



**REPORT ON THE CANONGATE PROJECT  
May – June 2008**



Report by CCF February 2009



Report Launch at the Scottish Storytelling Centre 21<sup>st</sup> Feb 09

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Campaigners outside City Chambers the day Caltongate passed was by CEC Feb 6<sup>th</sup> 2008

## THE CANONGATE PROJECT: FINAL REPORT

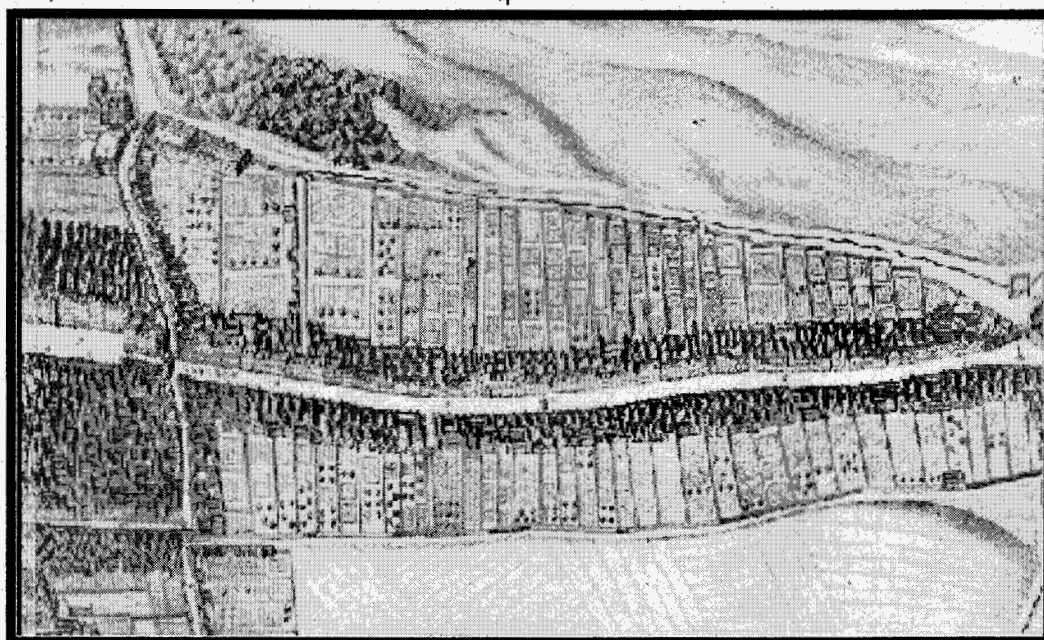
### 1. 0. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. WHO WE ARE

The Canongate Community Forum formed in 2005 in response to the proposed “Caltongate” development. We have become better known by the acronym SOOT - Save Our Old Town – our campaign in particular against the “Caltongate” proposal by developers Mountgrange which demands the demolition of listed buildings and the displacement of affordable housing to make way for a luxury hotel on the Canongate. The forum is striving to make it possible for community involvement in all proposed developments in the Old Town, and to give a voice to the local community.

We are a group of local residents and property owners who love the Old Town of Edinburgh and think it is a great place to live. We believe however that the needs of the residential population of the Old Town are not always correctly balanced against the needs of commercial interests such as tourism and property development for short term individual gain. If allowed to carry on unchallenged, this imbalance could eventually erode entirely the genuine historic character of a city centre which has been continuously inhabited since medieval times. Commerce is a necessary activity, but good cities depend also on a sense of shared civic purpose.

We accept the need for re-development in some areas of the Canongate. We welcomed the development on the old brewery sites to the south of the Canongate which reinterpreted the traditional herringbone pattern in a creative way. We have established good working relationships with local heritage agencies such as The Cockburn Association and The Edinburgh World Heritage Trust, with whom we have common ground, but our agenda is driven by the needs of the present community which inhabits the historic town fabric.



*Canongate section of Birds-Eye view of Edinburgh in 1647 by James Gordon of Rothiemay*

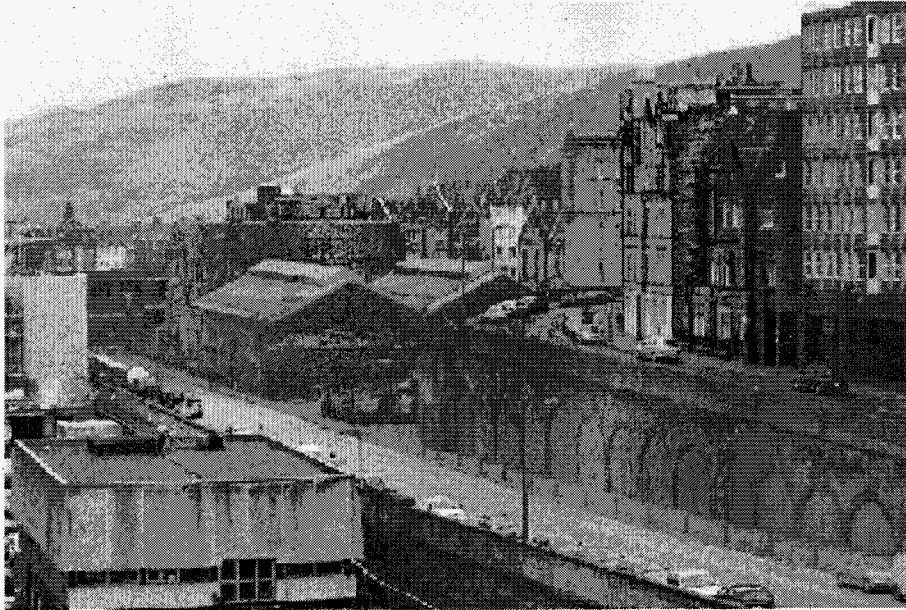
## 1.2. WHERE WE ARE

The Old Town of Edinburgh is a cultural heritage site of global significance and it also provides homes for many residents. The total population of the City Centre Ward (which also includes parts of the New Town) is about 22 000. The Old Town grew around a single long street running from the Castle to Holyrood Palace. The Canongate is at the Holyrood end. Until 1856 it was a separate burgh, outside the Edinburgh city walls, and has always had a largely residential character, which it has retained to this day.

Where much of the upper part of the Royal Mile has tourist shops at ground level, the Canongate has residential access doors and windows to dwellings. Housing development has continued into the twentieth century, on a reasonably large scale, much of it well designed and contributing in a positive way to the area. Many families have grown up here within living memory.

There is a noticeable lack of simple support services such as decent provision for rubbish storage, play space for children and shops to buy food. Most of the back greens and open space has fallen into disrepair or is being used by local businesses as bin storage.

There is identified Common Good Land and assets in the Old Town and still many more to be identified. The Common Good and its account are managed by the City of Edinburgh Council on behalf of the owners, the city's residents. The forum's secretary Sally Richardson became one of three petitioners calling on the Scottish Government for greater protection and legislation for Scotland's Common Good, when it was discovered that the former vegetable market on East Market Street, which forms part of the land deal to Caltongate developers Mountgrange was Common Good.



**Council & Common Good Land & Assets in red which are in Land Sale to Mountgrange  
(photo Andy Wightman)**

We wholeheartedly agree with Common Good expert Andy Wightman when he says “There are literally hundreds of millions of pounds floating about in the form of previously unaccounted for assets, undervalued assets and underused assets. This wealth belongs to the local community and not to the Council and can be used to begin a process of civic renewal and physical regeneration, to deliver wealth and prosperity, and to give back to towns across Scotland some self respect, belief and power to better the welfare of their community. “

### **1.3. WHAT WE WANT**

**Genuine Community Consultation is required.** The needs of the existing community should be established, as a necessary precursor to the planning of economic development. We need professionals and statutory bodies which work to serve the needs of the wider community as opposed to the narrow vested interests of the private developer.

### **1.4. HOW WE MIGHT GET IT**

With a view to achieving this aim, we have undertaken this research project. We will distribute our results as widely as possible, and seek all the ways we can to make our voice heard. We have established two key aims:

**1. How can we increase a wider sense of community amongst residents?** To achieve this we aim to get objective answers to the following questions:

- What is the demographic make up of residents in this community?
- What are the barriers that need to be overcome to encourage wider community involvement & participation?
- What processes would encourage more people to actively contribute to their community?
- What physical improvements (new facilities and services) would enable more people to actively become involved in their community?



**John Thompson CCF Treasurer in Project Shop**

## **2. What are the views of local residents about proposed capital developments in this area?**

To achieve this we aim to get objective answers to the following questions:

- What are the positive and negative things about living in this community?
- How do local residents really feel about specific proposed developments especially those relating to common good land?
- What gaps in support systems exist and what do local residents want to see in this community? (A wish list for alternative use of assets)

*If we can define, identify and measure what this community is, and discover what barriers and aspirations exist, then we can use this information to make a 'people's plan' for future development*

Money talks; everyone knows that; so we need to shout louder.



**Project Shop 8 St Mary's Street**

### **1.5. WHAT WE HAVE DONE SO FAR**

To begin with, we discovered, from the 2001 census that, in comparison with the Edinburgh city wide figures, the city centre population is:

- Quite young – a substantial number in the 16 to 44 age group
- Less likely to have cars
- More likely to walk to work or study than use any form of mechanical transport
- More likely to be living alone but with a roughly average number of households of over 3 people
- More likely to be male than female
- Less likely to own their own home

We established a team of local volunteers recruited from both from our community of long term residents, and also, somewhat unexpectedly, from the transient population of students, artists and part time residents, which is a vital and exciting part of the Old Town residential mix.

We intended to run this project in 2007 in the hope of using the results to influence the Planning Committee's decision on the Caltongate application. We tried to obtain the use of the Canongate Venture, one of the listed buildings sitting on common good land, which is currently standing empty and is scheduled for demolition if Caltongate goes ahead. We failed in this, for reasons unknown. No other existing community buildings were available.

However, in the Spring of 2008 (after the Committee had approved the application) we did obtain, with the help of one of our local councillors, a shop unit in St Mary's Street, which we occupied for 6 weeks as an information gathering centre and from which we ran a programme of events. We prepared a questionnaire and collected data from visitors to help compile answers to our key questions, and asked visitors to draw maps of the area as they saw it. This report summarises our methods and findings.



**Canongate Venture (North Canongate School) – To be demolished for Hotel's conference centre**

## **2.0. BACKGROUND**

### **2.1. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE OLD TOWN SINCE 1945**

At the end of WW2 the Old Town was an area of contrasts. Whilst it retained its national, legal and administrative functions – the Castle and Holyrood Palace, St. Giles, the law courts, the City Chambers – many of the buildings lining the Royal Mile were in a sadly dilapidated state. Along the Cowgate and both sides of the Canongate extensive areas of industry had developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, including several breweries. From the 60s onwards many of the smaller breweries closed, as did the Oliver and Boyd printing works on the west side of St. Mary's Street. Many parts of the Royal Mile became like stage sets – buildings or even mere facades to the street with nothing behind them.

Apart from its dilapidation the most serious threat to the integrity of the Old Town came from the 1946 Abercrombie Report's recommendation for a city inner ring road, the eastern flank of which would have connected Leith St. to the Pleasance, cutting across (perhaps under) the Royal Mile on the line of St. Mary's St. By the mid-60s this had been upgraded by the City Engineer to a 6 lane motorway! This proposal, together with the University's plans to extend its campus eastwards, blighted a whole swathe of housing within and immediately to the south of the Old Town.





**The Macrae Tenements in Canongate to be demolished for hotel & luxury housing**

The City Council set about replacing or renovating the worst of the housing, continuing the pre-war work by E J MacRae, the City Architect. Along the Canongate arose new housing designed by Robert Hurd and Basil Spence. Other parts of the Old Town were less fortunate. Concerns for public safety led to substantial areas of poor housing being demolished leaving gaps in the Royal Mile, the one between Blackfriars and Niddry Streets remaining for over 20 years and only filled by the Scandic Hotel in the late 80s after the Old Town had begun to show signs of renewal.

The large scale "clean sweep" approach to redevelopment affected many areas of the Old Town in the 60s. Both private developers and institutional investors wanted large single use buildings, and the industry norm was to acquire a number of small buildings or plots, and assemble these into large sites for clearance and rebuilding. The depressed state of the Old Town made it ripe for such procedures. New monolithic office blocks in Jeffrey St, at the junction of West Port and Lady Lawson St, and the new headquarters for Lothian Regional Council on George IV Bridge damaged the traditional pattern and scale of the Old Town.

The tide only began to turn after the passing of the 1967 Civic Amenities Act which provided for the designation of historically valuable city districts as "Conservation Areas". This eventually led to the declaration of the "Old Town Conservation Area" in 1977, which encouraged the repair and rehabilitation of buildings rather than their demolition. Legislation supporting renovation of the housing stock took effect from the mid 1970s, and led to the City Council initiating the rehabilitation of the east side of St. Mary's St. in the early 80s and filling a gap in Blackfriars St. with a new infill block. Both these schemes recalled the "Conservative surgery" approach pioneered in the Old Town by Patrick Geddes in the 1890s and continued in the rebuilding of the Canongate by E J MacRae during the inter-war period.



**Inside the Canongate Venture**

#### **The Edinburgh Old Town Study 1984**

However despite these pockets of housing renewal and new building the Old Town was still in a very depressed state in the early 80s. With mounting public concern over the future of the Old Town, the City Council took steps to ensure the area's survival. In October 1983 the Council initiated a study of the Old Town under the direction of Ian Begg (who had worked with Robert Hurd on the Canongate housing in the 1950s). The team produced the "Edinburgh Old Town Study 1984" which highlighted the drop in population to an unsustainable level, the many empty sites and dilapidated underused buildings, especially the upper storeys above commercial premises (17% of all dwellings were vacant) and the depressed state of the retail economy, which was largely dependent on seasonal tourism.

Following this study the Council took the step of establishing the "Edinburgh Old Town Committee for Conservation and Renewal" (EOTCCR). The Committee was based on the model of the Edinburgh New Town Conservation Committee (ENTCC) which had been successfully restoring New Town tenements and houses since 1972. The addition of "Renewal" to the title reflected the wider ranging remit in the Old Town – to encourage economic and social renewal in addition to restoring buildings.



**The Ark Building and Macrae Tenements on Canongate to be demolished for Caltongate**

Although EOTCCR had no legislative power it influenced the renewal of the Old Town in a number of ways. It built up close links with the local community, both residential and commercial, and represented the community's views through its role in monitoring and commenting on planning applications for new developments in the Old Town. The Committee's main weapon was its capital grant programme to assist the repair and restoration of buildings in the area. Jointly funded by the City and Historic Scotland, this programme, starting at £95,000 pa. rising to over £1 million by the mid 90s, enabled the Committee to reverse the neglected maintenance and dilapidation. The grants enabled EOTCCR to support Housing Associations in the restoration and conversion of buildings for social housing. One example is 10 Hunter Square, an important listed building, where redundant office space above a shop was converted to flats by the Old Town Housing Association.

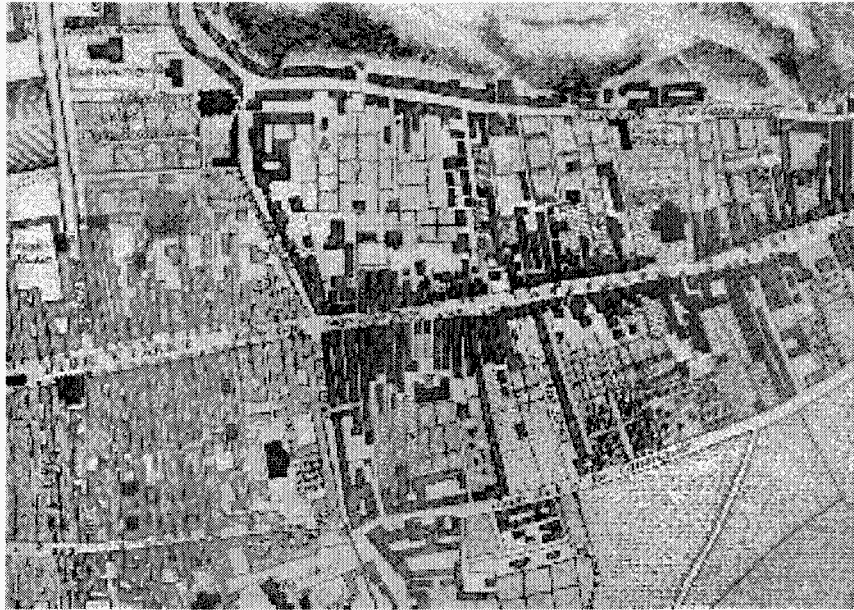
On a larger scale EOTCCR promoted street improvement schemes where grant aid was focused on groups of buildings in areas such as Cockburn and Victoria Streets, and South Bridge. The Committee's local presence (its office was in Advocates Close just off the High St) was a crucial factor in the success of these schemes, echoing Geddes' "hands on" approach to his improvement projects in the Lawnmarket.

### **The Edinburgh Old Town Renewal Trust**

In 1991 EOTCCR was restructured and became the Edinburgh Old Town Renewal Trust (EOTRT); co-funded by the local Enterprise Agency. This enabled the Trust to be more proactive in supporting redevelopment initiatives, and it assumed a role in co-ordinating public investment in the Old Town. It produced an annually updated "Old Town Action Plan", which identified opportunity sites and provided guidance on their development.

### **The 1996/97 Action Plan summed up the Trust's approach to the Old Town:**

'The continuation of a rich mix of uses within the Old Town has been followed as a planning objective for over three decades because it will ensure that the Old Town remains a living community, and does not become sterilised by large single use developments. During the last 10 years the Old Town has demonstrated its worth as a fashionable and lively part of the city, as a location for business, a centre for civic, institutional and cultural activities, and as a place to live in and visit.' Old Town Action Plan 1996/97



**Historical Map of area 1780**

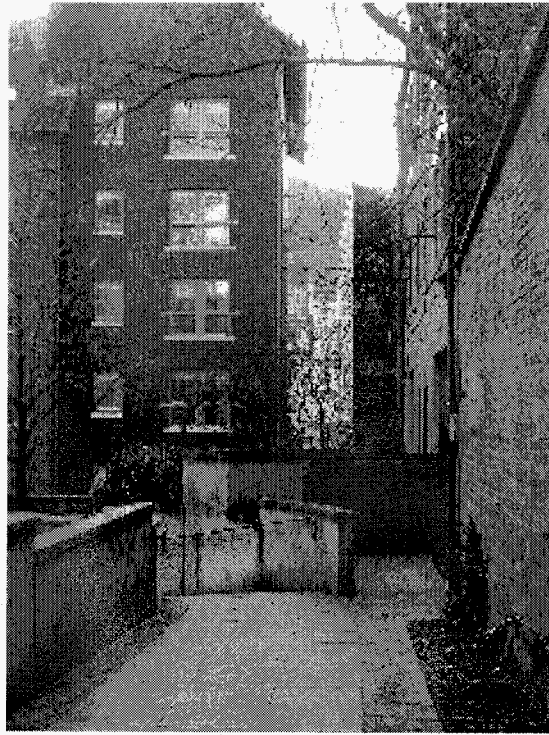
### **The Canongate Strategy**

In the mid-80s Scottish and Newcastle plc decided to move its brewing operations out of its long established site south of the Canongate. Together with adjacent redundant gas holders this left a vacant site of some 3.26 hectares. In response the Planning Dept and EOTCCR produced the Canongate Strategy setting out the principles for its redevelopment. The site was divided by Holyrood Rd. and the Strategy drew a distinction between the two parts. To the North of the road the brewery site extended up to Canongate and was to be treated as part of the Old Town.

*'North of Holyrood road... the aims will be to:*

- *make a positive contribution to local community life*
- *ensure that the majority of development is residential and aimed at a variety of housing needs*
- *ensure also that a significant proportion is non-residential in order to create jobs, improve local services and attract tourist activity*
- *retain existing buildings of character and convert to new uses wherever feasible*
- *retain and exploit vestiges of closes and courts'*

(Canongate Redevelopment Strategy 1987 – section 5.4)



**Hope Scheme – Looking to Crags from Canongate**

To the South of Holyrood Rd. the site had a different character, abutting the Park, and Scottish and Newcastle plc wished to promote a major educational and visitor attraction there. Subsequently a major iconic building housing the exhibition “Our Dynamic Earth” was built on the East of the site with new offices for the Scotsman newspaper alongside.

When development of the site north of Holyrood Rd. commenced in the late 80s the area was regarded as a contaminated post-industrial area in a remote location (in terms of public transport), and consequently not attractive to investors. Consequently a start was made with publicly funded social housing and cultural buildings to give the necessary confidence to attract private investment.

The development followed a masterplan drawn up by Edinburgh architect John Hope. His masterplan demarcated building plots based round a number of mixed-use narrow wynds (mixing pedestrians and vehicles), some existing, some newly created. Although none of the brewery buildings were listed, several were retained and converted to new uses such as housing and small scale offices. The gaps where the brewery buildings had faced the Canongate were filled with new Housing Association flats, and a new Scottish Poetry Library was tucked in behind. Though not all the new buildings are of equal merit, the overall character successfully complements the traditional Old Town pattern of development.



### **Edinburgh World Heritage**

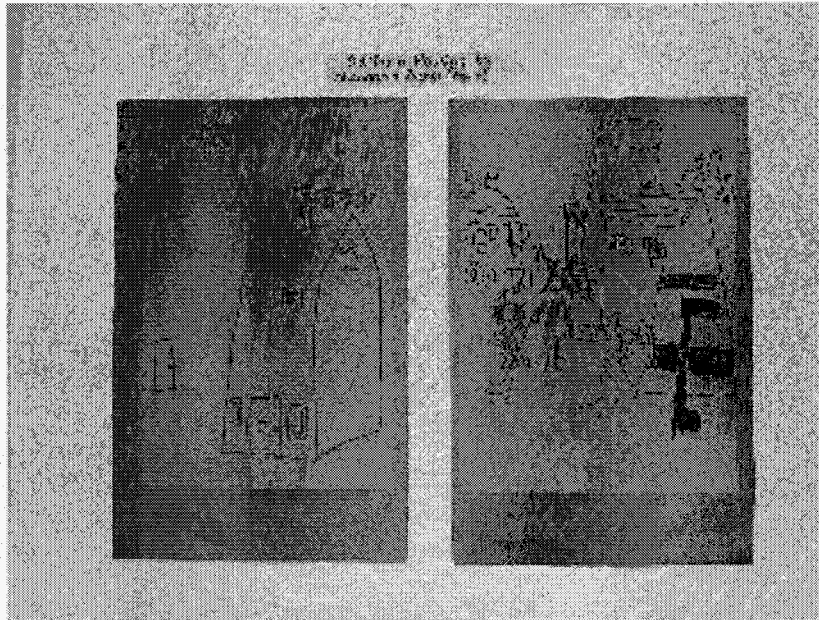
In 1995 the whole centre of Edinburgh was inscribed on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites, in part a recognition of the successful work carried out by ENTCC and EOTRT over the previous 30 years. In 1999 the two existing organisations were subsumed into a new Edinburgh World Heritage Trust (EWH). The remit of the EWH was narrower than that of EOTRT, focusing principally on conservation, planning advice and education, and its office was established in Charlotte Square. The close links between the local community and EOTRT were lost.

In 1997 came the decision to place the new Scottish Parliament adjacent to the Holyrood north site. Both the development process and the design of the new Parliament have generated much critical comment. The result is a complex, highly personal form of architecture which, at first sight, departs radically from the Old Town's traditional pattern of development.

The building of the parliament transformed the investment potential of the whole Canongate area. It attracted the large so-called "Caltongate" development to the north of Canongate on the site of the redundant New St. bus garage. The developer proposes to extend the site up to a new opening in the Canongate, demolishing some existing listed buildings and gutting two 1930 tenements by E J MacRae. This proposal ignores the principles set out in the Council's Canongate Strategy. It has all the hallmarks of a throwback to the comprehensive redevelopment era, and ignores the revival of the "conservative surgery" approach to renewal which had served the Old Town well for 30 years.

## **2.2. OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING SYSTEM**

Planning is the system within Local Government by which development, land and resources are managed and controlled to ensure benefit to all of the community and achieving a balance between economic and environmental/spatial pressures. Today's planning system is still based on the first Planning Acts which were introduced in 1947. The Planning system effectively nationalised the right to develop land and required Local Authorities to draft plans and documents to guide future developments (Policy Planning) and to manage applications for development consent (Development Control).



**Old Town Housing Drawings by local children during the project**

Over the years the system has remained largely the same although additional legislation has been introduced to address specific pressures and technological advancements. Whilst consolidation of some of the legislation has been achieved, the complexity of amendments and additional legislation has resulted in the planning process being criticised for being overly complex, bureaucratic and slow and as such an inhibitor to economic development. Public support for planning also declined in the 1960's and 1970's particularly as a result of some of the housing and transport policies imposed on communities at that time.

In recent years there has been a desire to undertake major reforms in the planning system to simplify and speed up the planning process to improve efficiency. The quality of planning and design cannot however be measured by the speed at which applications are processed. At the same time as governments have pushed for a more streamlined planning process, the public have become increasingly aware and concerned about the environmental and social impact of developments, particularly large scale speculative projects. Greater access to information and the development of community networks (assisted by increasing use and access to the internet) have enabled the public to participate more; however it is questionable how much power the public actually has to influence the formal planning process.

In addition to this increase in public awareness and interest in planning and development, has been the growth and interest in alternative methods of delivering services, and opportunities for communities, both through a variety of 'third sector' organisations, and community ownership or 'self build' projects. Examples of communities who have exercised their Community Right to Buy or established Development Trusts demonstrates that much of the skills and planning capacity needed to improve the environment and economy already exists within many communities and that often more sustainable, long term solutions can be achieved when communities have a greater role in the development process.



Evening News Cartoon, original donated to Forum by cartoonist Frank Boyle to launch project

Most recently new legislation has been introduced which aims to achieve greater public participation in planning through the introduction of government guidance and policies on Community Consultation, Community Planning and Community Engagement.

In addition Local Authorities are now subject to greater scrutiny regarding the administration of public assets and transparency in decision making through legislation such as the Freedom of Information Act and Best Value. The new National Planning Framework, which aims to improve the efficiency of the planning process and development of planning policy, claims to encourage greater public involvement.

It has been criticised by many as yet another example of policy which has evolved through consultation with predominantly professionals (often ex-Local Authority) and private developers where the role of public consultation appears to be little more than a tick-box exercise undertaken at the end of the process.

There is a culture change necessary in both Local and National Government if the democratic deficit in planning is to be truly addressed and this requires serious consideration to improving the opportunities for the public and communities to participate as full partners in the development process.





View up the Canongate with Huntly House Museum on left and Tollbooth to right

### 2.3. HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

As we move towards a low-carbon economy, we realise that our architectural heritage is not only valuable for its historical interest. It is more than a series of 'listed' individual buildings. The pattern of development and the overall character of our towns and cities is equally or more important. Historic towns were created by a low-carbon economy - travel was expensive and slow, and the materials used had to be close at hand. Such towns were densely built-up, with a mixture of uses – living, working, commerce and recreation - all integrated and close at hand. The idea of separating urban functions – 'zoning' in planning terms – could only develop when cheap travel (based on fossil fuels) became available. Historic towns have much to teach us about low-carbon living and many experts argue that compact walk able towns will be the most sustainable form of the future.

The tourist industry recognises the value of mixed use, lived-in towns. The Old Town of Edinburgh is promoted as a "living city" in contrast to the museum like character of some historic areas. Yet it appears that this attraction is often ignored in favour of developer led "economic development" when areas are being redeveloped. Too often the existing community is disrupted and suffers from such schemes.

Traditional towns have an established and sustainable local economy and social structure. These are destroyed by large scale and rapid change, exacerbating the stresses of modern life. People can cope with incremental change but large scale redevelopment leads to feelings of anomie and powerlessness, especially when the replacement structures appear to be unsustainable on both social and environmental grounds.



View up Canongate with more Macrae tenements left & right

There is also an assumption that the older buildings in these towns cannot meet current and future standards of sustainability. There are many reasons why this is wrong. Pre-nineteenth century buildings were produced in a low-carbon economy and have many lessons for us as we power-down from our era of (apparently) limitless cheap fuel. Seasonal variations in the climate had to be controlled by design rather than mechanical services. Massive walls and small windows conserve heat in winter and keep the interiors cool in summer (over-heating is likely to become an increasing problem as the climate warms). Rooms were planned to allow for natural ventilation.

If the technique of whole life costing is applied to buildings, existing traditional structures perform well. Their embodied energy (the carbon locked up in them) is lost if they are demolished and consigned to landfill. Their destruction uses more energy and transportation and adds to the 24% of all UK waste which comes from construction sites. If the full costs of demolition and site clearance were added to new construction costs, and set against the cost of adaptation and repair of an existing structure, rehabilitation will often prove the economic option. Even more so if the overall carbon consumption was to be taken into account.



**Official Launch Evening – Well attended**

### **3.0. PROGRAMME AND RESULTS**

#### **3.2. RECORD AND DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS**

**Official Launch Evening – Very well attended**

##### **Community Launch Weekend**

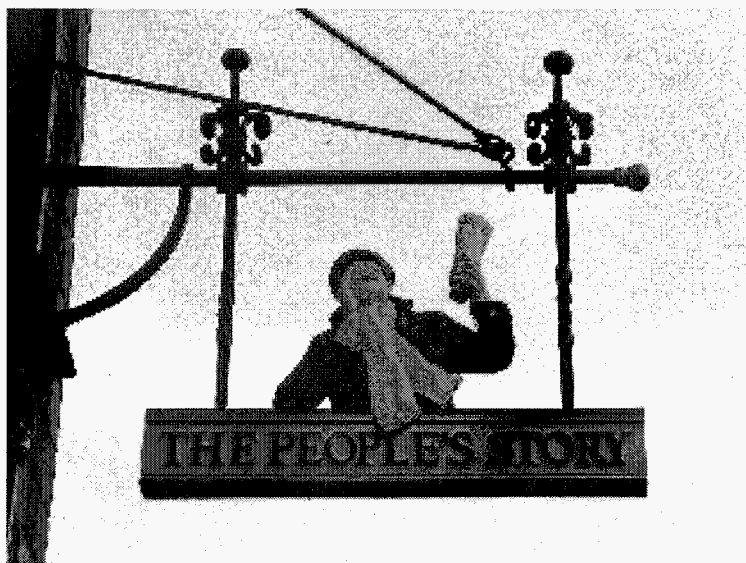
This was open weekend for locals to find out what was going on in the project shop. Funds were raised by donated baking and goods for the tombola.

##### **Mapping Launched.**

Visitors to the shop and participants at other events in the shop were invited to draw a map of the Canongate area. In addition, throughout the project period facilitators visited classes at Royal Mile Primary School and attended the School Summer Fayre to encourage pupils, parents and teachers to participate in the community mapping.

During sessions with classes at Royal Mile School pupils were given about 20mins to draw individual maps and were encouraged to think about the routes they take to school and what they see on the way and to try to name streets and buildings they knew. After drawing the maps each class discussed what they like and dislike about the environment (the streets, buildings and spaces) and what could or should be done to improve it.

Detailed analysis and information/links to maps is contained in the results section.

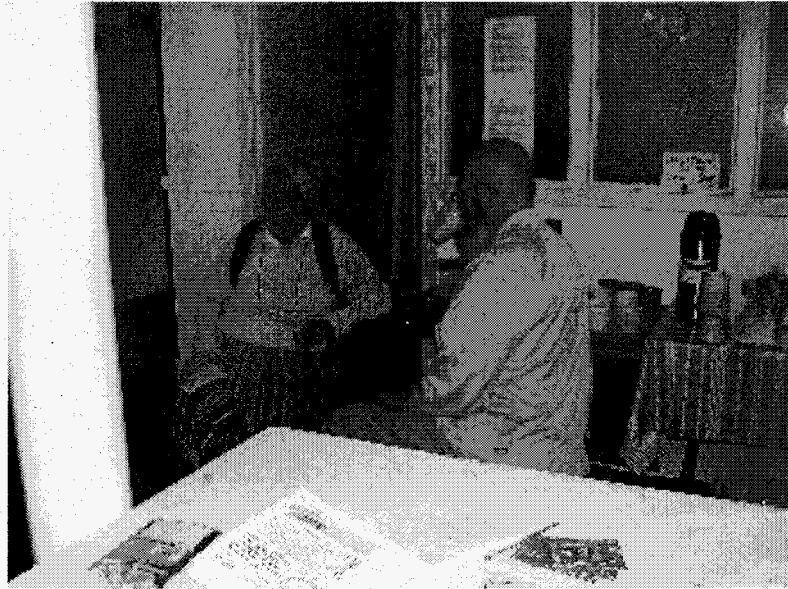


### **Banner Making Group**

The banner making group launched with a Saturday afternoon visit to the People's Story Museum to view some of the CEC banner collection which is displayed there and to learn more about the history and tradition of banners and their role in celebrations, protests and the development of trades and unions. Of particular interest was the 'community' banner which was produced in the 1980's which celebrates the community support for the establishment of the Peoples Story museum, and the variety of banners which have been used to highlight community and political protest.

The banner making group consisted of around 7 members who met regularly on a weekly basis throughout the programme. It was agreed that the banner should include some of the images and buildings which characterise the Canongate as well as articulate its value to participants and many others in the community. A design was agreed by the group; images collected by participants through photography were selected and have been printed onto fabric for inclusion on the banner.

Work on completing the assembly of the banner has been held up due to limited equipment (sewing machines) early on, and a lack of space following eviction from the shop. Members of this group are still in contact and it is hoped the banner will be completed later this year.



**Having a cuppa in the project shop**

### **Reminiscences**

The memories and experiences of people testify to the special significance of the Canongate. Every week, Christa Tooley and Margaret Baxter led a group reminiscence workshop at 8 St. Mary's Street. People who have spent time in the Canongate at some point in their life were invited to join them for a chat and a cup of tea. If people were unable to make the weekly meeting, then they were advised that Christa and Margaret could arrange to meet with them at their convenience.

Many, who spent time in the Canongate at some point in their life, came to share their memories with this group. In addition to the memory group, the facilitators arranged to meet local groups and individuals who were representative of some of our long term residents in the community. Outreach sessions included members from Canongate Kirk and Braidwood Centre's Writers Group, as well as individuals at home. Opinions on the proposed Caltongate development and the style and type of new developments in general for the city centre were also collected.

The information gathered provides a valuable and rich source of local and social history of the Canongate and its surrounding neighbourhoods. Most of the reminiscence sessions have been recorded on cassette tapes and a substantial amount has also been transcribed. A lot of memories of the Canongate have also been recorded through the mapping process as many of the former uses of shops and buildings and events that took place were referred to on the maps produced. Extracts from the memories recorded can be found in the results section.



Report Launch 21<sup>st</sup> Feb 09 at Scottish Storytelling Centre

### Film Screenings

The programme had 6 Film screenings, shown one evening each week and repeated at the weekend. Each screening included a group of short films with an opportunity for discussion afterwards. Films were sourced through Scottish Screen Archive and Pilton Video. All films had relevance to the project and its events & groups.

All films were retained at the shop and were also used with other groups/events and by visitors to shop when no specific events were scheduled.

*A full list of the Film resources gathered and summary of content is provided as an appendix (Film Resource Library Catalogue)*

**Week 1 – “A Mile of Memories”** Historical documentary and educational films featuring the Royal Mile, including Walkabout Edinburgh with Richard Demarco in 1970.

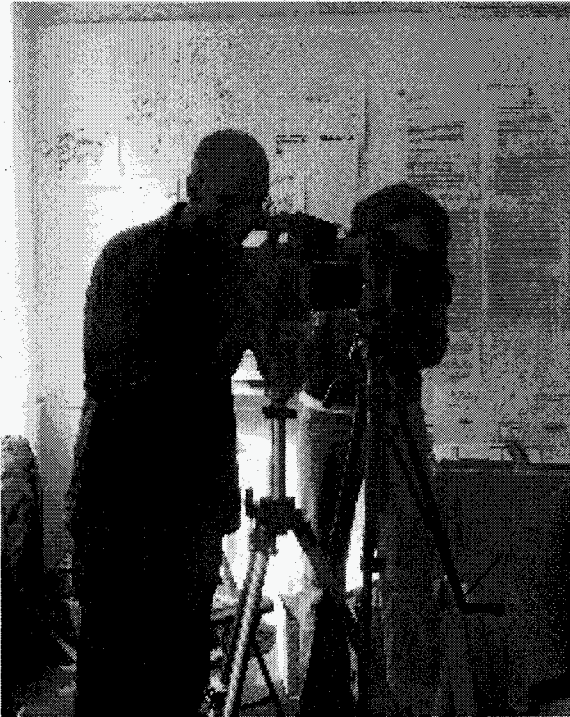
**Week 2 "Past Perspectives"** Drama, experimental and artistic films. They looked at the special characteristics of Edinburgh and her inhabitants, from the Scottish Screen Archives

**Week 3 "The Bigger Picture"** Contemporary films which consider the current UK-wide development trends and the threats from them. These films highlight issues including loss of identity and heritage, gentrification, sustainability and quality of design.

**Week 4 "Community Counts"** Contemporary films looking at particular issues raised by communities of place and communities of interest which includes advice about community campaigning and a comic short about community consultation

**Week 5 “Changing Policy”** Collection of films and news clips looking at the changing theories of planning and development through a collection of archive films and clips highlighting previous trends and policies.

**Week 6 "Moving Forward"** Films to inspire: examples of successful campaigns and initiatives that utilise new opportunities which are available to grow and develop community assets.



**Filmmaker Simon Yuill**

### **Film Making Workshops**

These were aimed at the basics of Film Making for those who want to record events, talks, or a walk for use perhaps in their community project or campaign.

Two film making workshops provided an opportunity for participants to discuss potential ideas for future film making projects. A general interest in community film making was highlighted through some of the films viewed and the film workshops encouraged participants to record events held throughout the programme. Participants were also encouraged by independent film makers who visited the workshops. The workshops also explored some ideas for types of short films or media sources (internet TV) which are accessible for community groups.

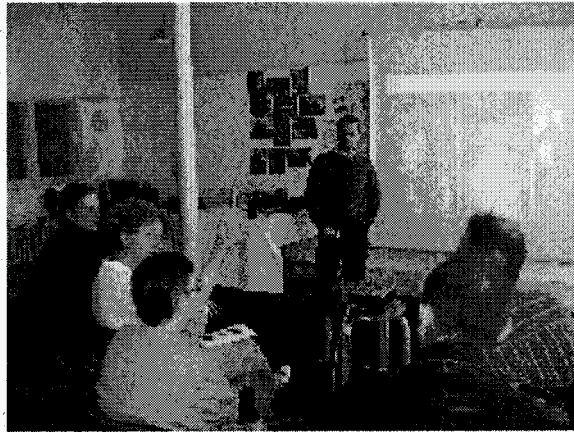
### **Talks/Discussions**

#### **Local People Leading (LPL) with Di Jennings**

LPL is an informal alliance of national networks, local community groups and individuals that has come together to campaign for a strong and independent community sector in Scotland. LPL has two main functions - to promote the work of local people in their communities and to influence national policy development. LPL emails regular briefings to its supporters on both these themes.

#### **Development Trusts Association Scotland - Wendy Reid**

Participants learnt how local people can set up Development Trusts to improve the quality of life in their community. A good example of this was presented by Pauline Gallacher of the Neilston Development Trust at the launch of this report on the 21<sup>st</sup> February at the Scottish Storytelling



EWHT with David Hicks presenting

### **The Edinburgh World Heritage Trust**

David Hicks and Jane Jackson gave a power point presentation explaining the history, purpose and work of EWHT and the role it plays in meeting the UK's responsibilities under the UNESCO convention. Detailed information and a variety of examples of the conservation and community engagement projects which EWH have contributed to were provided. The presentation was given on two occasions (one of which was filmed) to ensure alternative times were provided to facilitate a wider audience.

The presentation was followed by a discussion and Q & A session during which current international development trends and threats were discussed at length. Common concerns included the development of tall buildings in World Heritage Sites, and the potential damage caused by unchecked 'heritage tourism'. Concerns were also raised over the polarisation of heritage and economic values which has been promoted by the media. It was recognised that there is much common ground in the aims of conservation, energy efficiency, economic and environmental sustainability.

It was generally agreed that greater emphasis should be placed on valuing the unique character of places and using this as the key driver for better quality in architecture.

### **Richard Demarco 'A Portrait of Edinburgh as a World Heritage Site'**

This was the first talk in the programme and was very well attended. The event started with the group viewing a short film which Richard Demarco had made in 1970 highlighting the architectural and cultural history of Edinburgh and some of her 'villages' which form the city. This was followed by a very interesting presentation highlighting the important and instantly recognisable characteristics and architectural elements of Edinburgh, illustrated with examples in Richard's own painting of Edinburgh Old Town and New which he had brought to display.

A lively discussion followed during which the appropriateness and standard of design for the Caltongate development was discussed and heavily criticised by all attending.

Mountgange, the Caltongate developers promotional DVD was also viewed as many had not seen it (despite the heavily publicised circulation of this and other newsletters by the developers) Richard voiced concerns over Edinburgh's World Heritage status particularly if the mediocre quality of new developments is to prevail.





Richard Demarco (photo Neil Hodgins)

He discussed the 'drawability' or attractiveness of Edinburgh to the creative community if its unique quality of cityscape were lost. The event concluded with general agreement that greater efforts are needed to increase awareness of such threats to cultural heritage. There needs to be greater commitment to Edinburgh as an international city for art and architecture as part of its identity, and protect the cultural/communities heritage for future generations, and not undervalue the role of artists and others who come to study, paint and visit because of the living, working city core.

#### **Bern Balfe, architect**

Presentation and discussion about the architect's design process and how it can serve the needs of a community.

Bern Balfe gave an illustrated talk about the difficulties architects face in designing for the wider needs of the community as opposed to the narrow vested interests of the developer. Although individual architects have varying levels of skill, ultimately buildings reflect very accurately the values of the society that produced them. Those who are dissatisfied with modern buildings should look to alternative ways of commissioning and procuring them. Two case studies were examined: "Bedzed", a housing development led by an architect, the result of his research into low energy housing; and Coin Street, a movement which grew from community opposition to large scale top down development into a major force for change. The talk finished with some pictures of derelict spaces around the Old Town, a brief look at Gordon Cullen's 1980s masterplan for the Old Town, and a quote from Gunther Grass 'The first job of a citizen is to keep his mouth open'



**Radical History with Craig McLean**

**The Radical History of the Canongate - Craig McLean.**

A presentation & discussion including footage of 1937 May Day march through the Canongate. Craig is an activist, photographer and community artist. Craig showed a short film from the 30s, pictures from the Mining Museum and pictures from the Anti-Poll Tax struggle. He looked at events in the Canongate where people took radical action, and introduced and discussed lens based recordings of events in the Canongate. He also explored the importance of recording the Save Our Old Town campaign and Canongate Project, and why it's important not to leave it to local press.

**Scotland UnLtd - Eileen Inglis**

This organisation supports inspirational social entrepreneurs – all of whom are committed to making a positive change in their communities. These individuals have developed innovative and sustainable business solutions to a wide range of social concerns.

**Save Our Old Town Campaign - Sally Richardson**

A discussion led by Sally on the history of the campaign and its current position.

**The Cockburn Association - Elizabeth Graham**

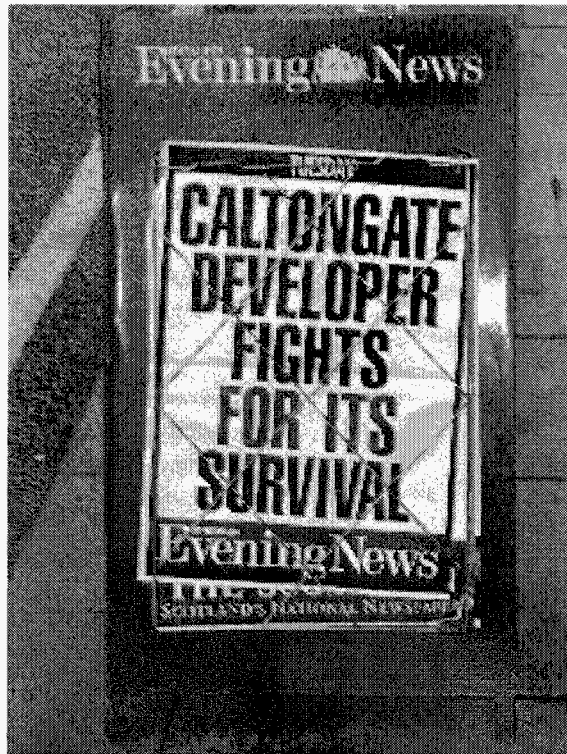
Discussion on the heritage organisation's work.

**Bob Hamilton from 'Citystrolls', Glasgow.**

Discussion group on how you can be active and make a difference in your community.

**"Family Connection" – Janet Fenton**

Janet presented a narrative of personal connection and recollection with the Old Town. This intimate recount of Janet's experiences from childhood to present day, of living, working and connection through family and friends gave a valuable insight to the changes of the Canongate residents' environment over the last 50 years. The session was recorded and contributed to the additional reminiscence material gathered.

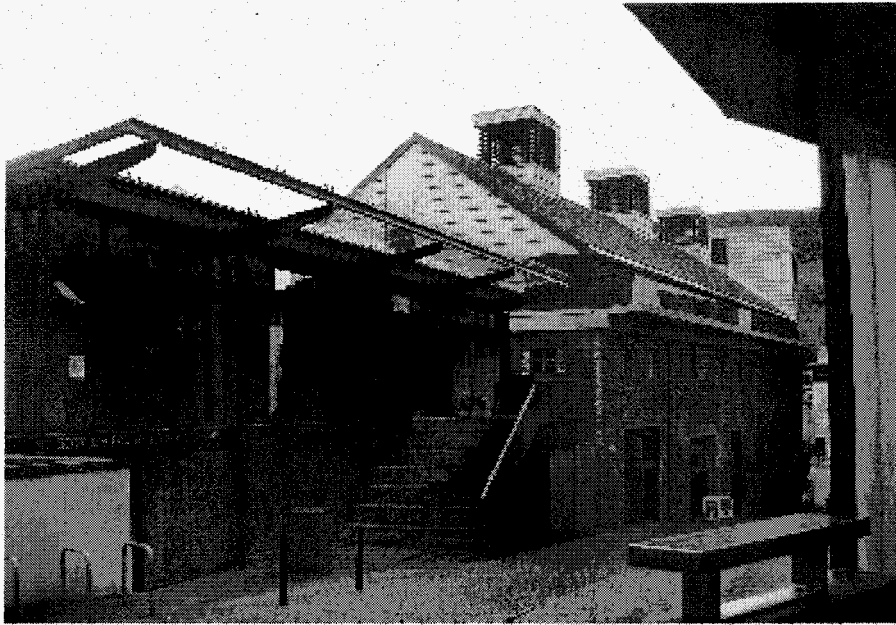


Latest news on land developer Mountgrange in Feb 2009

### **Community Land Partnerships (CLP) - Chris Cook**

People learnt about sustainable development and that the existing modes of development encourage, even mandate, sociopathic behaviour on the part of property developers. Land is acquired and developed with borrowed money secured by a mortgage on the property. The developer is motivated to develop as quickly as possible and as cheaply as possible with no real regard for the long-term consequences in terms of the energy efficiency and 'liveability' of the project beyond that which he is mandated to provide.

They learnt that the CLP model is entirely different. The developer does not buy and sell the land but instead acquires shares in the revenues which will flow over time from its successful and sustainable development and operation. The more energy efficient the development, and the better the quality, the less money is necessary to pay for repairs and for heating and the higher the rental value will therefore be.



Scottish Poetry Library in Hope Plan

## Talking Walks

### Walks with Jim Johnson

#### 1. A walk around the redeveloped former S&N breweries between Canongate and Holyrood Road.

Participants had an opportunity to view the original guidance and documents produced for the site and discuss how the development was funded in the shop on St Mary's St before starting. This walk round the former Scottish and Newcastle brewery site demonstrated that the Canongate could be redeveloped on a large scale whilst respecting the traditional "herring bone" urban pattern. Guided by John Hope's masterplan a variety of new buildings, including social, student and private housing, offices, a hotel, retail units and the Scottish Poetry Library had been arranged around closes and wynds surfaced with traditional materials. Views out to the south allowed the sun to penetrate the densely built up area, and glimpses of the Craggs had been carefully maintained. Most of the walk is recorded on film.

#### 2. Around the Old Town focussing on the street improvement schemes.

This illustrated the street improvement schemes carried out with the support of grants from the Edinburgh Old Town Renewal Trust. A small hardy band set out on a very wet afternoon to view several of these schemes. The route took in South Bridge where uncaring and improvident owners had led to decaying buildings and a protracted programme of repairs. Next Cockburn St where the 19<sup>th</sup> Century exuberance of the architecture had been recaptured by careful attention to detail, Victoria St, and finally Victoria Terrace where expensive, complex and virtually invisible waterproofing had ensured that the shops beneath the terrace were no longer affected by leaks.



**Allan Armstrong giving an introduction before walk**

### **Radical Old Town Walk by Allan Armstrong**

Activist, trade unionist and retired teacher Allan Armstrong has taken an interest in the radical history of Scotland and Ireland for most of his life. Allan looked at the role Edinburgh's Old Town played in shaping radical Scotland and the world; from dissident lawyers, dissenters and protestors, to riots and marches, to Marx and Engels. Allan explored the graves, lanes and closes of the Old Town taking the party on an adventure of protest, declaration and the demand for liberty and equality.

### **Walking talk on Women of the Old Town with Donald Smith**

Donald the director of the Scottish Story Telling Centre led this early evening walk around the centre of the Old Town which was well attended. A variety of extraordinary women (historical figures, community characters and even fictional characters) were introduced to participants during this walk including Mary of Guise, Mary Erskine, Elsie Ingles, Mary Whitfield, and Jenny Geddes.

Participants provided very positive feedback declaring the walk to be highly informative and inspiring, and found it particularly interesting to focus on the tradition of strong female characters in the history and development of businesses and services in the Old Town. This walk highlighted the role of women in campaigning for change, or establishing innovative systems and practical services to improve their community, and had particular relevance to some participants in relation to existing campaigns to improve the environment and democratic decision making.

Many who attended expressed an interest in looking at some of the characters referred to in this walk in more detail and developing further links with other projects (such as the 'Guide Cause'). Some participants were also interested in finding ways to raise the profile of women who have had an important influential role in the development of women and society generally. Most of this walk was recorded on film.



### **Common Good Day Scotland**

Common Good expert Andy Wightman gave a talk at 10.30am and was around for questions/workshops/discussion until 4pm. People came along from all over the country to get involved in reclaiming the rightful inheritance of the people of Scotland. Campaigners gave short talks on their experiences. Handouts were available.

There were over 30 participants which included – Andy Wightman, Common Good Petitioners Miss Mary. E. Mackenzie, David Harvie and Sally Richardson. Save Our Glen, City Strolls, Portobello Park Action Group and Jump – Art in Architecture



**Conservation Architect James Simpson EAR Day**

### **Edinburgh at Risk Day (EAR)**

**(EAR)** was founded by a number of on-going Edinburgh campaigns and is a non-political umbrella organisation open to all who value the city's culture, history and future and wishes full recognition of Edinburgh's Common Good. People were invited to come and find out what was going on in Edinburgh and its surrounding areas. Perhaps they too had concerns about developments and didn't know what to do? They met others who did and shared their experiences, successes and losses. Renowned Conservation architect James Simpson started the day with a talk on the risks Edinburgh faced from economic driven development.

Participants also included - Save Glenogle Baths, Portobello Park Action Group, Gardyloo, Orrocco Planning Appeal Group, Friends of Corstorphine Hill, Save Meadowbank, Jump- Art in Architecture, Bilston Road Protest Group,



**Cuboids Mobile SOOT shop out on The Royal Mile**

### **Cuboid installations**

A collective of artists – 'Cuboid' - constructed an information booth/kiosk in the shop to take out on the streets of Edinburgh as a mobile 'SOOT shop' to collect views and opinions about the Canongate using the project's questionnaires and encouraging the public to 'graffiti' the booth. This also provided a public information point where the programme of events was distributed and the day's events were advertised (The booth went out on the streets when the Common Good event and Edinburgh at Risk event were on in the shop).

The construction of the booth in the shop also encouraged participants to contribute to the publication of a 'SOOT' themed Bloid (Cuboids' fanzine style publication) which was launched along with a performance art production - '5th Order' - staged in the rear yard of the shop. Project participants and visitors to the shop were encouraged to assist in both the preparations and performance of '5th Order'. The SOOT Bloid, photographs and film footage of Cuboids involvement with the Canongate Project have been included on their website ([www.cuboid.org](http://www.cuboid.org))

The contribution of Cuboid to the project has also inspired further interest in SOOT and the Canongate Project from other artists working in the Old Town. It provided information and support to artists involved in the 'Close – up' exhibition during the 2008 Edinburgh International Art Festival.

### **Additional Events:**



**Dunbars Close "Secret Garden" Canongate**

**'Hidden Gardens of the Royal Mile** a walk led by Jean Bareham of Bluyonder Tours. The tour included some social history, but mainly covered how people use green space in the city nowadays. This now highly successful local walking tour emerged during the project. Jean had visited the shop on St Mary's St and offered Canongate Project participants a preview of the tour one Sunday afternoon as an additional event. The feedback from these tours has been very positive and has since aroused a lot of local interest in the tradition and history of gardens in the Canongate. As well as assisting this local attraction to develop through the sharing of a variety of local knowledge provided by participants, the tour now also makes reference to the development pressures and proposed plans for the Canongate area. The walk was well attended by a mix of local residents, students, and members of other local organisations. Some of this walk was recorded on film.

#### **Lunch and Memories**

People were invited to the shop at St Mary's Street to enjoy a bowl of homemade soup and lovely organic bread. This provided an additional session for the reminiscence group. Visitors shared their stories of The Canongate with the reminiscences group.



## Events Cancelled:



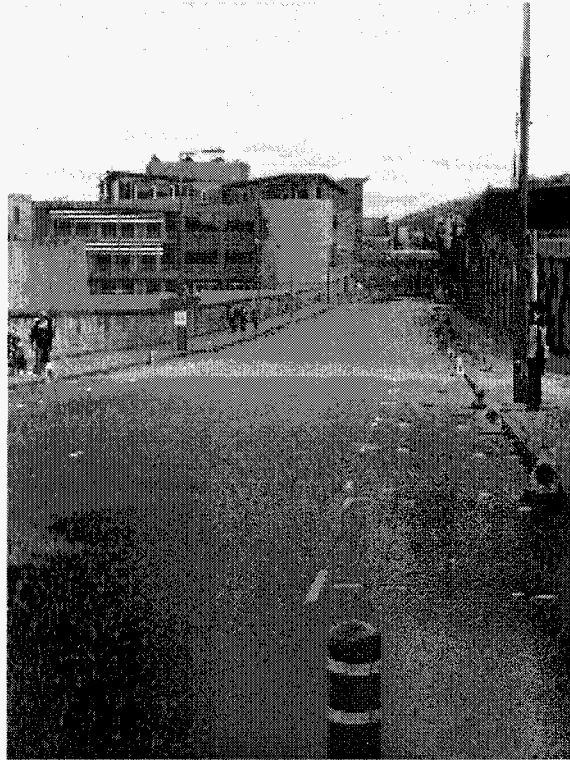
SOOT Street Party 2006

### Street Party

Save Our Old Town had successfully organised a street party two years previously, and planned to hold another to provide an opportunity to display some of the initial feedback from events and publicise some of the organisations and individuals who had contributed to the programme, as well as provide an opportunity for community capacity building. This was scheduled to take place at the end of the summer school term.

The Street Party organising group comprised a small number of volunteers who coordinated and planned a variety of entertainment, activities and stalls. The group also prepared publicity for this event. Open sessions were held on Friday and Sunday afternoons when participants could drop in and contribute to the planning and organising of events.

Planned activities included live music from 6 local bands, puppet shows, bouncy castle, craft stalls, fundraising stalls (for local groups including the Royal Mile Primary school), community drumming group performance, community/public art workshop/installation, information stalls from local heritage/community groups.



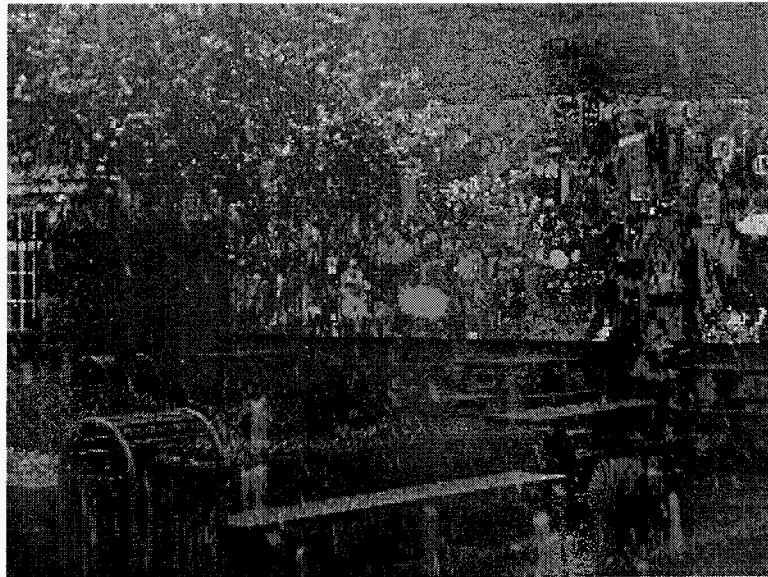
Street Party May 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

The event was included in the programme for the Old Town Festival which has recently been revived, and was considered to be a great opportunity to allow the local community to be directly involved in this Festival. Unfortunately the Street Party was cancelled with one week's notice due to problems encountered with CEC events planning, who, due to an oversight, had double booked us with an Orange March.

Our lease of the shop ran out just a couple of days after our intended street party so we were unable to programme any other events to compensate for the loss of the party. The building remains empty at time of writing this report.

#### **Youth Performance Project**

This was scheduled to be an ongoing project through-out the six weeks, concluding in a performance by the drama group at the street party. Plans were made for one of the Canongate Project volunteers (Nikki Logan) to work alongside Canongate Youth Project (CYP), an organisation that provides support and activities to young people in the Canongate and Southside area. Nikki was put through disclosure to enable working with two of the youth clubs to create a performance with some of the attendees. However due to the delay in starting the Canongate Project the dates ran alongside the changeover of the academic year and coincided with exams. This meant that children were changing between clubs which relate to school classes. Although there was general interest and support from both children and parents for a youth drama project it was not possible to undertake this group as programmed within the Project's timescales.



Royal Mile Primary School, Canongate - Mural of the Old Town

#### 4.0. RESULTS

##### 4.1. SOOT MAPS – FROM SCHOOL AND SHOP

About 100 maps were drawn by the Royal Mile Primary children. The original intention was to analyse all the maps using the categories from Kevin Lynch's book 'The Image of the City'. Lynch's categories were: paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks, but this proved inappropriate with the school maps. So we have recorded the number of times various "landmarks" appeared on the maps to give some idea what in their surrounding environment catches the children's attention and appears important to them.

When some kids seemed to have a problem starting on the maps we prompted them by suggesting they showed their journey to school, so not surprisingly a large proportion of maps feature the school and "my home". It was hard to decipher some of the younger children's maps; hence the percentages of school and home are perhaps lower than expected.

##### **Places drawn or named, in order of frequency –**

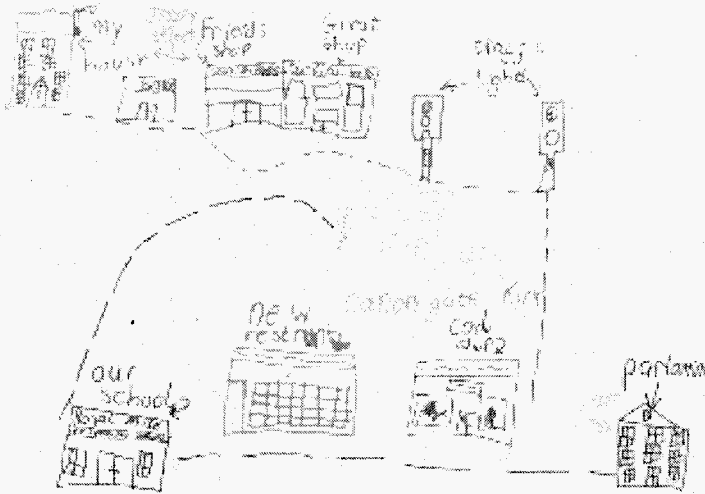
Royal Mile school 55%

Trees and park 32% (someone noted the "baby trees" newly planted)

My house 28%

Royal Mile 26% shops etc)

Shops 21% (individual shops mentioned - sweet shop, Christmas, organ & puzzle shops,



- Canongate Kirk 18%
- Scottish Parliament 15%
- Zebra crossing and lollipop man 14% (and No Parking Here sign)
- Holyrood Palace 13%
- Vehicles – buses, cars and lorries 11%
- The sun (not the newspaper) 11%
- Arthur's Seat and hills 10% (one mention of the volcano)
- Closes and pends 10%
- Dynamic Earth 8%
- Canongate Tollbooth (and clock) 7%
- Starbucks 7%
- Edinburgh Castle 6%
- Poetry library 6%
- Mushroom (secret) garden 6%
- Football pitch 5%
- St John Street. 5%
- Dumbiedykes (“Dummydykes”) 5% (mentioned by kids who live there?)

There were a whole range of less often mentioned places such as – Pizza Express, the Tun, the late lamented Bongo Club, Chessel's Court herb garden, Bakehouse Close, People's Story museum and the Canongate Kirk graveyard.

One noticeable point was the frequency that trees and the adjacent Holrood Park were drawn, perhaps indicating how much such natural, green spaces were valued by children who lived in a densely built-up area of the city.



**Dunbars Close which contains the Herb Garden**

#### **School children's comments**

After they had drawn the maps we asked the children their likes and dislikes in the area. These are recorded broken down by classes.

**P6 likes** – the herb garden, Starbucks, School, parliament, Dynamic Earth, my house, mushroom garden, Princes St. Gardens, Bene's (fish and chips), Sailors Ark, Jenny Ha's, Edinburgh Dungeons, Mary Kings Close, Forbidden Plant, canongate Kirk, Fudge shop, McDonald's Hotel, train station.

**P6 dislikes** – Parliament (windows too big), the Tun and new buildings beside it, Arthur's Seat (scary), Pizza Express (building behind blocks sky and views), corners of St. Mary's St and Pleasance (difficult crossing due to heavy traffic?), and hotel in St. Patrick's church grounds, not enough sports grounds and basketball courts.

**P6 what's needed in area?** – rehab facilities, free cafes for homeless, really scary graveyard, hospital, more public toilets, community centre/youth club, skatepark, rubbish bins, sweetie shop (like Caseys), Games shop, car boot sales/markets, shops.

**P2/3 likes** – Queen's park, parliament, school, Queen's Gallery, shops, Chessels Court, Arthurs Seat, meadows.

**P2/3 dislikes** – supermarket, hill, park (not clean), hotels, rubbish, McDonalds hotel.

**P3 likes** – sweetie shops, toy shops, high flats, Dynamic Earth, Parliament, Palace, Queens park, swans, Queens gallery, Arthurs Seat, Secret (mushroom) garden, Wilson's Court, St. Margaret's loch and well, Edinburgh Dungeons, Joke shop.

**P3 dislikes** – Niddry St. (smelly), the Tun, litter on streets, St. Mary's St. (roadworks), tunnel at New St. (dark and messy), Dumbiedykes (broken glass and fighting).



Local children have to go as far as the meadows for appropriate & safe play facilities

## 4.2. SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF SHOP QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

### 4.2.1. Perception of needs in Canongate

The questionnaires were available in the SOOT shop in St. Mary's St. and were handed out to all who attended the programme of events. 184 questionnaires were completed of which 53 respondents had a "local connection" (defined as 'live or work in the area covered by the Caltongate development or the Old Town, or used to live there for more than 10 years, or parents live in the area'. Where there were significant differences between the responses from locals and others these are noted below. **The responses have been grouped as follows:**

#### LIVING

70% wanted affordable or social housing (79% of locals)

66% wanted family housing (77% of locals)

66% wanted play parks/areas for children (77% of locals) and as many felt there was a need for more facilities for teenagers.

Facilities for the elderly (60% all respondent, 72% locals), a community centre (62% all respondents 70% locals) and an increase in the number of permanent residents 60% all, 68% locals)

50% favoured more support for local schools and nurseries.

#### ENVIRONMENT

62% wanted more grassed areas and trees

61% wanted community glass recycling and 55% community composting facilities.

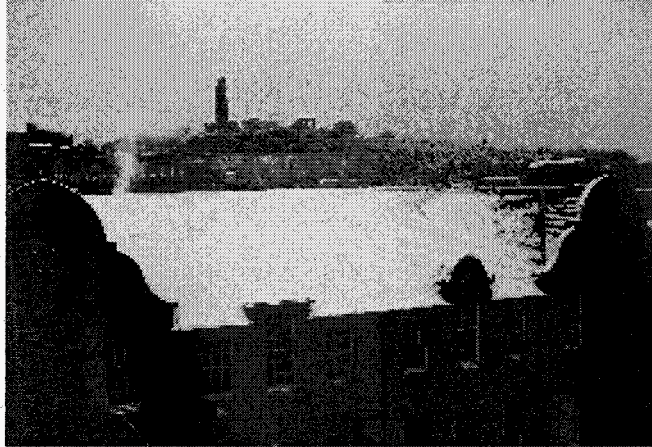
53% wanted more pedestrian priority streets

50% wanted improvements to back greens.

44% asked for more city club cars (51% locals)

51% of locals wanted cleaner pavements

40% wanted a reduction in sandwich boards and other street clutter.



**Canongate Venture was a small business start up centre  
(now empty awaiting demolition for hotel conference centre)**

#### **EMPLOYMENT AND RETAIL**

62% of locals wanted a local food market and 70% a better mix of shops.

57% wanted more working facilities for artists.

32% wanted opportunities for start-up businesses.

43% of locals wanted festive lights

There was a marked difference of view in regard to more facilities for the homeless, supported by only 38% of locals but 47% overall. Only 2% of respondents felt there was a need for more hotels in the area!

#### **4.2.2. Attitude Survey**

The second part of the questionnaire probed respondents' views on statements about the Old Town. The results are as follows.

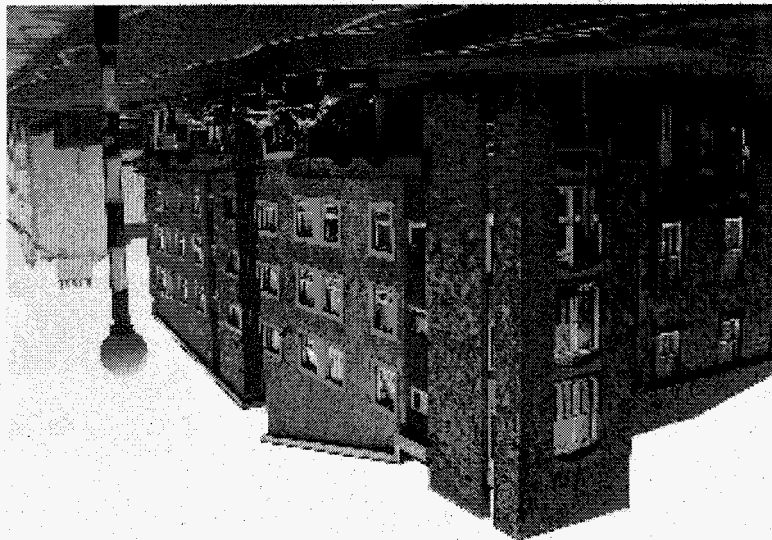
- Sound buildings should not be demolished – 91% agreed**
- Communities should be consulted before the Council sells public buildings and land – 98% agreed**
- Common Good land and assets should be given greater protection and full recognition - 91% agreed**
- New developments should be required to respect historic place names – 87% agreed, 10% disagreed**
- The Old Town needs responsive regeneration not dominant developments – 94% agreed**
- The “Caltongate” development should be stopped – 84% agreed, 15% disagreed.**

This includes facts and figures sourced from both Scottish Government and CEC's websites and Freedom of Information responses. See Appendices for this data.

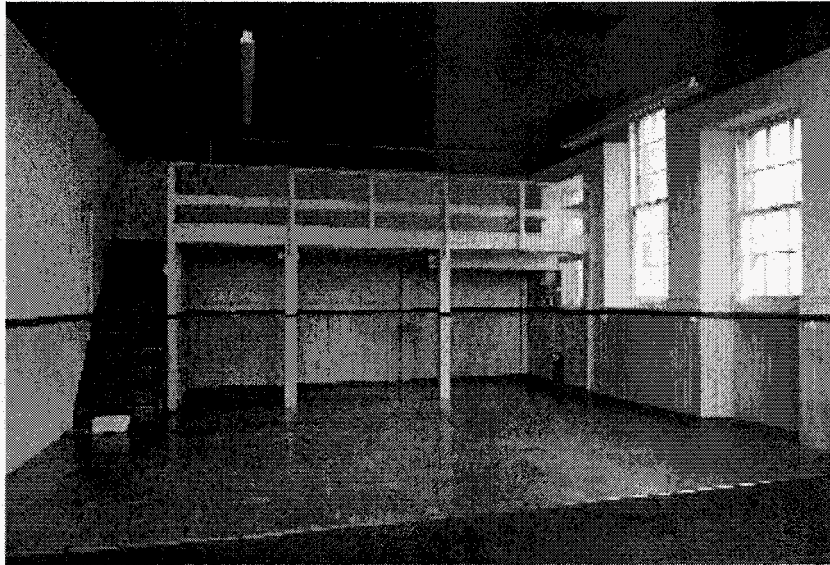
A variety of sources were used to discover facts relating to the availability and type of housing available within the Old Town to compare with other areas of Edinburgh and to assess the effectiveness of existing local and national housing policies.

#### 4.3. HOUSING ISSUES - DATA COLLECTED

Basil Spence Housing Lower Canongate







Inside the Canongate Venture which housed small start up businesses

#### 4.4. VACANCY ISSUES / LOSS OF SMALL BUSINESS WORKSHOP FACILITIES

##### Canongate Venture

This building has been occupied for 40 years as a centre for start - up business and workshop space. Following discussions with Mountgrange in 2005 to sell this property for demolition, CEC have refused to allow any new (even short term) lets and existing tenants were actively encouraged to give up their leases.

UNIT	TENANT	OCCUPATION DATES
Unit 1	Ian James	Vacant from 12/10/2005
Unit 2	Neil Macrae	Vacant from 04/10/2006
Unit 3	Alan Ramsay	Vacant from 07/06/2000
Unit 4,5,7 and 9	Department of Children & Families	Vacant from 30/11/2007
Unit 6	Blue (Scotland) Limited	In occupation
Unit 8	Philip Kropp	Vacant from 31/01/2006
Unit 10	Robert J Hans	Vacant from 05/01/2006
Unit 11	C.Walnick	In occupation
Unit 12	Simon J Williams	Vacant from 19/04/2004
Unit 13	Wee Stories Theatre for Children	Vacant from 30/11/2005
Unit14	Nancy Steele T/A Capital Press	In occupation
Unit 15	Alan Ramsay	Vacant from 31/01/2005
Unit 16	VA Electronic Design Limited	In occupation

CANONGATE VENTURE, 5 NEW STREET, EDINBURGH details as of JANUARY 2008



East Market Street Garages to left (former Vegetable Market Common Good)

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**Rental income from Canongate Venture and East Market Street Garages**

*"The only lettings affecting the subjects relate to Canongate Venture. Set out below is a tenancy schedule.*

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Tenant</b>
2	Neil Rodger McCrae - t/a Limerick Ltd
4,5,7,9	Education PPP2
6	Blue (Scotland) Ltd
11, 16	VA Electronic Design
14	Nancy Steele t/a Centre Press Agency

*The remaining units are vacant.*

*The total rental received by the Council in respect of sites and buildings for financial year 2005/2006 was approximately £224,000. This high level of rent reflects a particular, temporary requirement for space associated with Network Rail/Waverley Station and it is not representative of the rental value generally year on year.*

*The estimated current rental value of the subjects is circa £80,000 which reflects that any potential tenancy could only be struck on a very short term basis in view of the likelihood of the properties being demolished for redevelopment purposes. Indeed properties may be un-lettable given the circumstances". (Source CEC June 2006)*

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**A comparison with the units at Abbeymount Techbase, a similar style stand alone ex-school building providing industrial/workshops and small business space are as follows:**

**Vacancy rates at Abbeymount (units vacant for over 3 months)**

2004/5 - no units 2005/6 - 2 units 2006/7 - 1 unit

**Rental income from Abbeymount**

2004/5 - £60,811 2005/6 - £61,880 2006/7 - £74,974



Nov '08 the New Street Gap Site hoardings, the CEC headquarters to right with Canongate Venture to rear

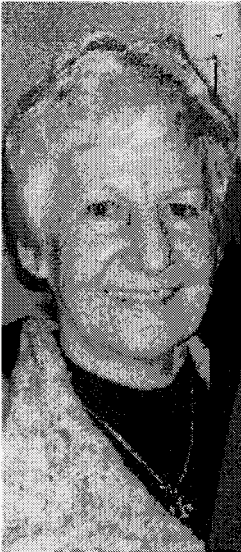
#### 4.5. OFFICE OVER- PROVISION IN CITY CENTRE

Existing office provision was often mentioned as a problem in the city centre, but many new office developments remain empty whilst there is a recognised shortage of small scale affordable start up business space and workshop space (see 4.4 above) see further data in appendices.



Empty offices Holyrood as at February 2009

#### 4.6. A SAMPLE OF MEMORIES COLLECTED BY REMINISCENCE GROUP



**Margaret Baxter**

“When Christa and I got involved with the Canongate Project little did we know just how many elderly people lived in the Canongate houses and sheltered homes around whose roots were here and of the stories they told us not just of themselves but of their parents before them. It made me feel very nostalgic as some of the stories were similar to what my mother told me as she was born in the Canongate.

What struck me was they all seemed upset about what was happening to their wonderful city. They spoke of all the breweries, printers and grocery shops that had all disappeared, in their place were souvenir shops. A lot of them depended on relatives and home carers to do their shopping as there were no shops near by. There were some able bodied pensioners who had to get a bus into Leith or Clerk St before they could buy butcher meat or fish, they couldn't understand why shops for tourists had priority. One lady expressed the opinion that in earlier years on holidaying abroad you found that the historical parts were left untouched by ugly concrete offices and hotels – you found them on the outskirts, so why had Edinburgh not done the same?

Another lady just can't believe that all the hotels are being built, could be filled to capacity all year round. We taped quite a few folk's memories of laughter and sadness and if we had more time we could have filled a library. It's just amazing how many people live here. It's not until you look up or go down the closes you notice it. I would like to pay tribute to the many people involved in the Canongate Project. They have really worked hard and it's been a pleasure meeting them and to know that they feel as strongly as I do about Auld Reekie.”

**Margaret Baxter, one of the group facilitators**



**Chessels Court off Canongate**

**Janet Fenton**

"One of my first jobs, when I was, I don't know, about 14, I had a Saturday job in Morrison the kilt maker, at the top of the Royal Mile, and eh, which involved—a lot of it involved speaking to Americans who were looking for their clan roots. Some of that doesn't change, either, but as you came further down the High Street, it became much more about it being a place where people lived, with dogs and cats in the streets and kids in the streets and food shops and people doing their shopping.

That's what I remember from my childhood. And that instilled a great desire in me for the way I wanted to live when I was growing up, was in the Royal Mile. That was my heart's desire..... (The Canongate) It was attractive to tourists, and they did walk down and have a look at it all, but they were looking in on something that was vibrant and alive.

That was also to do with the real sense of history and the fact that people in the community mostly came from families that knew the area, that knew something of its history, that knew how their family connected to it, why things were there. I can remember, I must have been just a wee girl, and my dad telling me—I can remember being with my dad and stopping in the street and him telling me about all the lads who were "not deid yet", and in the close and going past it and telling my hildren the same story."



Morocco Land on the Canongate

**Jim O'Meara**

"My mum was divorced, when I was only months old, so we lived something of a nomadic life. She had 6 sisters, 2 brothers and more uncles and aunties than you could shake a stick at we lived at various houses depending on who had a spare room and how long they would put up with us. We lived at St Mary St for a while then moved up the Pleasance from there to the Cowgate then on to the Canongate about 1951, moving from there to Leith about 1959

I used to have a pal called Tommy who lived in Chessels Court. Morocco Land was a huge derelict site strewn with the debris of older tenements etc and backed on to the School of Building which lay between New St and Cranston St I well remember the angst when the ground was cleared in order to build the flats as it was our major playground

As my mother worked in a number of different jobs and didn't have much money I used to have my lunch for a few coppers in the Old Sailor's Arc at the top of New St I went to St Anne's then St Pat's progressing to Holy Cross for my Secondary Education We would play in Milnes Court and Chessel's Court and I remember one day when Tommy Logan slipped climbing over spiked railings to get into the Nursery grounds that separated the two closes - the spike went right up through his chin into his palate. He was a rare fitba player I remember - as were a lot of the laddies who developed their skills in the back closes with their proverbial tanner ba'."



**Dumbiedykes view from Holyrood Road**

**Braidwood writers (W) group in conversation with Reminiscence volunteer (M)**

M: So did you actually come from the Dumbiedykes?

W2: I've been stayin' here for 46 years. So I've seen, like, huge changes. A lot were for the better, but for a long time it was considered quite unpopular.

W3: What was it like? What it said in this book... it was this run-down estate from hell!

W2: It has vastly changed. And thankfully as well, but it was all those fights with the council, there was never enough money in the coffers to bring the place up to date. And so they tried in the '90s, over a long period of time, to introduce private landlords, which was gonna take the onus away from the council, but it didn't happen.

W3: I just hope the plannin' that's goin' on with the Canongate is goin' to work. I just hope it doesn't take anythin' away from the Canongate an' its looks an' its history. That's a major thing that's upsettin' so many people. Changin' the historic Royal Mile like that.

M: The Ark... They want to demolish it. W3: Is that not gonna get kept? M: Well, we don't know. W3: I thought that was listed as well. M: That's right.

W3: I know the only thing constant in this world's change, but it's got to be change for the better.

M... this is what they're tryin' to do. Change the character. And what for? Money.

W3: Money. And what is so ironic, they're talkin' about hotels for tourists, but the reason tourists come here is that it's an old town, because of the history. And if you change it, you alter its condition— W4: They won't come here. W3: We need a hotel there? Where do you need a hotel? I really dinna know... It's all the tourist trade, and its big conglomerates that's gobblin' up the history... W4: It's all to do with money. W3: Aye, of course it is. And it's "Scotland" [she says the word in a flat American accent imitation; several laugh]. But that big block of offices next to us before you come to the Scotsman offices. That's empty there's big offices to let, units to let. How long has it been—4 year, 5 year?

M: I think it doesn't make sense, does it? You've got all these office blocks, and you're wantin' to build another office block right on the Royal Mile.

W3: It's just investors; that's what it is, it's just investors.



Panmure Close, Canongate - site of former Haig Poppy Factory

**Pat, ex-Canongate resident**

"I was 3-year old when I came to the Canongate. And my father was a cooper; he made beer barrels in the local brewery that was off Holyrood Road. And I was an only child until I was 11, and of course at that time the Second World War was starting and my father was called up. I have a sister now, and there's 11 years between us. So, my mother stayed 28 years in the Canongate before she moved out, so most of our childhood was brought up there. And ehm, it's a good place. Where we were, in Dunbar's Close, it was a close and it went right up, you know. But it wasn't enclosed at the time; it was open all the way down. And the Haig poppy factory was at the bottom, where the ex-servicemen made the poppies..... It was all open balconies all the way up. And we looked on to the poppy factory. They had the factory bit there, where the workers went in, and they had like a short piece bit here, which was all sort of nice-coloured stones and a nice walkway, up to where there was a showroom. And eh, there was lots of families in the close there....."

I was being brought up Catholic, so I went to the Catholic school; I went to St. Anne's in the Cowgate. When I got married, I changed to the Church of Scotland, and my girls went to the Royal Mile Primary, they went to the nursery first and then they went to the school. But growin' up was great really....street games and all... school holidays... you were out to 10 o'clock at night because it was still light! And, you had no fear. You had nothing to be frightened of...

Just before '49, and I was only 7, my mum workin' on the trams and bein' on the shifts, I went to stay with my grandmother....in Newington.....My first job was in a printing works, we left school at 14 then.... it was dead boring, because all I got to do was gum envelopes all day. And I thought, ohhh, I can't stand this. And of course you go through the rigmarole; they send you for a bottle of tartan ink, or they'd send you to some other department for a 'long stand', and then somewhere else for a pail of steam. This was your initiation....."





Inside the Sailors Ark, Canongate

**Volunteers (C and M) in conversation with two sisters, Anne and Kathleen (A and K), who had grown up in the Canongate but have moved away now**

M: What do you think about how they're changing the style of the Royal Mile, you know, the way they start building all those modern buildings?

K: I would have thought all these houses would be protected. A: Aye.

M: I lot of them are, aye, but these later houses that were built, the council houses, next to the Ark.

A: Like Jack's Close and that.....that must be listed.

M: Oh aye, most of them are, but developers want all this extra land to build the shops and offices, plus the hotel.

[A, K want to know what listed buildings are going to be up for demolition.]

C: There's the Sailor's Ark.

A: Oh, we used to go there for a dinner. I mean, in later years it was sorta like the down-and-outs that used to go there, but when we were wee, I mean my mum didn't have a lot of money, and we used to go there for our lunch sometime. Well, we didn't call it our lunch then; we used to call it goin' round for your dinner. And we used to get a good dinner from the Sailor's Ark.

K: So that's comin' down. C: Mm-hmm. K: What else? C: The Canongate Venture.

A, K: Where's that? M: It's an old school; it was an old school down New Street.

A: That's the techi-school. Cranston Street.

K: New Street.

A: New Street. Cause that's where our house is near the little one at the back a the school. I used to have a boyfriend go to that school. I used to wave to him [mimes waving and simpering; we all laugh]. M: Where did you go? A: St. Anne's. And then St. Pat's. And then Kate went—she went to the clever school. She went to Holy Cross Academy, and I went to St. Thomas'.

M: What age are you? A: 60 this year.



Canongate Kirk

**Volunteers (M and C) talk to older members of Canongate Kirk Girls' Club (W2, D and Di)**

D: Of course the school—'cause we all went to the school—

W1: 'Cause we all went to the same school.....

D...the Royal Mile, which was previously Milton House School....., we all, went there.... the church was much closer to the school in these days.

W2: That's true.

D: So, ehm, so I suppose there was that, but we didnae live for the church when we were young.

W3: No.

D: We just used to use it as an opportunity for us all to come together.

W2: And they were great company; they were really good. Great halls to hang out in.

D: Aye, and safe places.

W3: It was a safe place, but—

D: The Canongate was never a dangerous place in that time, was it?

Women: No, no. Not that I remember.

D: It was a safe place. And I can't honestly recall in our time, anythin' other than stealin' bikes. I cannae think...and you stole 'em back. [All laugh]

Di: Or fightin' for firewood.

D: (remembering)... the Hanover crew, and all that... Anyway, what we used to do is—because they were getting pulled down and demolished, all the old tenements—or at least refurbished, I suppose we would call it now. Stripped out the insides and left the outsides in most of 'em, except the new ones—you would go in, and the first objective was to take the doors off. The bonfire with the most doors was the best, so—how you would do it—the floorboard would have

already been ripped up, for the last bonfire—and you were in—oh, you would step on joists and everything, to get the doors, and put them out the windows, upstairs!

W2: And you would never think you would get hurt.

D: Nowadays, you would get killed.....I don't know what if you get rid of the health and safety.... it's no more dangerous now, but it seems more people seem to get injured now.

M: Talkin' about changes, do you see a lot a changes on the Royal Mile, shoppin' and that?

Di: There used to be a co-op... What was the place we used to go...?

D: St. Cuthbert's. It used to be down at...

Di: But you know on Jeffrey Street? They used to have a bakers store, because we used to go up for yesterday's bread, and we'd get it for a penny. Ken, it was the kind you have to cut.

D: But I actually suspect that's no different from any other place, where communities are more spread out these days, you know?

W2: There was massive clearances, though, in the Canongate.

D: Old shops... because I could take you right up. Buckley's was on the right. What was the post office across the street; what was that originally?

W1: That was the shop that sold sweeties; I used to go in there and get penny dainties.

Di: There was Gladys' down at the swing park; you used to get the toffee cups when Gladys was down there.

D: We had the black puddin' shop, the chip shop right inside the manse's gate...

W2: And the skeekin shop! It was right opposite the church.

D: And that was open on a Sunday; it was the froth from the beer, that they were allowed to sell, because it wasna licensed.

W2: And you couldn't get a drink on a Sunday at all in Scotland. The men used to go in there and they could drink skeekins.

D: But you took a glass jug, so what the guys said—my dad used to lie in his bed all day on a Sunday, so as a result after gettin' him his papers and cigarettes, you would then be sent down at half past 12 or 1 o'clock when they opened, and with a big jug you would get a jar of skeekin and pay him for it—it was right across there—I think it was about 3 pence or somethin'.

W2: You know, nobody outside the Canongate knows what skeekin is! Often Alec will say, to Willie Duff..... 'What about the skeekin shop?' He said 'I don't know what you're talkin' about—never heard a' the word.'



**Holiday Apartments (blue) & Housing in Hope Scheme Holyrood**

## **5.0. KEY FINDINGS**

### **5.1. HOUSING**

Throughout the Caltongate masterplanning process and during consultation on the Mountgrange planning applications, members of the public and community organisations highlighted the need for additional housing and in particular development which addresses the shortage of family and affordable housing in the Old Town.

Throughout the research project many issues relating to housing need and provision were raised by participants –

- the use of private letting agencies to resolve homelessness,
- the failure of existing housing allocations policies,
- an inadequacy of affordable housing policy to meet current needs,
- Subdivision and use of larger homes for student or tourist accommodation.

We also undertook some basic statistical research looking at existing housing provision by tenure and type. Information was also collected by searching council papers and Freedom of Information requests regarding city wide council housing stock, allocations/demand for social housing across the city and housing completions in the city centre.

It was clear that a better balance is needed between long term and transient residents and that within the City Centre there has been a significant shift towards private letting accommodation, with many larger homes which traditionally provided accommodation for families now being used for students (not always covered by HMO) or as 'holiday flats' or second homes. Whilst it is recognised that provision is also necessary for students and tourists within the city centre this should not be at the expense of adequate housing provision for permanent residents.

- **A 'liveable' city centre was identified as a key characteristic of the area.**
- **There is an urgent need to retain a mixed residential population in city centre.**



**Campaigners highlighting the community's concerns outside CEC Chambers**

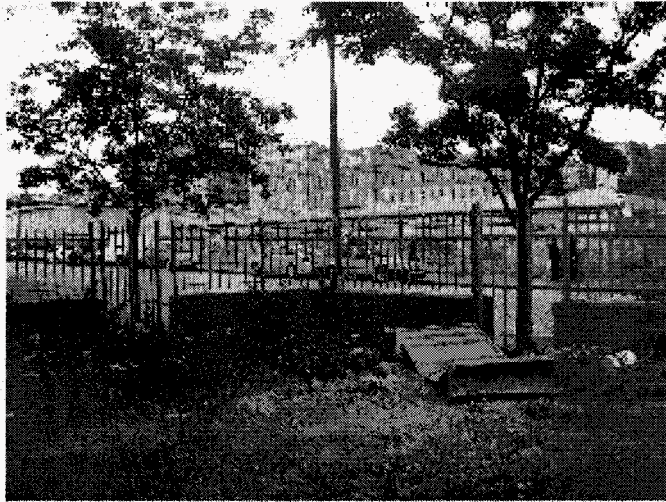
## **5.2 COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

In recent years there has been a loss in a variety of community facilities in the Old Town (e.g. St Annes, Community Centre, Dumbiedykes IT Centre, even the Canongate public toilets). In addition, the increase in tourist shops and cafés has resulted in a decline in the variety of shops to serve the needs of local residents. Whilst it is understood that the council is limited in the planning legislation to fully control the types of shops operating in any area, it is also recognised that much more could be done through letting arrangements for Council controlled shops and buildings.

The project questionnaire highlighted an urgent need for community facilities and spaces in Old Town. Of with people with a local connection; 70% identified support for a community centre and 70% identified the need for a better mix of shops.

There is an identified need for additional play facilities for both younger and teenage children within the city centre, particularly in the eastern area, as well as support facilities for the increasing number of elderly residents within the area.

- **More support and facilities are needed for the residential population if a 'living city' is to be maintained in the Old Town.**



Neglected space at the bottom of Cranston St corner East Market St

### 5.3. PUBLIC SPACE

The results from questionnaires and analysis of the mapping highlighted the value residents and visitors place on our green spaces. Both large parks and smaller areas which included trees and grassed areas were identified as an important community resource for all ages. It was also apparent that many 'hard' landscaped pedestrian spaces are also highly valued as opportunities for informal recreation and social interaction (e.g. Hunter Square and the High Street). Concerns were raised about the management of public space, and imposing restrictions on the accessibility of public spaces and streets. Most were opposed to creating 'gated areas' as a solution to management and were concerned that streets and public spaces in Old Town are becoming purely a resource to sell for private commercial activity.

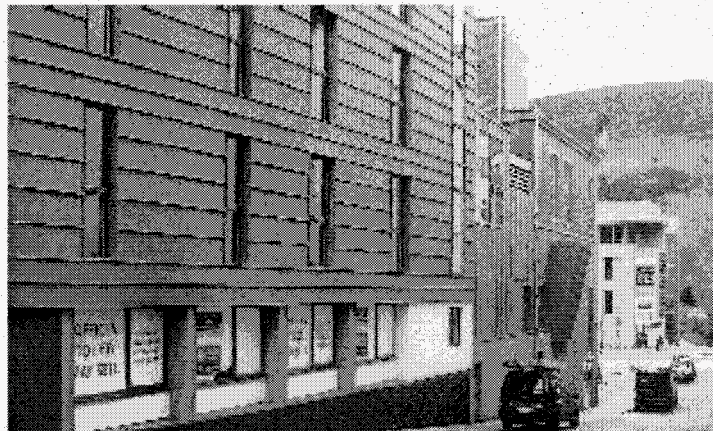
The local authority's apparent lack of responsibility and care for the everyday management of these spaces for public use has further reduced the sense of civic responsibility, and this is exacerbated by an increasing proportion of transient residents. There was much criticism of the regulatory response to problems (management through an increase in licensed businesses use, use controlled by commercial events organisations, increased installation of CCTV). Many felt that this approach does nothing to support informal public use of spaces or to address community concerns regarding improvements to public areas and access for pedestrians in the city.

- **A lack of 'public' responsibility exists in the management of public space.**
- **There is a need for safe public and usable green spaces in the Old Town.**
- **'Privatisation' of public space must stop.**

#### 5.4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The research undertaken highlighted the common threats from development to cities and communities elsewhere. The participants were able to forge links with other communities who also are struggling to retain their identity in the face of development pressure from 'gentrification' schemes and speculative large scale commercial developments.

Whilst there is a measurable excess of large scale 'grade A' office developments within the city centre, there is also an identifiable need for more 'affordable' workshops, start up and other small and medium sized enterprises. Economic change provides us with an opportunity to reconsider developments and land sales such as Caltongate, and to use community resources to better effect. By growing community assets through self build and community self management, greater civic responsibility can be nurtured and a more sustainable long term economic future can be realised.



**Empty offices around Canongate & Holyrood**

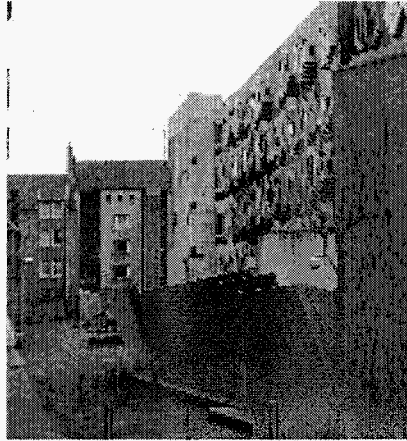
Whilst tourism, conference facilities and large scale offices will continue to play a role in the economy of cities, the future of growth in this sector is likely to be slowed by changes in business and industry practice in reaction to government actions on Climate Change, and by the development of communications and technology. Increased home working, video conferencing, eco-tourism are however likely to expand. In addition the retention, repair and reuse of existing public assets and buildings provides a fantastic opportunity to reskill workers in trades and provide training opportunities for sustainable building, community development and business management. It is clear that in the present economic climate public assets and resources should be retained and used to provide continued revenue streams for local government, rather than sold at reduced value to prop up failing development companies on the promise of speculative profits from developments which serve a limited future market. In light of recent economic scandals, public authorities should also consider reviewing sales of land which have not been concluded.

- **More affordable premises are needed to support smaller independent and start up businesses**
- **There is a need to identify opportunities and sites for community development and management to support local needs.**

## 5.5. PLANNING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Project fully reviewed the planning process undertaken by CEC in relation to the Mountgrange Caltongate Masterplan and the subsequent handling of the planning applications. This case demonstrated the lack of democracy which exists in the planning system. Although much mention was made of attempting to pilot the new methods of greater community consultation and engagement (in line with the new planning framework) the process failed to address fundamental concerns raised by a significant number of statutory and non-statutory consultees. There presently exists a serious democratic deficiency in the planning process whereby some stakeholders clearly have much greater influence than others and where the public interest now appears to be given little consideration. In particular the recent practice of encouraging developers to produce masterplans for public land as a condition following disposal, has led to criticism regarding the impartiality of the planning process, particularly where alternative masterplans have not been considered.

The Local Government Act, which governs the management accounting and disposal of Common Good Assets and other public buildings, land and assets, is also not working. Serious problems exist in many Local Authorities over the management and accounting of Common Good Land and Assets.



Scottish Parliament looking from Holyrood Road toward Canongate

'Best Value' which applies to all disposals is not always being applied, and there are very few procedures in place to enable public consultation or to have any input to auditing or planning for 'disposals of surplus property' (surplus to whom?). In addition, there are very limited opportunities for urban communities to participate in the growth in community ownership through restrictions in the Land Reform Act and 'community right to buy' legislation.

- **There is clearly a lack of democracy in the planning system and the new planning framework is failing to address undemocratic decision making.**
- **The Land Reform Act needs to be extended to include urban communities.**
- **There needs to be proper & accountable stewardship of Common Good Land & Assets.**





New Street site from Regent Road Canongate to rear

#### 6. ACTION POINTS – WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

- Demand CEC uphold the decision to use the £100,000 Bond from Mountgrange to allow a temporary landscape scheme to be implemented on the New St gap site.
- Request a full review of current land disposals by CEC for joint (development) ventures to assess potential losses of proposed profits resulting from the recent economic crisis.
- Allow the community temporary use or management of vacant buildings to support community needs - eg small business start up, artist space, community meetings/ projects, as is being implemented by councils throughout the U.K.
- Identify vacant homes, buildings and land that could be used to renovate into homes or have homes built upon. A strategy to increase the population of the Old Town to a sustainable level where the community is central to planning.
- Identify land that is under used to develop into green and/or public space.
- Seek opportunities to work with other local organizations and seek funding and support to develop, collation and archive research material collected.
- Support a community led initiative to develop a strategy for the regeneration and preservation of the Old Town in partnership with existing organisations and groups.
- Apply pressure on CEC to keep a register of Common Good Land and Assets.
- Make links with those who want to change taxation on land banking
- Support national initiatives for the scrapping of VAT on repairs to existing buildings

## 7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was compiled by Jim Johnson, Julie Logan, Catriona Grant, Bern Balfe, Lou Rosenberg and Sally Richardson. Photos by Sally Richardson except where credited.

Thanks to Communities Scotland's Robert Cuthbert, Lee Goudry and our SCARF mentor Douglas Westwater.

**Special thanks to the following facilitators, volunteers and contributors below and to everyone else who visited, participated and showed support for the project.**

Margaret Baxter, Ruth Holmes, Meg Adams, Christa Tooley, Joy Miliken, Alastair Mabbot, Susana Lorenzo, Marie Hamilton, John Stewart, John Thompson, Jon Panter-Black, Colin Geddes, Janet Fenton, Nikki Logan, David Liddle, Patsy Grant, Craig McLean, Allan Armstrong, Jim Slaven, Fiona McMurray, Ken Smillie, Margo & John, Peter Browne, Frank Boyle, Bob Hamilton, Simon Yuill, Eddie Truman and Jackie Salazarj

### **The following organisations contributed to the project –**

Braidwood Centre Writers Group  
 Canongate Kirk Girls' Club  
 Old Saint Paul's Church  
 The Royal Mile Primary School  
 The Demarco European Art Foundation  
 The Scottish Storytelling Centre  
 The Cockburn Association  
 Edinburgh World Heritage Trust  
 Simpson and Brown Architects  
 Neil Simpson Architects  
 The Architectural Collaborative  
 Art in Architecture  
 Cuboid  
 Community Land Partnerships  
 Development Trusts Association Scotland  
 Local People Leading  
 Scottish Screen  
 Pilton Video  
 Scotland Unltd  
 Scottish Commons  
 Save Our Glen  
 City Strolls  
 Gardyloo  
 Save Meadowbank Stadium  
 Porty Greenkeepers  
 Save Glenogle Baths  
 Orrocco Planning Appeal Group  
 Friends of Corstorphine Hill  
 Greenyonder Tours



During the Project we lost a dear friend and neighbour in the Canongate. Ken Skeel was very active in the Save Our Old Town campaign, and was one of the founders and stalwarts of the historic vigil for a Scottish Parliament that set up camp on Calton Hill between 1992 and 1997, paving the way for the creation of the Scottish Parliament.

During the last few days of his life he selflessly completed this drawing of John Knox, Mary Queen of Scots, Robbie Burns and Jenny Geddes enjoying a strip the willow down Market Street, with Calton Hill in the background.

His life long partner Nell gifted this to the SOOT campaign but sadly as we were compiling this report on the project, Nell died.

They were both brilliant artists, dancers, story tellers and passionate campaigners for Truth and Justice in the world. They will be sorely missed.