statistics nevertheless showed a large increase in the numbers of women ‘charged with importuning passengers on the public thoroughfares’ elsewhere in the city. The misadventures of a drunken Queenslander, robbed by two women on his way back from the Exhibition to his lodgings via the temptations of Lothian Road, hinted at a seamier side of tourism in the capital.¹⁷⁷

Strong drink, the Queenslander’s downfall, maintained a prominent presence throughout the show. In this the Exhibition reflected its host city and nation, and the place of alcohol in sociability and the leisure activities of all strata of the social life of both.¹⁷⁸ As consumer commodities the products of the brewing and distilling industries took up a significant proportion of the space allotted to food products. ‘Sampling of liquors was diligently prosecuted’ by connoisseurs at the stands of the eighteen suppliers of ‘the national beverage’ displaying their brands.¹⁷⁹ However, the provision of drink went beyond sampling. As a self-contained city behind its enclosing hoardings, the Exhibition, like all other similar events, had to satisfy its visitors’ needs for bodily sustenance. This requirement had been let out as a commercial opportunity for local caterers.¹⁸⁰

A.M. Ross, proprietor of the Café Royal Hotel, took the main contract. The elaborate menus for lunch and dinner in his first-class restaurant were advertised daily, although the quality of his other offerings was open to criticism: ‘The outside “bars” and what are called “third class” dining rooms, are little less than repellent’.¹⁸¹ While the place of abstention in

176 Edward Cunliffe Owen on suggestions that South Kensington had become ‘a sort of Cremorne’: ‘You cannot keep women of an improper character out of any public place of entertainment, provided that they conduct themselves with the same decorum as other people’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 30 Oct 1885, p.11; for prostitution at the Paris expositions see *inter alia* Siân Reynolds, *Paris–Edinburgh: Cultural Connections in the Belle Époque*. (Aldershot, 2007), p.119.

177 The story is told in *Scotsman*, 07 Sep 1886, p.4; the importuning figures were: 1886, 859; 1885, 441; 1884, 534. *Evening News*, 31 Dec 1886, p.2.

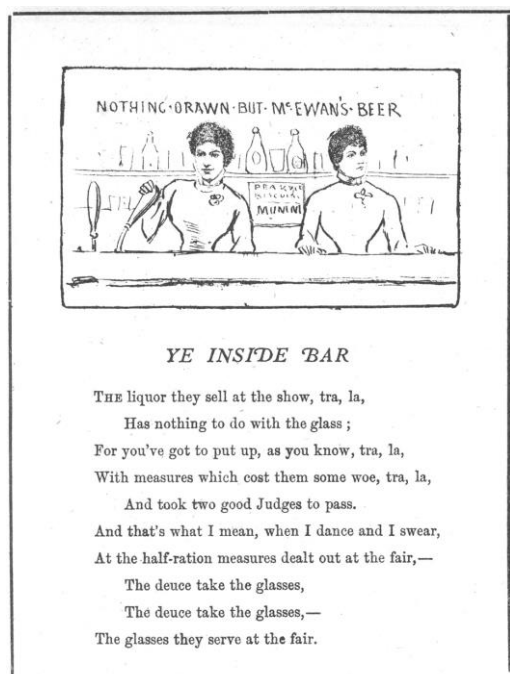
178 W. Hamish Fraser, ‘Developments in Leisure’, in W. Hamish Fraser and R.J. Morris (eds.), *People and Society in Scotland, 1830–1914*. (Edinburgh, 1990), pp.240–43; Smout, *Century*, pp.133–48.

179 *Evening News*, 01 Nov 1886, p.3, noting that Salt of Burton-on-Trent dispensed fourteen barrels’ worth of beer as samples. See p.168 above for drinks exhibitors.

180 p.81 above.

181 *Dispatch*, 26 May 1886, p.2, praising more egalitarian facilities at South Kensington, ‘quite the place for holiday dining among rich and poor’. The South Kensington Cookery School ran a demonstration restaurant there; something similar was tried at Bristol, but not at Edinburgh. A fish restaurant with waitresses costumed as Newhaven fishwives completed the Edinburgh dining facilities. For Ross’s advertisements, see *Scotsman*, *passim*. Ross made a profit of £10,000 on his £3,300 concession, according to *Dispatch*, 16 Jun 1890, p.4. For Ross’s subsequent career in exhibition catering, see p.275 below.

Edinburgh society was recognised by the award of a smaller contract for Temperance catering to Andrew Ritchie, there was never any possibility that the Exhibition as a whole would be dry. Ross's concession included extensive accommodation for indoor and outdoor bars.¹⁸² On the other hand, the Executive's stipulation that liquor should be served in a



Illus 5-4 Ross's bar staff—and bar prices. Stronach, *Our Own-eries*

smaller, non-standard, $\frac{1}{3}$ gill measure demonstrated a desire to limit alcohol consumption; the condition landed Ross in court on a charge of using false measures.¹⁸³

Ross's bars provided a source of sociable enjoyment to balance the improving lessons of the exhibits, or the pleasures of the entertainments offered elsewhere in the Exhibition grounds. 'Whatever may be the elevating and educational attractions of the Exhibition, and there are many, the drinking bars prove for the male, and for not a few female visitors, the centre of noisy revelry'.¹⁸⁴ Besides the capacity and price of his whisky measures, Ross's beer supply, limited to McEwan's—and his staff of fifty barmaids, another focus of the male gaze on women workers—were subjects of abiding interest for Exhibition

182 The indoor Refreshment Room is shown as occupying half a standard Exhibition court—25ft x 135ft gross—with a bar running for most of the length of the room, in *Engineering*, 04 Jun 1886, p.539.

183 Dismissed on appeal, *Scotsman*, 09 Jun 1886, p.9; editorial, p.6. The standard half-gill = 71ml, the short one-third gill = 48ml, cf. 2014 standard pub measures of 35ml and 25ml.

184 *Daily Review*, 08 Jun 1886, p.2.

commentators and cartoonists.¹⁸⁵ The satirists depicted over-indulgence at all levels of Exhibition society. The non-abstaining members of the Executive ‘their faces aglow with Glenlivet and pride’ were accused of attending the ceremonials fortified ‘with neat pocket-pistols well filled with Auld Kirk’.¹⁸⁶ The hapless drunk, either cheerful or despondent, was



Illus 5-5 Drinkers' logic. W.G. Stevenson, *Sketches at the International Exhibition*

a stock figure for humourists. The alleged rowdiness of the long-suffering excursionists offered further material for the caricaturist.¹⁸⁷

The comic opportunity presented by alcohol was only one of the themes of the flurry of squibs and satires that were inspired by the Exhibition.¹⁸⁸ Unimpressed by social

185 For Victorian barmaids, see Peter Bailey, 'Parasexuality and Glamour: the Victorian Barmaid as Cultural Prototype', *Gender & History*, 2:2 (June 1990), pp.148–172, and their rarity in Scotland p.158. Fraser, 'Developments', p.243, notes the progressive exclusion of women from Scottish pubs as both drinkers and bar staff.

186 *The Queen at Our Owneries*, cf. Executive conviviality at dinner, p.100 above.

187 For aspersions on the manners of 'the ubiquitous Glasgow callant', see *Dundee Courier*, 30 Aug 1886, p.2. Bad behaviour by lower-class excursionists from Edinburgh was more frequently reported: for example, rowdy Leith visitors to Hamilton, *Dispatch*, 10 Jul 1886, p.2; the Edinburgh Catholic Young Men's Association's alleged outrages in Cumnock, *Dispatch*, 09 Aug 1886, p.3.

188 Those surviving are: Stronach, *Our Own-eries; Hits and Misses, or Random Shots at the Exhibition*; W.G. Stevenson, *Sketches at the International Exhibition*. (Edinburgh, 1886); and *The Queen at Our Owneries*, by far the cleverest. The Glasgow satirical weeklies *The Bailie* and *Quiz* also

standing, suspicious of motives, often acerbic in tone, these ephemeral publications lampooned the leading figures of the Executive. The martinet Hedley was an easy target; Gowans, the man of the hour and the public face of the Exhibition, generally fared better.¹⁸⁹ The Exhibition squibs caught the tone of a sceptical undercurrent of opinion never very far from the surface of Edinburgh public life and expressed in the outraged tone of letters to the press on ticket allocations, or the bad-tempered imprecations voiced at the meetings of exhibitors or season ticket holders. Within the Exhibition itself, spectators at set-piece events could not always be relied on to show the requisite respect to authority figures: at the Queen's visit

the crowd were not loth to indulge in sarcasms upon awkward unknown personages in Court costume, and especially was it very trying for some who had to run the gauntlet along the north promenade, the remarks uttered being very personal and happy.¹⁹⁰

These examples of *badinage* serve as something of a counterweight to any idea of the respectable Edinburgh crowd as an over-respectful mass, deferential to appointed authorities. In a community where social discipline was immediate and apparent, compliance with respectable observances was expected and lapses observed and noted. At the same time, as the Exhibition's points of dispute demonstrated, the matters of the Edinburgh public sphere were often conducted in a fractious, splenetic and sometimes outrightly venomous manner. However, the underlying quizzical and sardonic tone glimpsed from time to time only emphasises the general restrained demeanour of the Exhibition spectators: observant, restrained, self-disciplined. Respectable recreation here, as elsewhere in the city, was taken in a rational and ordered manner. The exceptions, such as the *mêlée* at Prince Albert Victor's opening visit, only confirmed the Exhibition's success in handling its sometimes huge crowds with minimal intervention.

Within the Exhibition grounds the citizens of Edinburgh were themselves on

commented on the Exhibition. For a more serious treatment in dialect, see *Hotch Potch in Braid Scotch, or, an Auld Wife's Cracks about the Edinburgh Exhibition*. (Brechin, 1886).

189 *The Queen at Our Owneries* again: 'His life is a record of honest hard work, / and the whole Exhibition is due to the fight / he made for it 'gainst those who pooh-poohed the scheme, / and swore that it never would see the daylight'; but see also the caricature of the Model Tenement from *Our Own-eries*, reproduced in Adams, *The Making of Urban Scotland*, p.193.

190 *North British Daily Mail*, 19 Aug 1886. Having paid 5s. for entrance, these spectators were presumably fairly affluent. The two riotous drunks who had to be removed by police from the grandstands stand out amid the generally extravagant displays of loyalty: *Scotsman*, 19 Aug 1886, p.6.

display.¹⁹¹ The observances of the royal events allowed the participants to act out their ceremonial roles: the city's Magistrates and Councillors luxuriating in the royal presence over their colleagues from other, lesser municipalities; the young women presenters of Prince Albert Victor's propine; or the Committee members enjoying the reward of presentation to royalty. But within the courts or the outside promenades the observer of social performance—whether as well-set-up season-ticket holders, as mashers, *jeunesse dorée*, or even as street urchins—could distinguish recognisable Edinburgh social types. The Victorian interest in social observation can be seen as another dimension of Bennett's



Illus 5-6 'Our Excursionists'. Stronach, *Our Own-eries*

oligoptic self-policing: another perspective would look to the transient space of the Exhibition as an arena for the transgressive and the carnivalesque.¹⁹² Such examples of transgression as occurred within the confines of the West Meadows—drunkenness, petty crime, *lèse-majesté* or simple fractiousness—were hardly unknown in the city outside. Once again the Exhibition functioned as a representation of Edinburgh, though this representation was of a less-than-ideal city.

191 Cf. the motto for another exhibition: 'Please remember when you get inside the gates you are part of the show', quoted Bennett, *Birth*, p.68–69.

192 See for example Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture*. (Toronto, 1997), following Peter Stallybrass and Allon White's Bakhtinian analysis of the carnivalesque, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*. (Ithaca, 1986): although even in Walden's Toronto showground, a very different *milieu* to Edinburgh, examples of real transgression were limited.

Closing rituals

Disorder at the Exhibition's closing ceremony provided the one episode of the true carnivalesque in the course of the event. The last day of the Exhibition had the mischance to coincide with a University Rectorial election; the resulting student disturbances disrupted the celebratory conclusion to the show. Edinburgh University, the largest and most prestigious in Scotland, occupied the central role in the city's educational and intellectual life. Its prestige, and its teaching capacity, had been enhanced by the construction of the New Buildings to accommodate its world-famous medical school, only a few hundred yards from the West Meadows and the Exhibition. Though Edinburgh was the youngest of the Scottish universities, its claim to historic pedigree had been asserted by the invented ceremonials and academic rites of the Tercentenary celebrations of 1884.¹⁹³ Student numbers had risen with the University's growth: from 1,564 in 1868 to 3,425 in 1884, with 1,736, over half, of these studying medicine.¹⁹⁴

The rise of this student estate—still entirely male in 1886, despite the campaigns for medical education for women and the efforts of the EAUEW—was associated with a very visible tradition of noisy and boisterous behaviour which from time to time enlivened Edinburgh's street life. In particular, such horseplay marked the ritual contests of the triennial Rectorial elections, with their own invented traditions: mock battles for emblems or colours, pea- and flour-throwing, and concluding torchlight processions.¹⁹⁵ Principal Grant may have bemoaned the 'carnival tradition' embodied in the elections: but the truly carnivalesque quality of these episodes of licenced misrule was evident in their edgy toleration by University and municipal authorities.¹⁹⁶ Amongst the perpetrators were, after all, future members of the nation's legal, medical and clerical élites.

The elements of Rectorial confrontation were played out on the morning of Saturday 30 October. In a politically-charged contest between two figures of national standing the Tory incumbent, elected in 1883 as Sir Stafford Northcote but recently ennobled as Lord

193 Robert Anderson, 'Ceremony in Context: The Edinburgh University Tercentenary, 1884', *Scottish Historical Review*, 87:1 (April 2008), pp.121–145.

194 Figures from Anderson, 'Ceremony in Context', p.125; see also Gillies, *Edinburgh Past and Present*, p.146: 'The medical students come from all parts of the world; less than half are natives'.

195 For Rectorial elections see Anderson, 'Ceremony in Context', p.129.

196 Grant quoted Anderson, 'Ceremony in Context', p.131. Anderson notes that the University authorities promoted the foundation of a Students' Representative Council in late 1883 to encourage—successfully—good behaviour during the Tercentenary observances.

Iddesleigh, faced the Gladstonian Liberal M.P. Sir Lyon Playfair. After the ritual despoliation of the University quadrangle by over-excited youths the result was announced: Iddesleigh had convincingly defeated Playfair by 1,094 votes to 747.¹⁹⁷ Convention demanded further outrages; the nearby Exhibition presented a tempting target. In the course of the afternoon a gang of 300 to 400 students ‘followed by a rabble of small boys and roughs’ attempted to storm the Exhibition gates.¹⁹⁸ The increasingly violent exchanges between stick-wielding students and baton-carrying police were interrupted only by the students’ withdrawal to take part in their torchlight procession to Calton Hill.

Meanwhile, the Exhibition’s last day was proceeding with all its accustomed excitement and spectacle. Despite the one-shilling entry charge for both adults and children 39,921 admissions were recorded in the course of the day, the fifth largest total of the event’s run. In the afternoon Dale made his final balloon ascent, on this occasion accompanied by his wife; after an uneventful trip across the Forth they descended at Leven. In the evening Pain’s closing fireworks ‘exceeded all previous displays in scale and brilliancy’.¹⁹⁹ The Exhibition management, their resources reinforced by additional police numbers, were however braced for further trouble; and skirmishing at the gates duly resumed when the student revellers returned around 9:00pm.²⁰⁰

It soon became apparent that students had infiltrated the Exhibition itself; the

197 W.D. Rubinstein, ‘Northcote, Stafford Henry, first earl of Iddesleigh (1818–1887)’, *ODNB*; Graeme J.N. Gooday, ‘Playfair, Lyon, first Baron Playfair (1818–1898)’, *ODNB*. Although Iddesleigh had been a popular Rector, Playfair had strong University connections as Professor of Chemistry from 1858 to 1868 and subsequently M.P. for Edinburgh and St Andrews Universities until 1885; William Hole, *Quasi Cursores*. (Edinburgh, 1884), pp.25–32. Playfair’s defeat demonstrated the Conservative and Unionist temper of contemporary student opinion. Coincidentally both Northcote and Playfair had played central roles in the Great Exhibition of 1851; neither had any part in the Edinburgh Exhibition.

198 The student disturbances were described at length in the next day’s *Scotsman*, *Dispatch*, *Evening News* and *Herald* from which accounts the details here are taken. Transgressive misbehaviour marked the closing days of other exhibitions: Liverpool in 1886, Edinburgh in 1890 and 1908 (*Dispatch*, 10 Nov 1886, p.4; *Scotsman*, 03 Nov 1890, p.7, 02 Nov 1908, p.9).

199 *Scotsman*, 01 Nov 1886, p.7.

200 In a pleasing touch of modernity both police reinforcements and student detainees were conveyed along Gowans’s electric railway. The students were almost all set free without charge; it is indicative of the ritual nature of the combat that, in a fracas involving significant levels of violence and public disorder and the disruption of a prestigious civic event, only one student found himself in court: one William Bremner was fined £1, with the option of five days imprisonment, for smashing a lamp. The S.R.C., the voice of the responsible majority, was keen to point out that those involved ‘formed but a small proportion of the students in attendance at the University’, *Scotsman*, 03 Nov 1886, p.6.

insurgents ‘marshalled themselves in processional order and marched through the principal portions of the building’.²⁰¹ Inside the crowded Grand Hall, students in false noses and moustaches attempted to disrupt the closing ceremony. In an increasingly restive and nervous audience ‘several ladies fainted, and the difficulty of getting them removed tended to increase the interruption’ and it was only with difficulty that Gowans, presiding on the platform, could conclude the proceedings with the required dignity.²⁰² The students lingered after the close, and Gowans again took charge of the situation by leading them, singing ‘Rule, Britannia’, out of the grounds: ‘A forest of sticks was in the air, amid which nothing could be seen of the Dean but his tall hat—like the helmet of Navarre—and the smoke curling up from the cigar he was smoking’.²⁰³ The expedient was only partly successful: police patience was eventually exhausted, batons were again drawn, and the grounds were only cleared by a charge of eight mounted policemen. Thus vanquished, the rioters vanished into the night nursing sore heads, torn coats and battered hats.

The evening’s excitement, like the Exhibition itself, was over. The crowds had dispersed, the generating machinery was silent, the electric light extinguished. In the Grand Hall, lit only ‘by the dim light of a gas jet in the Treasurer’s office’,²⁰⁴ a small group gathered to conclude the event that had engrossed them, and much of Edinburgh, for the past six months. Gowans, whose leadership had been confirmed by the trying and sometimes farcical nature of the day’s incidents, summoned the tone required to do justice to the vision and achievements of the Exhibition’s organisers.

They had had a very pleasant time of it; they had formed many acquaintances, which he believed would last as long as the breath was in their bodies ... From the beginning they had stumbling-blocks put in their way; but that had been only an encouragement to them to make greater efforts ... He did not believe in sailing with the wind always. If they were to make good sailors they must have storms ... They had met pleasantly all along during the last twelve months. They had had their little bits of sparring, but even that sparring cleared the atmosphere, and they now came to the sorrowful task of locking the door from the inside which had been opened from the outside six months ago by Prince Albert Victor.²⁰⁵

The door was closed, the key turned, ‘Auld Lang Syne’ sung. But for Gowans in particular, more stormy weather lay ahead.

201 *Herald*, 01 Nov 1886, p.4.

202 *Scotsman*, 01 Nov 1886, p.7.

203 *Scotsman*, 01 Nov 1886, p.7.

204 *Herald*, 01 Nov 1886, p.4.

205 *Scotsman*, 01 Nov 1886, p.7.

6. Aftermath and afterlife

In the early days of November 1886 the Exhibition organisers could congratulate themselves on the successful conclusion of their undertaking. The closing scenes of student rowdiness could be quickly passed over as licensed horseplay; the continuing rumblings of dissatisfaction from exhibitors over the awards procedure and the tawdriness of its paper medals could be dismissed as inevitable symptoms of commercial self-interest. The organisers enjoyed the plaudits of public and press. The Exhibition had reflected well on the city. The Executive and its web of subcommittees had demonstrated the capacities of Edinburgh's middle-class volunteers in the organisation of a novel venture of formidable size and complexity. The outcome, in the attractiveness of its environment, the interest of its exhibits and attractions and the all-important visitor numbers which they had generated compared advantageously with competing events. And perhaps of most immediate public interest a substantial surplus—of as much as £15,000 or £20,000—was forecast.¹

This final chapter begins by examining events in the immediate aftermath of the Exhibition: events that unfolded into two areas of public dispute that conspired to take a great deal of the gloss from the organisers' achievements. The first concerned the uses of the West Meadows, and the issues of access to public space which had been pre-empted by the Town Council grant of the site. The Exhibition organisers, enchanted by their Fairy Palace, proposed to retain the Grand Hall in place as a community asset. Though the proposal had its supporters, it unleashed a storm of protest from the opposing champions of the Meadows' traditional role as an open space for artisan recreation. These contrasting visions of the public good were played out in municipal election meetings and legal action before the defeat of the Hall's partisans, the forced removal of the Hall and the other remnants of the Exhibition, and the eventual reinstatement of the parkland provided a precedent for the resistance to future encroachment on the Meadows.

The second source of discord concerned the much-trumpeted Exhibition surplus. From £15,000 the projected total slipped away to less than £5,500 in the final account, disappointing the representatives of Edinburgh good causes hoping to benefit from the show. It was the grant to the Exhibition's major beneficiary—none other than Sir James Gowans himself—that however aroused another clamour of dissent. The award of £2,000 to Gowans, now bankrupt and seriously ill, raised issues of probity in public life, the

1 For example *Scotsman*, 01 Nov 1886, p.6.

meaning of honorary service in Edinburgh civil society, and the public status of the Exhibition funds. The final winding-up of the Exhibition's affairs was accompanied by a sense of disquiet at an apparent breach of trust in these matters.

While the future of the Meadows and the disbursal of the Exhibition funds were matters of concern to Edinburgh, the event's reputation for success outside the city made it something of a model for succeeding exhibitions. This chapter goes on to discuss the influence of the Edinburgh Exhibition on organisers in Newcastle, Manchester, and in particular Glasgow, where exhibition planning—and traditional rivalries—resumed. The circulation of people, things and ideas between shows brought out similarities, and the repetition of successful formulas. Local character on the other hand produced local distinctiveness: exhibitions reflected the characteristics of their host cities. This was demonstrated in Glasgow, where greater resources and, eventually, greater ambitions led to a spectacular outcome. The exhibition as an embodiment of local characteristics prompts conclusions on the main focus of this research: on Edinburgh's individuality as a nineteenth-century city, and on its Exhibition as a representation of that city through which this individual character can be examined.

The Grand Hall controversy

Dismantling the Exhibition proved to be a more problematic business than putting it up. The Town Council granted the use of the West Meadows in September 1885 under the strict condition that the park would be restored to its original state after the event. Burnet and Lindsay's 'Permanent Building', the Grand Pavilion, was permanent only insofar as it could be taken down and re-erected on another site.² However, once the magnificence of their creation and its utility as a public hall became apparent the Exhibition organisers made no secret of their desire to see it retained where it stood. Barely a fortnight after the opening ceremony Gowans proclaimed his expectation 'that the Edinburgh people would never think about pulling down that grand hall',³ and the sentiment was frequently repeated by Exhibition promoters thereafter. Once the show was over, the Exhibition Association made the Town Council an offer: the Permanent Building would be donated to the city and a capital sum of £8,500 would be provided from the projected Exhibition surplus for

2 On these points see p.82, p.106 above respectively

3 At the Executive dinner of 21 May: *Scotsman*, 22 May 1886, p.9.

reconstruction, improved facilities and future running costs.⁴

The offer crystallised what had become a spirited public debate on the future of the West Meadows. Opposition to the Hall's retention was led by the *Scotsman*, championing reinstatement of the park as open, communal space. Earlier suggestions of a legacy use of the Exhibition buildings had been allowed to pass without comment; but hints by Gowans at the Highland Gathering in early October provoked a stinging response:

Shall the West Meadows be permanently closed to the public, except as a place for exhibitions and entertainments? Are they to be abolished as an open space, as a playground for children—as a place of recreation for working men, where, in the heart of the city, they may breathe free air and enjoy healthy exercise without expense and without leave of any man? Is the beauty of the Meadows to be disfigured by barricades and barracks, and hid behind closed doors? ⁵

This warning galvanised opposition to permanent encroachment on popular amenity. The Edinburgh Outdoor Recreation Union, with its upper-class patrons C.C. Cottrell and Sir Noël Paton, lobbied on behalf of the artisan sportsmen displaced by the Exhibition.⁶ The Trades Council, longstanding in its support for working class recreation, resolved unanimously that 'nothing would be satisfactory except the removal of the entire buildings'.⁷ The Cockburn Association, establishment guardians of Edinburgh's open spaces, were also moved to advocate the restoration of the public park.⁸ And, as the November round of municipal elections approached and ward meetings were called to adopt candidates, it was clear that the issue would intrude into local politics.⁹

Feelings against the Grand Hall were by no means unanimous. Majorities in favour of its retention were recorded at a number of ward meetings.¹⁰ Amongst the flurry of letters prompted by the *Scotsman's* intervention in the debate, a number were prepared to support

4 ECA Acc.423/13: Exhibition Association Minutes, 20 Oct 1886; *Scotsman*, 26 Oct 1886, p.5; and 06 Nov 1886, p.10 for City Superintendent's and Burgh Engineer's report on the building.

5 *Scotsman*, 05 Oct 1886, p.4.

6 *Scottish News*, 13 Oct 1886, p.3.

7 NLS Acc.11177/6: Edinburgh United Trades Council, Minutes, 02 Nov 1886.

8 *Scottish News*, 23 Oct 1886, p.4; see also Cockburn Association, *Annual Report*, 1886/87. Sir Noël Paton, Queen's Limner in Scotland, was a vice-president of the Association.

9 See for example Liberal activist and EORU Secretary James Pretsell, *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, 15 Oct 1886, p.2. Not unusually, only two seats were contested in the election itself on 2 November.

10 For example the meeting of largely middle-class St George's Ward reported *Scotsman*, 20 Oct 1886, p.8, where the vote was sixty-three to forty-three in favour of retention.

the Hall's preservation as a valuable civic resource, a winter garden and a concert hall, and to counter the characterisation of the West Meadows as a space exclusively reserved for working-class sports.¹¹ The Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, after a debate expressing 'considerable diversity of opinion', backed the offer unanimously, if unenthusiastically.¹² In the press, the trenchant opposition of the *Scotsman* and its stablemate the *Dispatch* was not shared by the other Edinburgh papers. For the Radical *Evening News*

In all cities there are always to be found people who pose as watchdogs to the community, and whose barking creates a panic among the feeble-minded ... It will be a surprise indeed to us to learn that the working classes of Edinburgh are so enamoured of cricket and football ... and so irrationally devoted to popular rights as to refuse a corner of the Meadows to a building which will not only be a memorial of a successful undertaking but also a home for healthy indoor recreation and popular culture.¹³

And the Tory *Scottish News* was inclined to agree:

We have no doubt that if the building was accepted the citizens of Edinburgh would soon find that it could be used in many ways for the advantage of the community; and they would be unwise to have the building demolished at once without giving the matter the fullest possible consideration.¹⁴

However, the weight of newspaper correspondence was firmly behind the removal of the buildings; and opposition to the Exhibition Association's prospective gift was evident at the ward adoption meetings. Support for the Hall's retention was frequently met with jeers; many meetings vociferously demanded the clearing of the Meadows, and Councillors and candidates obligingly trimmed to their constituents' opinions.¹⁵

In any case, the Grand Hall's protagonists were hindered by the legal barriers against the erection of permanent buildings on the Meadows. A private Bill amending the 1827 proscription was perfectly feasible: but while the legislative path to Westminster for Scottish

11 Put most baldly—and loftily—by 'Belgrave', *Scotsman*, 09 Oct 1886, p.7: 'it seems a great pity that the large outlay incurred in so beautifully laying out the grounds should be entirely thrown away, and the West Meadows restored to their primitive condition merely to satisfy the demands of a limited class'.

12 *Scottish News*, 22 Oct 1886, p.2; *Scotsman*, 22 Oct 1886, p.7. James Tod, Chairman of the Chamber, was a member of the Exhibition Executive. Thomas Clark spoke in favour of retention at the meeting.

13 *Edinburgh Evening News*, 09 Oct 1886, p.2.

14 *Scottish News*, 27 Oct 1886, p.6; see also 22 Oct 1886, p.4.

15 For example St Giles Ward meeting, *Scotsman*, 16 Oct 1886, p.11, where Trades Council opposition overturned Cllr Clapperton's support for retaining the Hall, though only by forty votes to thirty-six; Clapperton afterwards voted against retention.

municipalities was familiar and well-trodden, the procedure was tortuous and expensive.¹⁶ Meanwhile the idiosyncratic enforcement mechanism specified in the follow-up 1837 Act—‘this bogus law, this objection by one citizen ... this musty, fusty law’¹⁷—left the Council open to legal action by a single ratepayer. Even with these difficulties there was considerable support for the retention of the Hall amongst Councillors when the Exhibition Association’s offer was put to the newly-elected Town Council. The Lord Provost’s Committee declined the gift by only eight votes to six, a decision ratified twenty-three to fifteen by full Council after, inevitably, an impassioned plea for retention from Gowans.¹⁸ In the debate it was evident that other Councillors were dissuaded, either by their constituents’ views or the legal difficulties involved, from following their own inclinations and voting to retain the Hall.¹⁹

The Town Council decision cleared the way for the demolition of the empty Exhibition buildings, which had been stripped of their contents. This was sometimes a laborious process: the return of the railway locomotives and carriages to their depots took days of manoeuvring and created traffic confusion and public entertainment.²⁰ The temporary courts were naturally first to go, reduced to lumber for disposal by their contractor Shillinglaw. There was talk of re-assembling Old Edinburgh for the Paris Exhibition of 1889, or alternatively exporting the attraction to South Australia for the forthcoming Melbourne Centennial.²¹ Both projects fell through. Sydney Mitchell’s carefully-crafted plasterwork was ignominiously smashed up and any usable components salvaged for re-sale.

16 For the legal background see p.73 above. The private legislation enabling the erection of the Scott Monument in the 1840s was cited as a precedent; a single-clause insertion in a forthcoming Municipal Bill may have been all that was necessary, *Scottish News*, 27 Oct 1886, p.6. The cost of such private Bills was one of the drivers behind Scottish demands for administrative devolution; see John W. Gulland, *How Edinburgh Is Governed. A Handbook for Citizens*. (Edinburgh, 1891), p.86, for Edinburgh expenditure on private bills.

17 Bailie Robert Cranston, *Evening News*, 08 Nov 1886, p.2.

18 *Scotsman*, 08 Nov 1886, p.6; 09 Nov 1886, p.7; *Scottish News*, 09 Nov 1886, p.2. Lord Provost Clark, Treasurer Boyd, Parks Convener Clapperton, and Kinloch Anderson were amongst those voting to decline; Gowans and Dunlop, to accept.

19 A point made forcibly in an excoriating *Scotsman* editorial, 09 Nov 1886, p.4: ‘We have given them [Councillors supporting acceptance] full credit for disinterested public spirit. But their reputation for judgement and taste has been sadly blighted’.

20 For example *Scotsman*, 22 Nov 1886, p.6, for stranding of locomotives and carriages in Lothian Road.

21 *Scotsman*, 10 Dec 1886, p.4.

Progress was not fast enough for the friends of the Meadows. In early February 1887 solicitors acting for ‘a large number of gentlemen interested in the matter’ took action under the 1837 legislation to demand the immediate removal of the Grand Hall and the Model Tenement, the remaining Exhibition buildings.²² The Exhibition Association affected innocence. It ‘did not meditate the permanent occupation of the ground, but simply its use for the purposes of their special and exceptional undertaking’;²³ but the legal threat and further Council pressure stimulated action. The Grand Hall had been removed by late April; the materials of the Tenement were appropriated by Gowans for re-erection as a double villa on his Craiglockhart development.²⁴

Meanwhile, violence was still being done to the Meadows to restore some semblance of its former flatness. The concrete beds of the Machine Hall were blasted out,²⁵ but slow progress was reported in removing ‘the mounds of lath and plaster, piles of drain pipes, flayed and trampled soil, and the melancholy ruins of the Grand Hall and the “How not to do it” Dwelling Houses’; ‘The larva or abandoned shell of the Exhibition was only too patent ... but the gilded and glorious creatures who once inhabited it were nowhere to be found’.²⁶ For months the West Meadows remained a wasteland. To the injury caused by the continuing sequestration of public space, an insult was added in the shape of Sheriff Thoms’s gift of the redundant whalebones that once framed the Shetland knitters’ stall in the Women’s Industries Section, to form a memorial arch in the devastated landscape.

From many quarters there come ... mumblings and railings against the Town Council for turning the Meadows into a Valley of Dry Bones. The grass now grows rankly over the unhallowed grave of the late Exhibition ... to dispel [a] ‘returning air of gaiety’ to the same, the Council have accepted from one of their number [*sic*] a quantity of old jawbones, grown mouldy in his hands, and have set them up, as a perpetual reminder of the vanity and fleeting nature of human pleasures.²⁷

22 Scott Moncrieff & Trail, *Scotsman*, 09 Feb 1886, p.9. City Superintendent Robert Morham had quietly advocated retention of the Tenement, *Scottish News*, 17 Nov 1886, p.2.

23 ECA Acc.423/6: response to summons by James Mackenzie.

24 ECA Acc.423/16: Minute Book 2, 20 Apr 1887. *BoSE*, p.537, identifies nos 157–159 Colinton Road as ‘probably’ the much-altered Model Tenement, the ‘skeleton’ of which was reportedly visible on the banks of the Union Canal—opposite the Meggetland site of the 1890 Exhibition—at the time of Gowans’s death, June 1890: *Dispatch*, 26 Jun 1890, p.2.

25 *Scotsman*, 11 Mar 1887, p.4 reported that ‘blasting operations were now nearly completed’; cf Gowans’s strictures on the damage caused to the Meadows by the Highland Show, p.81 above.

26 *Dispatch*, 01 Mar 1887, p.2.

27 *Dispatch*, 09 Sep 1887, p.2. The same page carries a letter from ‘Town Councillor’ bemoaning

The park was not re-opened to the public, including the long-displaced cricketers, until May 1889.²⁸

The long-drawn-out process of restitution reinforced concerns for the protection of the Meadows as an open space. The application to the Town Council in July 1889 for the grant of the East Meadows as the grounds for the proposed 1890 Exhibition—reminiscent of Hutchison’s ill-judged request for the use of Princes Street Gardens for the Forestry Exhibition—was not surprisingly rejected out of hand.²⁹ The limitations of municipal memory and the temptations of the Meadows as a site were however demonstrated only nine years later. In July 1898 the Lord Provost’s Committee proposed to locate the recently-endowed Usher Hall in the corner of the West Meadows, almost exactly where the Grand Hall had stood. Amongst the majority voting down the proposal Bailie Kinloch Anderson, now elevated to the magistracy, was able to cite the experience of 1886 as evidence of the impossibility of securing public assent for any such development.³⁰

The Exhibition surplus—and Gowans

At the close of the Exhibition, public attention had turned to the glittering prospect of a public benefit from its financial success. Plainly, the undertaking had more than paid its way; the pledges of its guarantors which had constituted the virtual capital of the guarantee fund remained untouched. Intangible promises had magicked up the fairy palace on the Meadows and all its accoutrements and underwritten an enterprise with a turnover of £110,000 and the promise of a healthy surplus.³¹

Even while the Meadows remained a wilderness, the expected bonus began to dematerialise. Apparently unforeseen calls had to be settled and demands continued to be submitted: expenses to Bertram and to Duncan & Grant for the erection and removal of the Exhibition engines; £115 to Stuart & Co, after an unedifying legal action against

the ‘frightful enormity’, ‘bad taste’, ‘charnel house’ etc. For Kinloch Anderson’s condemnation of the bones see *Scotsman*, 13 Oct 1887, p.7.

28 *Scotsman*, 06 May 1889, p.6. £3,000 was spent on removing the buildings and making good the grounds, £4,600 received from ‘Sales of Old Material on Demolition of Buildings’, Exhibition Accounts, ECA Acc.423/13: Exhibition Association Minutes, 28 Dec 1887.

29 *Scotsman*, 17 Jul 1889, p.10.

30 *Scotsman*, 05 Jul 1898, p.7; *Evening News*, 06 Jul 1898, p.3; for Trades Council opposition see *Scotsman* 06 Jul 1898, p.11. A location map of the proposed Hall is held in NLS Acc.10222: Bartholomew archive.

31 Exhibition Accounts.

Gowans for payment for plasterwork in the Model Tenement; £1,050 to the contractor Gilroy for additional work on Old Edinburgh personally authorised by Sydney Mitchell; and so on.³² The Town Council's rejection of the Grand Hall was in fact a disguised blessing for the Exhibition organisers; the resources promised to refurbish and maintain the Hall would simply not have been available had the Association's proposal been accepted. Throughout 1887 the projected surplus steadily dwindled: from £15,000 in December 1886, to between £8,000 and £10,000 in March 1887, to £5,600 in December.³³ The reputation for careful financial management earned by treasurer Gaff over the course of the Exhibition's run was threatened by this spectacular failure to account for the contingencies emerging after its close.³⁴

Though much reduced, the surplus remained substantial; but its diminution inevitably meant disappointment for the claimants competing for a share of the expected bonanza. While wrangling between exhibitor members of the Exhibition Association and the Executive continued, the aggrieved party's demand for real metal medals appeared increasingly unrealistic. The eventual resolution reached in September 1887, that successful exhibitors could have their medals struck from an approved die at their own expense, involved no further expenditure of Exhibition funds.³⁵ Meanwhile a succession of hopeful applicants from Edinburgh's associational networks submitted bids for a share in the reduced total. Robert Marr's Scottish Musical Society sought to establish a Scottish Musical Academy; the Royal Scottish Society of Arts appealed for a donation; the Board of Manufactures solicited funds for a Museum of Comparative Sculpture; and the University Department of Engineering requested support for a Mechanical Laboratory.³⁶

In the face of these competing claims the distribution of the remaining surplus proceeded slowly. A Joint Committee under Clark's convenership did not meet until July 1888. It reported back to the Exhibition Association on 16 November with the results of its

32 ECA Acc.423/16: Minute Book 2, 03 Feb 1887; *Scotsman*, 14 May 1887, p.11; ECA Acc.423/16: Minute Book 2, 14 Oct 1887.

33 *Scotsman*, 19 Mar 1887, p.8; 17 Dec 1887, p.10.

34 "Though lost to sight, to memory dear" ... What has become of the Exhibition surplus? *Scotsman*, 10 Nov 1887, p.4.

35 ECA Acc.423/13: Exhibition Association Minutes, 28 Sep 1887. The jeweller James Crichton costed the medals at £4,000, Minutes, 16 Dec 1886—when the surplus was estimated at over £15,000. Crichton could be seen to have an interest here: as 'Medallists to the Forestry Exhibition' his firm was well placed to pick up medal business, *Cameron's Guide through the International Exhibition of Industry, Science, and Art*, advertisement p.22.

36 ECA Acc.423/6: Exhibition correspondence; ECA Acc.423/16: Minute Book 2, 27 Dec 1887.

deliberations. £1,500 was earmarked for a reference collection for the proposed Public Library, a particular enthusiasm of Lord Provost Clark's.³⁷ £1,000 was granted to the Scottish Meteorological Society to develop its Ben Nevis Observatory.³⁸ £850 went to establish an Edinburgh Exhibition Trust to encourage future exhibitions.³⁹ The Edinburgh Choral Union which had featured so prominently in the royal ceremonials was awarded £100,⁴⁰ as was the Scottish Geographical Society; and the sum of £50 was contributed to the Exhibition of Decorative Handiwork being staged in the Royal Scottish Academy galleries.⁴¹

The largest award proposed by the Committee was also its most controversial. The sum of £2,000, more than a third of the residual surplus, was set aside as an honorarium to Sir James Gowans himself, in recognition of his services to the Exhibition. This was a long-standing intention. On 14 October 1886, when the Exhibition was at its peak and Gowans was acclaimed as its leading figure, a special meeting of the Executive had voted, in his absence, to make him such a grant.⁴² The legal obstacle—that the Articles of Association expressly prohibited any officer of the Exhibition benefitting from its proceeds—could be evaded, according to advice received by the Executive, if the gift was designated 'for services rendered'.⁴³ Whatever the legal position, Gowans stepped in after adverse

37 The Public Library project was established with a £50,000 donation from Andrew Carnegie; previous library proposals had been defeated by plebiscite. For Carnegie's gift and Clark's enthusiasm see *Scotsman*, 02 Oct 1886, p.10. The Committee disregarded their law agent Cuthbert's advice that the Exhibition grant was outwith their powers, since it would benefit Association members as Edinburgh ratepayers. ECA Acc.423/13: Exhibition Association Minutes, 04 Dec 1887.

38 A prestige Scottish scientific project currently in financial difficulties; the Society lobbied intensively for Exhibition funding. The grant was used to construct a low-level observatory in Fort William, see Marjory Roy, *The Ben Nevis Meteorological Observatory 1883–1904*. (2004). The high-level Observatory building had been Sydney Mitchell's first commission, NRS GD492/64/161; 67/1; 102/6: Mitchell scrapbooks. Sir Arthur, Sydney's father, was a supporter of the S.M.S.

39 ECA Acc.423/10: Declaration of Trust, 10 Apr 1889. The *Scotsman*, already exasperated by the Exhibition's aftermath, attacked this provision as striking against the voluntary principle: 'The generosity with which the public came forward with a guarantee fund for the Exhibition proves conclusively that no such fund as this is necessary', 19 Nov 1888, p.6.

40 'The society was at this time practically bankrupt', resulting in frequent calls on the guarantors of its annual concert series, Waddell, *History of the Edinburgh Choral Union*. (Edinburgh, 1908), p.197; see also p.66 above.

41 Exhibition reviewed *Scotsman*, 10 Nov 1888, p.11; *Evening News*, 28 Nov 1888, p.2.

42 ECA Acc.423/16: Minute Book 2, Special Meeting 14 Oct 1886.

43 *Dispatch*, 18 Oct 1886, p.2, claimed that the advice of the Lord Advocate had been taken—if so

comment. His letter published in all four Edinburgh newspapers on 22 October graciously declined any such reward: ‘the satisfactory results are due to others as well as myself’.⁴⁴

There matters rested for almost two years until, at the Executive Council meeting of 10 September 1888, the same £2,000 gift to Gowans was voted through.⁴⁵ The revived proposal ran into the determined censure of the *Scotsman*, always watchful for instances of jobbery in public life and with the Grand Hall fiasco still in mind. The paper’s criticism went to the heart of voluntary action in Edinburgh civil society. Gowans had acted in an honorary capacity as Chairman of the Exhibition Executive. The contribution of his time and abilities to the public good had been recognised in the esteem of his fellow citizens and rewarded by the bestowal of his knighthood by the monarch herself. The Exhibition surplus was in effect a public fund generated by the benevolence of the guarantors; the award of money from it, and the legal manoeuvres necessary to evade the provisions of the Articles of Association, reduced Gowans to ‘a sort of superior manager’. ‘One cannot well enjoy to the full both the praise and the pudding’.⁴⁶

Despite these strictures, Gowans’s supporters stuck doggedly to their scheme.⁴⁷ At the Exhibition Association meeting of 16 November called to authorise the final disbursement of the surplus, opposition to the contentious award at last emerged from Councillors Macpherson and Ritchie and the umbrella manufacturer David Taylor.⁴⁸ The proposal was swept through regardless; Gowans’s grant had become an overriding priority for Thomas Clark and the majority of the remaining Association members. Despite further erosion of the available surplus by legal fees the £2,000 remained inviolate while the amounts paid to the nominated good causes were proportionately reduced.⁴⁹

The motives behind this apparently reckless generosity were clear. Gowans had

this was J.H.A. Macdonald who was himself an exhibitor of his own inventions (#1034).

44 For example *Scottish News*, 22 Oct 1886, p.6.

45 ECA Acc.423/16: Minute Book 2, 10 Sep 1888.

46 *Scotsman*, 12 Sep 1888, p.6; *Dispatch*, 18 Sep 1888, p.2.

47 The affair surfaced in the professional press: ‘Two Thousand Pounds for “Honorary” Services’, *British Architect*, 31:12 (September 1888), p.200, picking up the *Scotsman* story.

48 ‘The Gowans Scandal’, *Dispatch*, 17 Nov 1888, p.3; *Scotsman*, 17 Nov 1888, p.6; 19 Nov 1888, p.6. John Macpherson was a temperance hotelier and a member of the Refreshment Committee as well as an Exhibition guarantor.

49 At the Exhibition Association winding-up meeting of 17 October 1889 the division of the residue, now whittled away to £5,447 4s 2d, was given as: Gowans £2,000; Edinburgh Public Library £1,436 6s 9d; Scottish Meteorological Society £957 11s 2d; Edinburgh Exhibition Trust £813 18s 6d; Scottish Geographical Society and Edinburgh Choral Union £95 15s 1d each; Exhibition of Decorative Handiwork £47 17s 1d. *Scotsman*, 18 Oct 1889, p.6.

suffered catastrophic misfortunes since the close of the Exhibition, and the colleagues who had worked closely with him and who attributed the success of the undertaking to his efforts wished to find a practical expression of their sympathy with his difficulties. Gowans had fallen seriously ill almost immediately after the close of the Exhibition. His breakdown had been caused, it was agreed, by his exertions in its prosecution.

Sir James Gowans ... lost his health in consequence of the services he rendered to the Exhibition ... Sir James was a strong man before the exhibition began ... and they all knew what it was before it closed. He sacrificed himself to the Exhibition night and day, and in all weathers, and suffered nothing to come in the way of doing his duty towards it.⁵⁰

Gowans's debilitating illness curtailed his public appearances. His attendance at the Exhibition business meetings was sporadic, and he was frequently absent from the Town Council and the Dean of Guild Court—though incapacity did not prevent his unanimous re-election as Dean in November of 1887, 1888 and 1889. His last substantial public pronouncement, a paper to the Edinburgh meeting of the National Association for the Advancement of Art in October 1889, was read by the engineer Allan Carter, his colleague from the Exhibition Executive.⁵¹

Gowans's financial affairs deteriorated along with his health. Precarious before the Exhibition, his position was exacerbated by his all-consuming involvement with its management. Supporters gathered round: in a show of bourgeois solidarity a subscription fund was opened in May 1887, ostensibly to recognise his achievements in public life and in the success of the Exhibition. As the chosen vehicle 'a testimonial to Lady Gowans should be the form adopted, as undoubtedly it would be the most gratifying and acceptable to Sir James';⁵² not only gratifying and acceptable but also expedient, as a means of securing the proceeds from any hovering creditors. By February 1888 matters had worsened. A deed of administration—effectively an admission of bankruptcy⁵³—was drawn up, but difficulties

50 Clark, at the Exhibition Association meeting of 16 November 1888, *Scotsman*, 17 Nov 1888, p.6.

51 Report, *Scotsman*, 31 Oct 1889, p.5; James Gowans, 'Municipal Legislation with Reference to Architecture', *Transactions of the National Association for the Advancement of Art and Its Application to Industry. Edinburgh Meeting. MDCCCLXXXIX*. (London, 1890); Duncan McAra, *Sir James Gowans, Romantic Rationalist*. (Edinburgh, 1975), p.49, gives Gowans's illness as prostatitis.

52 *Scotsman*, 06 May 1887, p.4; NRS GD282/13/257: Davidson & Syme W.S., Minute of meeting 05 May 1887 [marked 'Press Copy']; *DSA*. £500 had already been subscribed; the donors included Hedley and other figures from the Exhibition.

53 Gowans's financial crisis may well have been precipitated by the death of John Waddell (for

in securing the agreement of creditors persisted. Gowans's £2,000 grant from Exhibition funds could only be made 'provided that all the creditors have now agreed to the Trust Deed and that there is no danger of the sum to be voted to Sir James being attached by a creditor by arrestment or otherwise'.⁵⁴ Ratification at the meeting of 16 November 1888 only came after the Deed of Trust was finalised on 5 November.⁵⁵

While the *Scotsman* expressed the conventional sympathies with Gowans's health and financial difficulties, in the paper's view they did not affect the impropriety of the £2,000 award. While Gowans deserved compensation for his efforts and his losses, this should come not from the public funds of the Exhibition, once again reducing him to a 'paid servant'. His meritorious service should be recognised by individuals, privately, by the testimonial fund mechanism which, although the *Scotsman* refrained from mentioning this, had already been tried and apparently found inadequate. For the newspaper, the mismanagement of the Exhibition surplus had irredeemably tarnished Gowans's reputation. His further involvement in the 'Craiglockhart Hill "job"', the municipal purchase of unusable open ground to the alleged advantage of property developers, Gowans included, in the Craiglockhart area was pilloried by the paper. Gowans, attempting to use the Town Council as a forum in which to pursue what was now a vendetta, was in effect shouted down by his fellow Council members.⁵⁶

Gowans's last public appearance on 30 May 1890 recalled the happier days of the 1886 Exhibition. A long-delayed portrait of Lothian by W.E. Lockhart, the parting gift from the

whom see p.105 above) on 17 January 1888, rather than by the dealings with the Caledonian Railway—which resulted in a substantial award of compensation to Gowans—given in *D.S.A.* Waddell seems to have been acting as an unofficial banker to Gowans, NRS GD282/13/251: Gowans to Waddell, statements, 15 Jan 1885, 31 Dec 1887. Clark was also a £3,000 creditor. For 'confidential' bankruptcy agreements, see James Carroll, Nicholas J. Morgan, and Michael S. Moss, 'Building by Numbers: The Lifecycle of Scottish Building Firms, 1793–1913', in Philippe Jobert and Michael S. Moss (eds.), *The Birth and Death of Companies: An Historical Perspective*. (Carnforth, 1990), pp.206–207.

54 ECA Acc.423/6: Marchbank to Davidson & Syme W.S. [Gowans's solicitors], 31 Oct 1888. The Executive and Association meetings of 15 October 1888 were both adjourned because of an unexplained 'painful matter' concerning Gowans (ECA Acc.423/16: Minute Book 2, Acc.423/13, Exhibition Association Minutes; *Scotsman*, 16 Oct 1886, p.4)—presumably the Court of Session action by J.A. Robertson, to the abandonment of which this correspondence refers.

55 NRS CS46/1890 Dec 3: Court of Session warrants. Other than carefully-coded remarks in the *Scotsman* and *Dispatch*, no public reference was made to Gowans's bankruptcy.

56 *Scotsman*, 09 Jan 1889, p.6; 23 Jan 1889, p.6, for editorials on the 'job'; 06 Feb 1889, p.9 for Gowans's Council appearance.

Exhibition Association to its president, was at last finished. Gowans, despite his advancing illness, was able to make the presentation; Lothian, now Scottish Secretary and an honorary Burgess of the City of Edinburgh, in turn remembered the triumph of four years before.

Looking back over an interval of four years ... and recalling the faces before him, which he then saw so often, he could not refrain from saying that his recollections of that Exhibition ... were of the most pleasant character ... Of all the Exhibitions he had anything to do with, that one seemed to him to carry the palm for go and success from beginning to end.⁵⁷

Sir James Gowans, whose efforts on its behalf had brought him popular acclaim for this 'go and success', but whose fortunes and public reputation had suffered in its aftermath, died less than a month later.⁵⁸

A model exhibition

The Edinburgh Exhibition closed with its organisers well pleased with their show. They stressed its improving qualities and were at pains to reject the characterisation as a bazaar, tainted with commercialism and triviality, which had followed the project from its inception. On the contrary, the Edinburgh Exhibition, in Gowans's eyes at least, was exemplary:

he had had taken the opinion not of himself, but of men from all parts of the world ... men who had seen exhibitions all over the globe; and they had told him that having seen all these exhibitions, they had not seen anything so good or full of instruction, so full of everything that was desirable, than their little Exhibition on the West Meadows of Edinburgh.⁵⁹

But the event's success was a matter for more general pride in civic achievement.

It is within our knowledge that visitors fresh from the 'Colinderies' and the Liverpool Exhibition have been greatly impressed by the skill of the arrangements here—the judgement shown in the planning of the buildings, the taste and neatness with which the exhibits have been laid out, and the endless facilities for the comfort and the

57 *Scotsman*, 31 May 1890, p.6. Lothian was appointed Scottish Secretary in March 1887 and received the Freedom of the City on 7 June; *Scotsman*, 08 Jun 1887, p.9. Lockhart's (p.94 above) £315 fee had been held back from the Exhibition funds.

58 At midnight on 25 June. For obituaries, see *Scotsman*, 27 Jun 1890, p.5, and Rev James Macgregor's memoir, 30 Jun 1890, p.5; *Glasgow Herald*, 27 Jun 1890, p.6; *Dispatch*, 26 Jun 1890, p.2. He received a public funeral with the Town Council in attendance, *Scotsman*, 01 Jul 1890, p.4.

59 Gowans in expansive mood at the exhibitors' dinner, *Scotsman*, 28 Oct 1886, p.6.

convenience of the sightseers.⁶⁰

These skilful arrangements and confident management, as yet unblemished by the setbacks to come, could only enhance Edinburgh's reputation in exhibitionary circles.

As interest in similar ventures developed in other cities, the Edinburgh Exhibition took a part as a model for future events. Its details were naturally scrutinised by the organisers of the upcoming exhibitions of the Jubilee year of 1887. A sixty-strong delegation from the Corporation of Newcastle arrived on an official visit to Edinburgh in August 1886. Among their number was J.R. Somers Vine, the director-designate of the planned International Mining Exhibition; the party spent several hours in a detailed examination of the installation on the Meadows.⁶¹ The Edinburgh Exhibition had also attracted attention in Manchester, where a much more ambitious show was once again under consideration. Amongst the correspondents lavishing praise on the Edinburgh event was Ellis Lever, the early protagonist of a Manchester Exhibition now riding a wave of enthusiasm for the revived project. On the basis of detailed information on costs and takings obtained from the Edinburgh organisers, Lever could proclaim that '[o]ur Scottish friends have shown us what faith and courage can do'.⁶² A deputation of the newly formed Manchester Exhibition Executive duly examined the Edinburgh facilities in October 'with a view to employing their information in carrying out their own undertaking'.⁶³

These exploratory missions recalled the Edinburgh Executive's own investigations at South Kensington and Antwerp, and provided further evidence of the workings of Alexander Geppert's exhibitionary networks of personnel, exhibits, and knowledge.⁶⁴ In the afterlife of the Edinburgh Exhibition, reputations won there allowed individuals to progress in the emerging profession of exhibition management. H.A. Hedley was recruited as General Manager at Edinburgh from a relatively minor role at South Kensington; despite his brusque manner he received much of the credit for the event's efficient direction. By December 1886 he was confirmed as manager of the projected Glasgow Exhibition of 1888: 'to be sure Mr H. is said to be a rather stand-off gentleman [but] a splendid worker'.⁶⁵

60 *Scotsman*, 01 Nov 1886, p.6.

61 *Scotsman*, 14 Aug 1886, p.6.

62 *Manchester Guardian*, 02 Jun 1886, p.3; see also 01 Jun 1886, p.8. For Lever, see p.31 above.

63 *Scotsman*, 22 Oct 1886, p.5.

64 p.95 above.

65 *Bailie*, 24 Nov 1886, p.5; see also 08 Dec 1886, p.1 for 'a certain high-handed manner' on Hedley's part. Cf. Alistair Goldsmith's view of Hedley, p.97.

Stand-off or not, Hedley returned to Glasgow in the same role for the 1901 event. The Edinburgh electrical engineer W.A. Bryson's supervision of the Edinburgh lighting installations had been highly praised; he became successively Electrician at the Manchester Exhibition in 1887 and Engineer and Electrician to the Glasgow Exhibition of 1888 before returning for the 1890 Edinburgh Exhibition.⁶⁶ Refreshment contractor Alexander Mackenzie Ross went on to a brief but spectacular career in exhibition catering: at Manchester in 1887, where he offered the unheard-of price of £43,000 for his concession, and at the *Grand concours des sciences et de l'industrie* at Brussels in 1888 before also returning to Edinburgh in 1890.⁶⁷

Just as personnel circulated between exhibitions, so did things. The exhibitors who turned up at exhibition after exhibition, often bringing their fixtures—like Van Houten's cocoa pavilion—with them, were conspicuously pursuing marketing strategies based on such exposure. And as with things, concepts: the exhibitionary networks transmitted ideas for attractions. Distinctive features at Edinburgh reappeared at succeeding events. The Newcastle Exhibition featured both an Artisan Section and a model dwelling; though this embodiment of sanitary improvement had now become a middle-class villa, with servant's room, rather than a working-class tenement.⁶⁸ The Manchester Exhibition included a representation of an 'Artisan's Living Room, Bedroom and Parlour', 'suitable for persons of limited means'; and while there was no Women's Section, the Women's Industries exhibit in the extensive Irish section echoed Ishbel Aberdeen's triumph at Edinburgh.⁶⁹ The Glasgow Exhibition of 1888 would similarly import these innovative Edinburgh features in its Artisan Section, and in a Women's Art and Industries department where once again Hannah Rosebery served as a vice-convenor and Shetland knitters were again on display—though without their jawbone canopy.⁷⁰ There was however no attempt to replicate the Model

66 *Official Catalogues* of the exhibitions concerned.

67 *Dispatch*, 13 May 1890, p.4; Walter Tomlinson, *The Pictorial Record of the Royal Jubilee Exhibition, Manchester, 1887*. (Manchester, 1888), p.142. The Brussels *Concours* was a relatively minor event by European standards: 'l'exposition n'eut qu'un succès médiocre', Adolphe Démy, *Essai historique sur les expositions universelles de Paris*. (Paris, 1907), p.324. Samuel Lee Bapty, manager of the Liverpool 1886 and Manchester Exhibitions, was Commissioner General for its British Section; he went on to manage the disastrous 1890 Edinburgh event.

68 Royal Mining, Engineering and Industrial Exhibition, *Guide to the Exhibition and to Objects of Interest in Newcastle and Neighbourhood*. (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1887).

69 Royal Jubilee Exhibition, 1887 (Manchester), *Official Catalogue*, #220, #1165.

70 International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art, Glasgow 1888, *Official Catalogue*. (Edinburgh, 1888), #1781 for the Shetland knitters.

Tenement or to display any form of ideal housing at Glasgow.⁷¹

The fashion for historical recreation established by Old London and Old Edinburgh was continued at both the Newcastle and Manchester Exhibitions. Newcastle organisers attempted to appeal to local loyalties with a paper-on-timber replica of the Old Tyne Bridge ‘spanning the still waters of Lodge’s Reservoir’.⁷² The Manchester contribution was more ambitious: Old Manchester and Salford, another grouping of accurately-reproduced historic buildings following the pattern of London and Edinburgh, was patently an attempt to elaborate a history for the paradigmatic shock city of industrialisation.⁷³ Like Old Edinburgh, Old Manchester was populated with a cast of costumed attendants, though here the result was a glorious jumble of Roman centurions, Marie Stuarts and Jacobites.⁷⁴ Rather than attempt such an ambitious ensemble, historical reconstruction at the 1888 Glasgow Exhibition took the form of the re-created Bishop’s Castle, a single isolated construction of timber and painted canvas which nevertheless housed a museum-standard collection of archaeological and historical artifacts.⁷⁵ Remote as the Castle was from the main event, the Glasgow organisers could not entirely ignore the attractions of the past in the midst of the modern present which was so pleasing to international exhibition visitors.⁷⁶

For exhibition projects had taken off in Glasgow. The plans thrown into disarray in the summer of 1885 were reanimated by the undoubted success of the Edinburgh event, though the Glasgow International Exhibition of Industry Science and Art of 1888 was to be constructed on a much grander scale than its Edinburgh namesake. In the extent of its Kelvinside site and the size of its buildings, its immediate comparator was the previous

71 Perilla Kinchin and Julie Kinchin, *Glasgow’s Great Exhibitions 1888, 1901, 1911, 1938, 1988*. (Wendlebury, 1988), p.86 detect in this an unwillingness to publicise Glasgow’s poor housing conditions.

72 R.J.C., ‘Old Tyne Bridge’, *Monthly Chronicle of North-Country Lore and Legend*, 1:1 (March 1887), p.23; Royal Mining, Engineering and Industrial Exhibition, *Official Guide*, p.45.

73 See p.135, above. Though Old Manchester was a free-standing construction rather than a street enclosed within an exhibition complex, in concept and plan it followed its London and Edinburgh predecessors closely. Alan Kidd, ‘The Industrial City and Its Pre-Industrial Past: The Manchester Royal Jubilee Exhibition of 1887’, *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, 89 (1995), fig.19 p.64.

74 Tomlinson, *Pictorial Record*, p.127ff.

75 *The Book of the Bishop’s Castle*. (Edinburgh, 1888); ‘a collection phenomenal in the history of international exhibitions’, W.G.B., ‘The Bishop’s Castle, Glasgow International Exhibition’, *Athenaeum*, 3167 (July 1888), p.38; Kinchin, *Glasgow’s Great Exhibitions*, p.45, on the inadequacies of the building (a.k.a. the Bishop’s *Palace*).

76 Wilson Smith, ‘Old London, Old Edinburgh: Constructing Historic Cities’, in Marta Filipová (ed.), *Cultures of International Exhibitions, 1840–1940*. (Farnham, forthcoming 2015).

year's Manchester Royal Jubilee Exhibition. It was this event which the Glasgow projectors, managers and their bourgeois supporters strove to outdo, not least in the matter of visitor numbers.⁷⁷ The bombastic slogan 'Manchester and Edinburgh may *try* it, but Glasgow can *do* it' caught the assertive and competitive tone perfectly.⁷⁸ In its size and its industrial, commercial and social makeup Manchester was a more natural competitor for Glasgow élites than the Scottish capital. However, in the autumn of 1886 the Manchester event lay in the future. The organisers of the reinvigorated Glasgow project had only the achievements of the Edinburgh Exhibition against which to measure their prospects.

The Glasgow Industrial Exhibition which opened at Burnbank on 25 November 1886, less than four weeks after the close of the Edinburgh event, served as an immediate demonstration of the city's exhibitionary potential.⁷⁹ The event had been organised in the space of three months by Ernest Barker, all the while pursuing his more dubious activities as an exhibition agent at Edinburgh. Many of the three hundred exhibitors—among them the Singer Company, the Glasgow Asylum for the Blind and the enterprising Andrew Beveridge, purveyor of sauces and pickles—had transferred directly from the Edinburgh Exhibition, no doubt encouraged by Barker.⁸⁰ More exotically, a painted canvas representation of an Indian street evoked the mood, if not the reality, of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition.⁸¹ While the Burnbank exhibition was Barker's initiative, he had secured municipal support for the undertaking. However, recently-elected Lord Provost James King, opening the show, was at pains to point out that

it in no sense became a rival to or took the freshness off the great international exhibition which was to be held in the city two years hence. Rather ... it would constitute a whet to the appetite, and cause them to enjoy to the full extent the International Exhibition when it was opened.⁸²

77 See Kinchin, *Glasgow's Great Exhibitions*, pp.52–53, for Glasgow season ticket holders' efforts to inflate the turnstile count.

78 Kinchin, *Glasgow's Great Exhibitions*, pp.17, 19–20.

79 *Herald*, 25 Nov 1886, p.5, for a full description. The Burnbank Volunteer drill-hall was a favourite site for Glasgow exhibitions. It had been extended to provide 35,000ft² of exhibition space, around one-third of the 102,000ft² available at Edinburgh.

80 For Barker see *Bailie*, 26 Nov 1886, pp.1–2.

81 A more authentic Indian street was to feature prominently at the 1888 Glasgow Exhibition, Stana Nenadic, 'Exhibiting India in Nineteenth-Century Scotland and the Impact on Commerce, Industry and Popular Culture', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 34:1 (April 2014), pp.79–82.

82 *Herald*, 26 Nov 1886, p.4. King was one of the patrons of the Edinburgh Exhibition.

Burnbank heralded a greater event to come

Organisation of this Glasgow International Exhibition was meanwhile gathering momentum. The first move, a submission by Bailie James Dickson to the Glasgow Parks Committee on 15 July 1886, was plainly a response to the Edinburgh event as well as a resumption of the stalled initiative. ‘This, the first official record of the scheme, was due to the energy of the gentlemen ... who for some weeks previously had been actively discussing the possibility of rivalling the “Show” in Modern Athens’.⁸³ As presented to Glasgow Town Council in October, Dickson’s proposals were relatively unambitious: a Scottish National Exhibition based around the industries of the West of Scotland, with a guarantee fund target of £50,000.⁸⁴ While a majority welcomed the proposal enthusiastically, hesitations about the suitability of Glasgow as an exhibition centre, and the capabilities of its human resources, were repeated. ‘It should be remembered that Glasgow had little or nothing to attract people to it, and that they had not a man like Sir James Gowans’.⁸⁵ The *Scottish News* concurred.

The Exhibition is just one of the attractions of Edinburgh, and it has naturally been visited by crowds of tourists this summer, who were attracted to Edinburgh not primarily by the show on the Meadows, but by the scenic and historic charms of the most picturesque city in Europe. Glasgow, on the other hand, when contrasted with Edinburgh is comparatively poor in legendary and historic associations, and its scenery and atmosphere may well be passed over in silence.⁸⁶

The growth of the Glasgow guarantee fund silenced these doubts. By late October the total exceeded £70,000 and pledges were still pouring in, in an impassioned display of individual and corporate support for the Exhibition project. The contrast with the canvassing and re-canvassing necessary for the Edinburgh organisers to achieve their much smaller guarantee was stark.⁸⁷ The Glasgow undertaking blossomed as the fund grew. ‘Who

83 *Cameron’s Guide through the Glasgow Exhibition, 1888*. (Edinburgh, 1888), p.7.

84 Though this was twice the original Edinburgh objective.

85 Bailie James McFarlane, quoted *Dispatch*, 07 Oct 1886, p.2; *Herald*, 07 Oct 1886, p.9, gives a full report of the animated debate. Both Dickson and McFarlane had been members of the Edinburgh Executive and sporadically attended meetings. Lord Provost King assumed the chairmanship of the Glasgow Executive in November, silencing talk of ‘no Sir James Gowans’, *Quiz*, 19 Nov 1886, p.104.

86 *Scottish News*, 07 Oct 1886, p.6. The account also noted Edinburgh’s ‘homogenous, amusement-loving population’.

87 *Herald*, 30 Oct 1886, p.4, lists the guarantors to date. There were already thirty-seven pledges of £1,000 or over, compared to seven in the entire Edinburgh fund, Table 2-2, p.70 above. The

would not be brave with a hundred thousand pounds behind him?’ The focus broadened to become more confidently international.⁸⁸ At the same time, whatever consideration initially given to the involvement of other Scottish municipalities—so central to the Edinburgh Exhibition and its assertion of Edinburgh’s capital status—dissolved in the flood of local money.

In Edinburgh, Lord Provost Clark felt obliged to offer the Glasgow fund his Town Council’s unsolicited guarantee; but the pledge of £2,500 was already an insignificant speck in the total.⁸⁹ When emissaries of the Glasgow Executive reached Edinburgh in March 1887, they advised the Council that they were not seeking any further pledges. Rather than establishing an Edinburgh Committee, they requested a mere four Council delegates, including the totemic but now incapacitated Gowans, to join the Executive. And the Council was left in no doubt that the prime purpose of the Glasgow undertaking was to showcase ‘the great industries of the West of Scotland’.⁹⁰ As well as a celebration of civic pride and self-assurance, the Glasgow International Exhibition was to be an expression of local rather than national patriotism.⁹¹

The contrast between the efforts of Glasgow and Edinburgh organisers to construct ideal representations of their respective cities mirrored their different social and economic structures and the exercise of power and influence within them. Glasgow industrial and commercial élites, entrepreneurial, competitive and outward-looking, protective of their place in the second city of Empire, compared themselves naturally to similarly-scaled

Glasgow fund eventually reached £300,000.

88 *Scottish News*, 30 Oct 1886, p.6; *Herald*, 30 Oct 1886, p.4, gives a vote of 35–7 in favour of internationality at the first organising meeting: though, as at Edinburgh, this meant little to the final content of the show, Kinchin, *Glasgow’s Great Exhibitions*, p.34.

89 In fact there was considerable opposition to the offer: *Scotsman*, 06 Nov 1886, p.12. *Herald*, 06 Nov 1886, p.4, quotes Gowans: ‘If the thing was to be done let it be done in a graceful way’. Glasgow Town Council had pledged £5,000; this and Edinburgh’s £2,500 were the only municipal contributions to the guarantee fund, International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art, Glasgow 1888, *Official Catalogue*, pp.48–51.

90 *Scotsman*, 30 Mar 1887, p.9. The Glasgow delegation included Bailie Dickson, and Hedley.

91 ‘Despite the presence of Scottish Art and Antiquities the Exhibition lacked a truly Scottish character’, Jonathon Kinghorn, *Glasgow’s International Exhibition, 1888*. (Glasgow, 1988), p.28; though John MacKenzie discerns a couthy national feeling in the event: ‘It was not a remote Scottishness ... but a Scottishness that gave a distinct meaning to Glasgow’s industry and place in the world’, ‘“The Second City of the Empire”: Glasgow—Imperial Municipality’, in Felix Driver and David Gilbert (eds.), *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity*. (Manchester, 1999), pp.227–28, in the context of the city as an imagined community, p.221.

year	city	exhibition	visits	guarantee		total income	profit/loss	space		awards	acreage	
				fund	>			charges	grounds		buildings	
1882	Edinburgh	Fisheries	>132,000	>£1215	£5,845	£1,400	medals, cash prizes					
1883	London	Fisheries	2,703,051	£45,000	£162,903	£14,752	no medals	no			22	
1884	London	Health	4,153,390	£36,000	£237,048	£15,580	no medals	no			22	
1884	Edinburgh	Forestry	>500,000	£6,899	£22,957	£292	medals	1s./ft ²				
1885	London	Inventions	3,760,581	£96,000	£196,312	-£18,089	medals	no			22	
1885	Antwerp	Exposition <i>universelle</i>	3,500,000			broke even	diploma with bronze medal	fr70/m ² =5s.2d./ft ²			54	25
1886	London	Colonial & Indian	5,550,745	£218,430	£249,861	£34,642	no	no		no	22	10
1886	Edinburgh	Industry Science & Art	2,769,632	£36,400	£105,326	£5,555	diploma for medals	2s./ft ² [except Old Edinburgh]			25	7
1886	Liverpool	Navigation, Travelling, Commerce & Manufacture	2,676,515	£87,474	£131,032	-£19,135	diploma with bronze medal	no			35	9
1887	Manchester	Royal Jubilee Exhibition	4,765,137	£115,307	£268,290	£46,977	no	2s.6d./ft ²		no	45	14
1887	Newcastle- upon-Tyne	Mining, Engineering & Industrial	2,092,273	£35,000	£88,357	£3,762	diploma	2s.6d./ft ²			31.5	
1888	Glasgow	Industry Science & Art	5,309,196	c£300,000	£225,929	£41,080	no	2s./ft ²		no	66	16

Table 6-1 Comparative statistics of British exhibitions of the 1880s. Source: Wood, 'Memorandum on Exhibitions'; Tomlinson, *Pictorial Record*; Herbert, *Fish and Fisheries*; Mill and Rattray, *Forestry and Forest Products*; Scotsman; *Glasgow Herald*; *Newcastle Courant*; *St James's Gazette*. The total of visits given for the 1888 Glasgow Exhibition is net of attendants' admissions

conglomerations such as Manchester. The two cities' exhibitions turned out to be similarly prodigious in extent and achievement. The 1888 Exhibition laid the foundation for Glasgow's rise as the premier British exhibition city;⁹² Edinburgh organisers had to settle for a more restricted compass and reputation.

Conclusion: six months in a city

The comparison of individual exhibitions, and their host cities, returns attention to the examination of the great exhibition in itself as a phenomenon of Victorian urban life. The great exhibitions were quintessential institutions of modernity. In the complex of exhibitionary institutions they occupied a space between the educative confines of the museum, art gallery and library—facilities provided by the modern municipality for its contemplative citizens—and the commercial territory of the department store. The tension between education and commerce was heightened by the pressures on exhibitors as increasing competition and the marketing techniques of branding and advertising led on the one hand to spectacular and competitive displays, and on the other the expectation of direct commercial benefit from participation. The resulting atmosphere of commercialisation, of the bazaar, was decried by commentators but became an inescapable feature of the exhibition experience. Furthermore, the exposition of education and improvement was insufficient to continue to draw the mass attendance which the great exhibitions had created but now depended on for their narrative of continuous growth. Entertainment increasingly intruded into the contemplative space of the exhibition: the traditional fair was reborn in a modern form, as pleasure garden or mechanical funfair.

Thus to the moment of 1886. The metropolitan tradition—hitherto the defining attribute of great exhibitions—had languished in Britain since 1862 and the apparent decline of London as an exhibition capital. It was re-established in the specialised South Kensington shows of the 1880s, though these events rejected universal coverage in favour of the orthodoxy of less ambitious themed subject matter. At the same time the bourgeois leadership of cities outside London, resourceful and self-confident, could fasten on exhibition projects as another means to aggrandise their municipality and express their local patriotism against the claims of competitors. 1886 saw the culmination of the one tendency in the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, the last event in the South Kensington series; and the

92 Paul Greenhalgh, 'The Art and Industry of Mammon: International Exhibitions, 1851–1901', in John M. MacKenzie (ed.), *The Victorian Vision*. (London, 2001), pp.265–79, 275–76.

launch of the other in Edinburgh and Liverpool, the first large-scale international exhibitions outside London.

The contrast between these latter two events prompted Patrick Geddes to remark on ‘the perfect way in which they reflect the strong and weak sides of the community organising them’.⁹³ Liverpool, ‘a great maritime city’, staged a more international exhibition; though its Indian parade, its animal shows and its Canadian Tobogganing can be taken as symptoms of the ‘profuse vulgarity and monumental ugliness’ which Geddes found there. Edinburgh’s venture, on the other hand, while ‘provincial’, displayed ‘[a] comparatively artistic and architectural character ... thanks to the longer tradition of culture of the latter city’. Like South Kensington, both events turned out to be themed: and the themes in turn displayed the characteristics of their host cities. Liverpool created the ‘Shipperies’. At Edinburgh, nominally universal after the specialised Fisheries and Forestry events, the theme was Scottishness itself.

And so, finally, to the Edinburgh International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art of 1886, and to the experience of the three groups this study has identified as participants. The visitors were drawn in by the excitement of the social event of that summer. They were enticed not only by spectacular exhibits but also by the other attractions—the music, fireworks, sports tournaments, balloon ascents and Highland games—which confirmed the turn to entertainment as an exhibition crowd-pleaser. This pleasure was demonstrated in the mass attendance figures of the Exhibition’s latter days. For the exhibitors, whose predominantly Scottish origins confirmed the undertaking’s status as a national enterprise, participation involved a commercial calculation: the search for contracts, customers or reputation. Inevitably, some retired disappointed, to join the caravan to their next event in Newcastle, Manchester or Glasgow.

It was the organisers, however, to whom the Exhibition’s success was due—and for which they were not ashamed to take the credit. Mobilising the resources of their own middle-class associational culture they created the palace in the Meadows which attracted exhibitors and entranced visitors. The metaphor of struggle, of Clark’s acorn and oak, seems apt. The organisers had little experience and few precedents to guide them. In only fifteen months they raised the virtual capital of the guarantee fund, attracted the support from Glasgow and other Scottish burghs essential to their portrayal of Edinburgh’s leadership as a capital city, elaborated a management structure embodying local knowledge

93 Patrick Geddes, *Industrial Exhibitions and Modern Progress*, (Edinburgh, 1887), p. 8; subsequent quotations in this paragraph from this source. See also p.164 above.

and expertise—including that of Geddes’s artists and architects—and erected the buildings and fitted them out to house the Exhibition.

In this ephemeral complex in the Meadows the performances of the Exhibition were acted out. It has been characterised in this study as an ideal city, an idealised representation of its creators’ vision of Edinburgh itself. Beside the modernity of the great exhibition captured in the displays of technology, industry and merchandise, the visitor was invited to view the symbols of Scottish national history, and to be immersed in the historic city of Old Edinburgh. The recourse to history in the midst of modernity which characterised the real Edinburgh, and the city’s claims to this history as the capital of the Scottish nation were thus dramatised. The possibilities of improvement in the historic city were raised by the display of the Model Tenement. The Exhibition city found a place for civic ceremonial, for royal pomp and splendour; and also for artisan creativity and the women’s movement. No matter what disputes and controversies arose in the course of those six months of 1886, the ideal city of the Exhibition stood as a depiction of Edinburgh.

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GCA **Glasgow City Archives**

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