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Edinburgh Portrait

WILLIAM TROTTER,
CABINET MAKER, ENTREPRENEUR AND LORD PROVOST,

1772–1833

STEPHEN JACKSON

WILLIAM TROTTER is today celebrated as Scotland's greatest cabinet maker, the name attached to countless pieces of fine regency furniture of Scottish origin. The man behind the furniture is less well known, either as Lord Provost of Edinburgh between 1825 and 1827, or as an individual, representative of his time.¹ Research by furniture historians into Trotter's work is constantly on-going and this current interest in part justifies the present biographical exposition.² The evidence for Trotter's political life is relatively plentiful in the many letters written in connection with municipal business and newspaper commentaries on city politics. This essay also seeks to clarify the history of the Trotter family and certain other aspects of William Trotter's career.

Trotter was not well served by his only previous biographer, Francis Bamford, whose brief sketches in the *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club* and elsewhere, while full of admiration for the furniture, characterised his political career as a murky pre-Reform episode of derisory significance.³ Bamford relished Henry Cockburn's description of the Lord Provost as possessed with 'only the disposition to be cunning but not the ability' and certainly Trotter's term in office was neither easy nor especially accomplished.⁴ The general re-evaluation of the political and social history of the early nineteenth century that has taken place since Bamford was writing forces us, however, to contextualise this aspect of Trotter's career differently. Oligarchical politics were not devoid of principle or purpose and we need to recognise that the level at which civic business was conducted imposed certain standards of competence upon its managers.

William Trotter was born on 10 November 1772, the youngest son of Thomas Trotter and Charlotte Knox (fig. 1).⁵ Thomas (1724–1804), who founded the furniture firm, was the son of the merchant Thomas Trotter (1685–1767), a provisioner to the

Duke of Cumberland's army in 1745.⁶ Thomas Trotter senior's youngest son, William, inherited the successful grocery business, later becoming the Shore Master at Leith, while another son, John, became the minister of Ceres in Fife, and later at the Scots Church in Swallow Street in London.⁷

Thomas Trotter junior began trading as an upholsterer in partnership with Robert Young during the 1740s. Young and Trotter diversified into cabinet making in around 1772, the year in which they established premises at No. 9 Princes Street, on the south side at the east end of the street (fig. 2). The family home remained at Gosford's Close in the Old Town until 1797 when Thomas bought a house in George Street from his son-in-law.⁸ Thomas's eldest son, also Thomas, became a Major General in the Royal Artillery, and other sons entered the Navy, the medical profession and the East India Company, in both civil and military capacities. Of his four daughters, the eldest, Mary, married the merchant John Pitcairn, whilst the third, Jane, married Pitcairn's brother, Alexander.⁹

William Trotter became a partner in the furnishing firm in 1797, alongside his father Thomas, Robert Young, and James Hamilton.¹⁰ Hamilton died in 1801 and Thomas Trotter in 1804. It would appear that Robert Young retired from the business shortly afterwards, since on 11 May 1805, at the age of 32, William announced in the *Caledonian Mercury* that he had 'succeeded to the Old Establishment'.¹¹ The young entrepreneur had married his cousin, St Clair Stuart Knox, in June 1801. The Knox family were descended from the brother of the Great Reformer, a matter of some pride to later generations.¹²

William's own family was as large as that in which he grew up, Mrs Trotter presenting him with six sons and three daughters (fig. 3). Of the four sons who lived to adulthood the eldest, Robert Knox Trotter, was destined for the army, whilst the second,

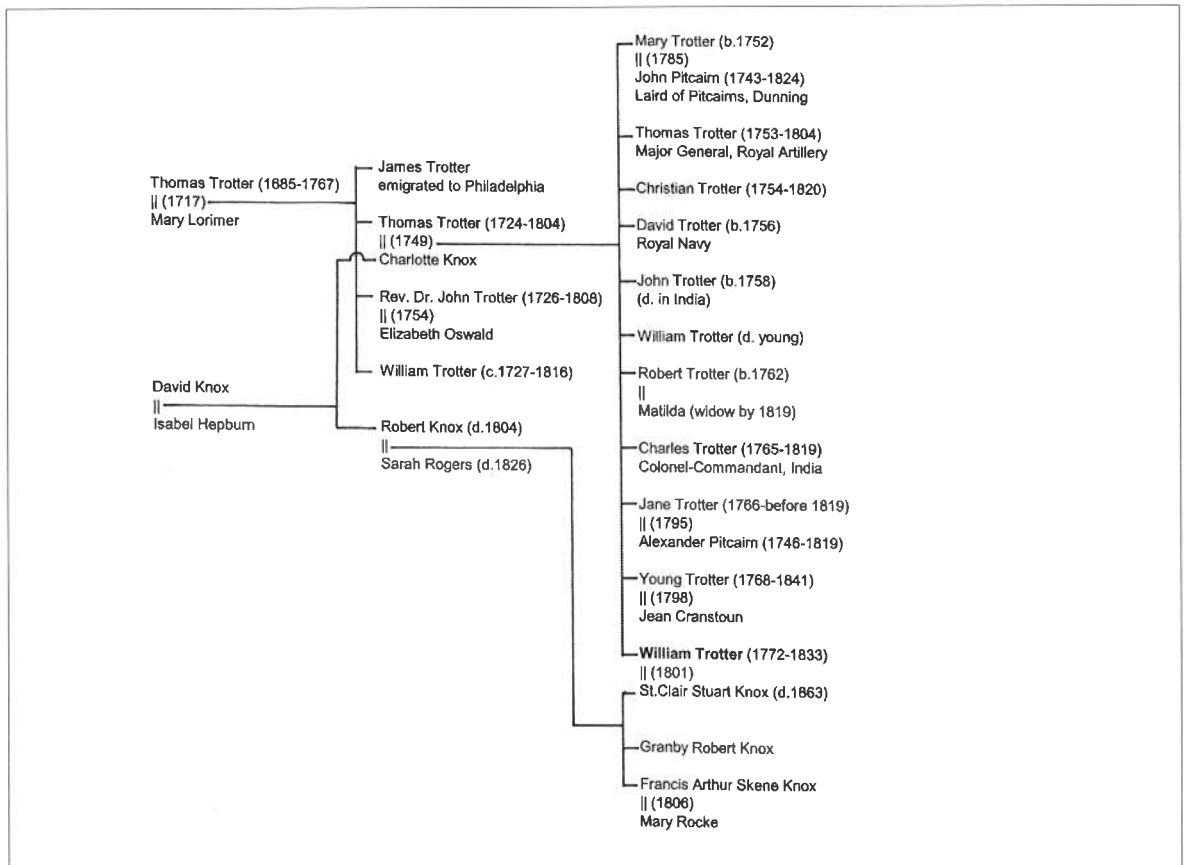


Fig. 1. The family of Thomas Trotter senior.

William Thomas, entered the East India Company. The third, Francis, emigrated to America, dying prematurely in 1836 — in his father's will, Francis was treated with a degree of suspicion, the trustees being permitted to withhold his annuity of £200 'if his conduct shall merit it'.¹³ The youngest, Charles, inherited 9 Princes Street on coming of age in 1837, and his career has been amply described by Ian Gow.¹⁴ Of the three daughters, one married a German, another a Russian, and the last maintained the family tradition of marrying a Knox cousin.¹⁵

William Trotter prospered and in 1820 he bought the Ballindean estate in Perthshire from Sir David Wedderburn for £67,000.¹⁶ £22,000 of the purchase price was financed as a loan from Wedderburn's trustees that was not settled until 1828, the year in which Trotter appears to have begun to alter the fabric of the existing house.¹⁷ The purchase included the home farm and four tenanted farms in the

parishes of Inchture and Longforgan, and in 1830 he bought the lands of South Ballo, to the north of Ballindean.¹⁸ It is generally assumed from drawings now held at the National Monuments Record of Scotland that the remodelling of Ballindean was undertaken by the architect Thomas Hamilton but the documentary evidence is deficient and this aspect of Trotter's grand domestic project requires further study.¹⁹ It was in 1828 also that William reached an agreement with Lord Kinnaird that his family might occupy part of the front seat at Inchture parish church.²⁰ In Edinburgh, the family resided at 25 Northumberland Street until 1817, when they moved to 13 Abercromby Place.²¹ It is clear, however, that in business, politics and family life, Trotter increasingly identified, towards the end of his life, with Perthshire. He was a Justice of the Peace there, a Commissioner of Supply for the county, and Deputy Lieutenant.²²

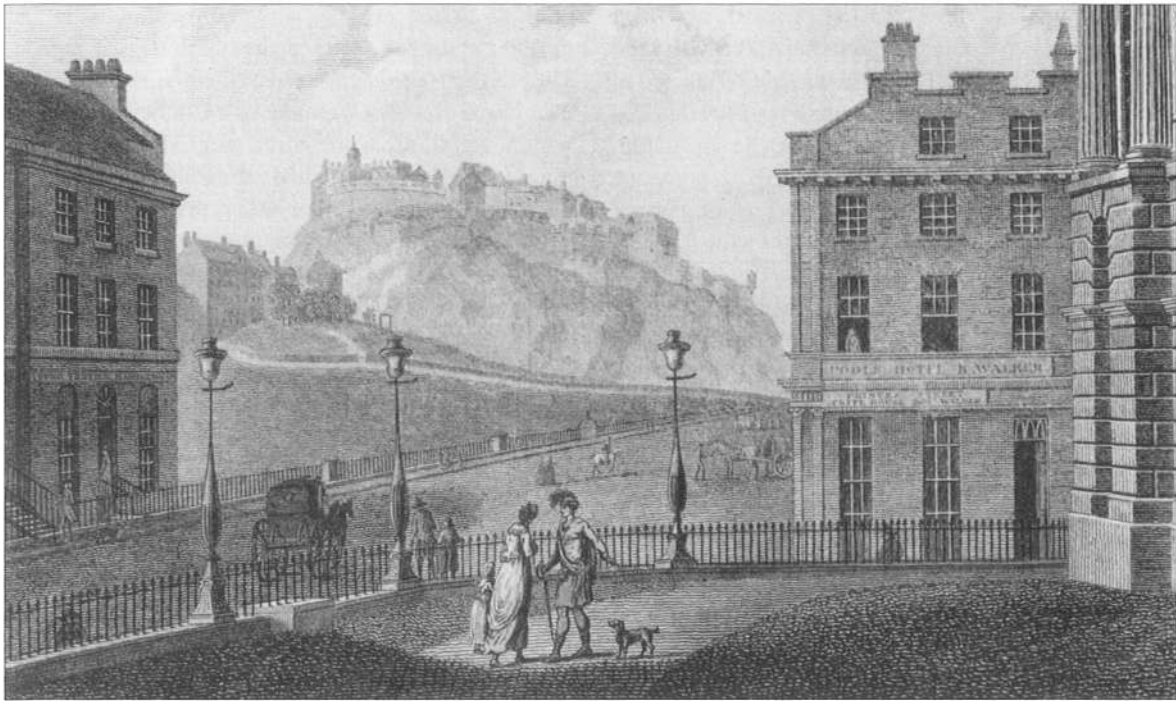


Fig. 2. Princes Street, showing the shop of Young, Trotter and Hamilton at the left hand side. Etching by James Fittler after Jean Claude Nattes, published in *Scotia Depicta*, London, 1804. (National Museums of Scotland Library.)

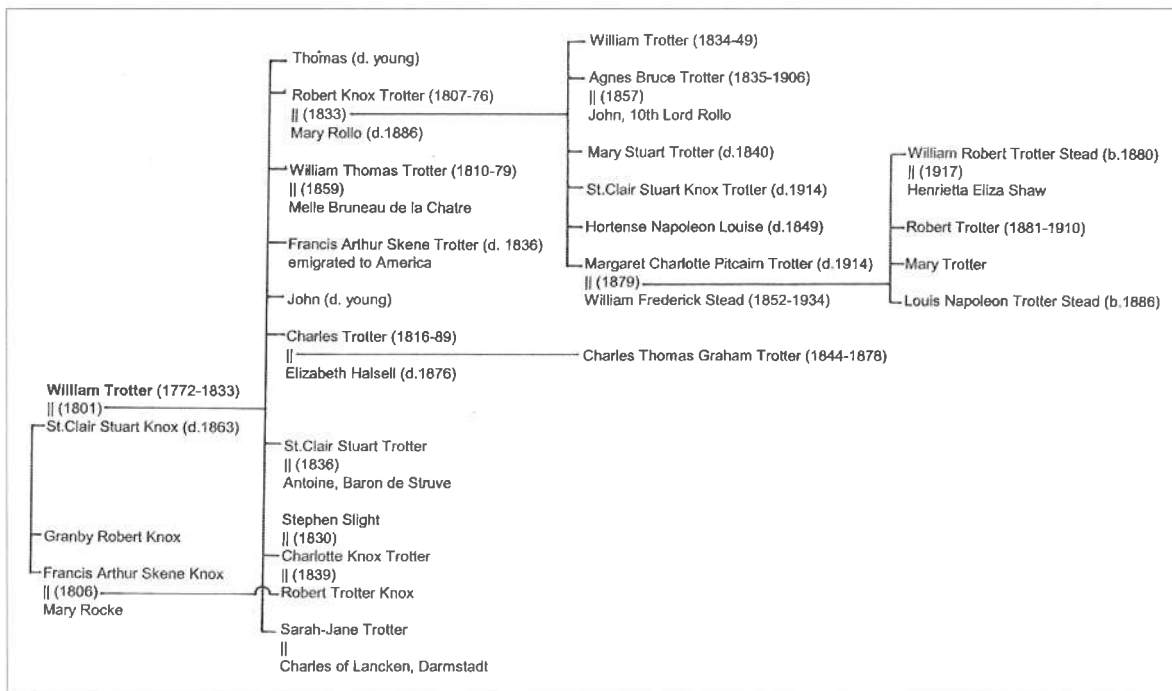


Fig. 3. The family of William Trotter.

It is unclear how Trotter gained his first Edinburgh Town Council appointment, as a Merchant Councillor in October 1806. He was not re-elected in 1807 but returned to the Council in 1809 as Old Dean of Guild. As the previous Dean of Guild, William Calder, had become Lord Provost, someone had to be found to fill this relatively unimportant position, tenable for one year. In October 1813 Trotter became one of the four Bailies in a new Council formed by Sir John Marjoribanks. This important magisterial post was not taken up again in 1814 and a full decade passed before he was selected to stand as Lord Provost.²³

Edinburgh's Town Council was notoriously undemocratic. The outgoing Council elected those individuals who would form its successor. The process began in late September and was completed during the first week of October when the Provost and four Bailies were elected. While Merchant Councillors were drawn from the ranks of Edinburgh's Merchant Company, they were not elected by the membership at large (roughly four to five hundred individuals during this period). The only external influence was the selection of Trades Councillors from leets, or lists, provided by the individual trade incorporations. Even this process was open to considerable manipulation and many of the fourteen incorporations had only a handful of members by this date. By convention, the Lord Provost served for two years although other members of the Council tended to rotate or stand down annually.²⁴

Unusually, Trotter found his candidature for the provostship opposed from within the Council. At a meeting towards the end of July 1825, William Allan of Glen, who was due to step down as a magistrate, vented his anger at Lord Provost Alexander Henderson's decision to nominate Trotter. The *Scotsman* suggested that:²⁵

A good many members of Council, indignant at the unceremonious way in which offices, apparently in their gift, are disposed of without the smallest mark of deference to their opinions, are seriously inclined to support Mr Allan [for Provost] — who instead of being hatched into the Chief Magistracy in a secret conclave, frankly appeals to the sentiments of his brother members.

This contest provoked a satirical cartoon in the pages of the *Northern Looking-Glass*. The rivals are shown tugging at the gown of Provost Henderson, each

pointing to his carriage, while below they wine and dine the outgoing Council members (figs 4 and 5). The cartoon comments directly on a report in the *Edinburgh Weekly Chronicle* of a Council meeting at which opinions were aired regarding the rival nominations.²⁶ Trotter had apparently 'ordered a carriage, and taken other steps preparatory to his elevation' on the understanding that Allan did not intend to stand. During the meeting, Allan challenged Trades Convenor David McGibbon to deny:

whether he had not been present at a dinner, after the High School examination, last year, at which his [Allan's] health was drank as the successor to the present Chief Magistrate. The Convenor said he had no recollection of such a circumstance: several of the members near him, however, not only recollected such a toast was given, but that it was received with cheers, in which the Convenor himself joined with great apparent cordiality.

To this Allan added that 'his coach had been ordered several weeks or months before Mr Trotter's' and that he would not be standing down.

Both candidates were Tories and the manner in which the contest came about appeared to indicate that there was little to choose between them. An anonymous correspondent in the *Scotsman* questioned that paper's preference for Allan on the grounds that:²⁷

To me they are Dromeo of Glen and Dromeo of Ballindean. I can distinguish them not ... It is true that the one comes invested with a romantic air of wrong. The object of the first love, he has been jilted by his mistress. The affections of the Good Town have been lavished on a more accomplished rival. But to a Whig what is this? ... The system and the principles are untouched. 'Between Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee' he knows not the difference ... I scarce do know which looks, dresses, walks or boos best. I have not seen any of them in a quadrille. Their dancing therefore, is with me, a moot point.

If their personal qualities were unknown, the writer did, however, consider their political allegiances to differ in one crucial aspect:

How do the gentlemen stand at Arniston? Are they either or both engaged there? This is delicate ground. But it is clear, so far as Mr Allan is concerned. He has published his allegiance. He has made a parade of his submission to the dynasty of Dundas. Has Mr Trotter? No. I tell you, no. I tell you more. Not only has he not declared his adhesion. It has not been given. He is free of all engagement.

Were it true, this would have been recommendation enough for a Whig to prefer the election of Trotter. From the 1770s to the 1830s, the Dundas family,



Fig. 4. 'The two Provosts', *Northern Looking-Glass*, September 1825. (National Library of Scotland.)



Fig. 5. 'Civic Festivals', *Northern Looking-Glass*, September 1825. (National Library of Scotland.)

whose ancestral home was Arniston House, occupied various positions in the government of Scotland. Henry Dundas and his son Robert, first and second Viscounts Melville, practically ruled the country on behalf of successive Tory administrations. It was wishful thinking, however, to disassociate the cabinet maker from the Dundas interest. As early as 10 May 1825, Lord Melville had written to Trotter to express

his 'great satisfaction' at the latter's nomination.²⁸ The Provost in waiting replied offering to pack his Council with men who would return as Member of Parliament for Edinburgh, the Lord Register, Melville's cousin, William Dundas.²⁹

Both actors and commentators were thinking ahead to the general election that would take place in 1826. Selection of the MP for Edinburgh lay in the

hands of the twenty five ordinary members of the Town Council, together with eight extraordinary Trades Deacons. Charles Maclaren, editor of the *Scotsman*, preferred Allan's 'self-will and spontaneity of purpose' precisely because he might unseat William Dundas.³⁰ Maclaren cautioned that the best candidate would possess 'the smallest share of the qualities that make a man the submissive tool of the depositaries of power'. If Allan were ambitious, he would present a greater nuisance to the Dundas family than to Edinburgh's citizens. In a letter to Lord Melville, Trotter represented Allan as the tool of Sir John Marjoribanks, now MP for Berwickshire, claiming that Allan and his associates would depose William Dundas in favour of Marjoribanks.³¹ In truth, Marjoribanks' oppositional activities amounted to little more than sympathy for the interests of Leith in respect to harbour improvements, a cause of friction between the port and the city.³²

The only distinction which the *Scotsman's* anonymous letter writer could point to was in church policy, where Trotter was to be preferred for being the friend of those who 'detest and refuse all pluralities'. The Town Council had the power of patronage in selecting Edinburgh's ministers, as well as the professors at the University. Hence whilst Allan might 'reward his friends with the fat things of the College and the Town', Trotter could be relied upon to 'seek the meritorious'. Trotter is thus identified as leaning more to the evangelical than to the moderate wing of the Church, a position that was increasingly consistent with political conservatism. Trotter was an elder at St George's Church during the ministry of Andrew Thomson, the leading evangelical of the 1820s.³³ Although Thomson was a Whig, Thomas Chalmers at St John's parish in Glasgow was establishing a following among the civic conservatives led by Kirkman Finlay and James Ewing.³⁴ Glasgow's ruling elite had by this date pioneered an interventionist, utilitarian style of civic management, elements of which are detectable in William Trotter's administration of Edinburgh. To cite one example, during 1826, he set unemployed weavers to work on Edinburgh's Meadows, as James Cleland had done on Glasgow Green.³⁵

In the event, the labyrinthine methods by which councillors were selected during the last fortnight in

September enabled Trotter to force check-mate upon Allan. The absence from a crucial meeting of one Council member who supported Allan led to that man's nominated proxy being replaced, on a vote, by William Trotter himself.³⁶ This in turn allowed certain trades' leets to be shortened against their own preference and for enough of Allan's supporters to be replaced with Trotter's men. Outgoing Provost Henderson disliked the manner in which this was done but could do nothing to prevent it, and support for Allan rapidly fell away. Allan withdrew his challenge the next day and on 4 October Trotter was formally elected, along with the Bailies, Treasurer and Dean of Guild. He was now free to parade in his new carriage, the 'splendour' of which, wrote the *Scotsman*:³⁷

surpasses any vehicle which has been formerly started in this city. The rich caparison of the horses, and the costly but chaste ornaments of the carriage, together with the elegance of the liveries, excited universal admiration.

There was no sarcasm, however, in Maclaren's hopes for Trotter's term in office:³⁸

Mr Trotter cannot be willing that his name should be added to the long list of past Provosts who have sunk into inglorious and stupid oblivion. His taste, education, and habits of life, have given him wider sympathies than most of his predecessors, and the spirit of the times — of his political superiors — is favourable and stimulating ... With the aid of the Senatus he may do something to improve the internal administration of the College ... [and] is there not much to be done respecting that *teaching* which flows from the pulpit? ... He is, by marriage, a kinsman of the illustrious Knox ... The beneficial consequences which arise from the introduction of able and popular ministers to ecclesiastical charges in this great city, are incalculable.

Maclaren was an opponent of pluralism and at the time of the Disruption joined the Free Church. The hand of his co-editor, William Ritchie, can perhaps be discerned in the editorial's comments on the 'regard [that] must be had to the rules of taste in planning and constructing public buildings'. In his own inaugural speech, Trotter set out to distance himself from the 'manner in which I have been placed in this chair' and outlined his primary objectives as 'a most anxious and ardent desire to increase the splendour of our native city', together with implementation of the 'important and beneficial arrangements' planned for the Port of Leith.³⁹

These two grand projects were inherited from the previous Lord Provost. The first, improvements to

the infrastructure of the Old Town, in order to open up the west and south to residential and commercial development, had been opposed by residential taxpayers, and an Improvements Bill had been withdrawn from Parliament, at the committee stage, in June 1825.⁴⁰ Trotter would need the support of both government and Parliament in getting a revised bill framed and passed. Although he flattered William Dundas in his inaugural speech, in private he warned Lord Melville that guiding the legislation through Parliament would 'require much activity, perseverance, & influence' on the part of the member for Edinburgh.⁴¹ The concern was that Dundas was generally reckoned to be lazy and inattentive, a failing that contrasted with Viscount Melville's own administrative energies.

The second project, development of Leith docks, was an almost continuous process during the early nineteenth century. Huge redevelopment of the harbour complex, for naval and commercial purposes, was first proposed in 1799. By 1817 the Town Council had spent over £300,000, incurring debts, principally to the government, which it attempted to meet through the taxation of trade.⁴² Scottish civic finances were in poor health throughout the period and when in 1817 the cost of harbour improvements at Aberdeen rendered its Town Council insolvent, a Select Committee of the House of Commons was formed to examine allegations of financial mismanagement. The Committee discovered that 'improvident administration of the pecuniary concerns of the city' caused Edinburgh to spend two-thirds of ordinary tax revenues on interest payments.⁴³ The total level of Edinburgh's debt had increased continuously since 1807 and by 1819 stood at £497,101.

In May 1825, in an attempt to escape bankruptcy, the Town Council drew up a parliamentary bill transferring the docks to a joint stock company. After public opposition from the citizens of Leith, the moderate Whig, James Abercromby, led its rejection by the Commons.⁴⁴ It was discovered that several Councillors were to be shareholders, and that, in the words of Henry Cockburn, 'the public trustees had sold the subject of the trust to themselves for individual profit'.⁴⁵ Melville, drawing on his position as First Lord of the Admiralty, engineered a compromise measure, passed as an Act of Parliament

in June 1825, by which the government lent Edinburgh more money, permitted the city to borrow an even larger sum from elsewhere, and stipulated the construction of a naval yard as well as an eastern pier for the docks. Although the borrowing would have to be repaid from harbour duties, the merchants of Leith were granted seats on the Commission that would henceforth manage the docks, as also were representatives of the Admiralty.⁴⁶

The challenges that the new Lord Provost faced featured in a second cartoon published by the *Looking-Glass* in October 1825 (fig. 6). Trotter is shown recoiling in frustration at a list of set-backs: the rejected bills, the manner of his election, and the resignation of one of his Baillies just weeks into his term of office.⁴⁷ Around his Council table, factious and unfriendly faces clamour for his attention or comment on the retreat of their opponents. In the event Trotter began as he meant to go on and came out fighting. His first major act as Lord Provost, on 10 November, was a visitation of the University. A dispute within the medical faculty concerning the necessity of midwifery as a component subject of the MD syllabus gave occasion for the Town Council to assert its right to regulate academic affairs within the University. At a deliberately confrontational meeting at the College, using the title and pomp of Rector of the University, Trotter dictated to the Senatus the terms under which midwifery would be taught.⁴⁸ The detail of the dispute was secondary to the Council's desire not to relinquish any authority to which it had a legal right, and Trotter's defence of civic powers was a theme which would emerge again during his provostship.

As noted previously, it was one of the Lord Provost's duties to ensure that the Town Council return William Dundas as their Member of Parliament. Dundas had been MP for Edinburgh since 1812 and was to remain so until 1831. The *Scotsman* described him as a 'state pauper ... a sinecurist, who is morally, (and ought to be legally) disqualified for sitting in parliament in any place whatever'.⁴⁹ Many Councillors were of a similar opinion, and in an effort to impress upon both sides the benefits of good communication, Trotter requested of Lord Melville one to one meetings for them with their MP. This Dundas flatly refused to do, regarding his conduct at Westminster as non-

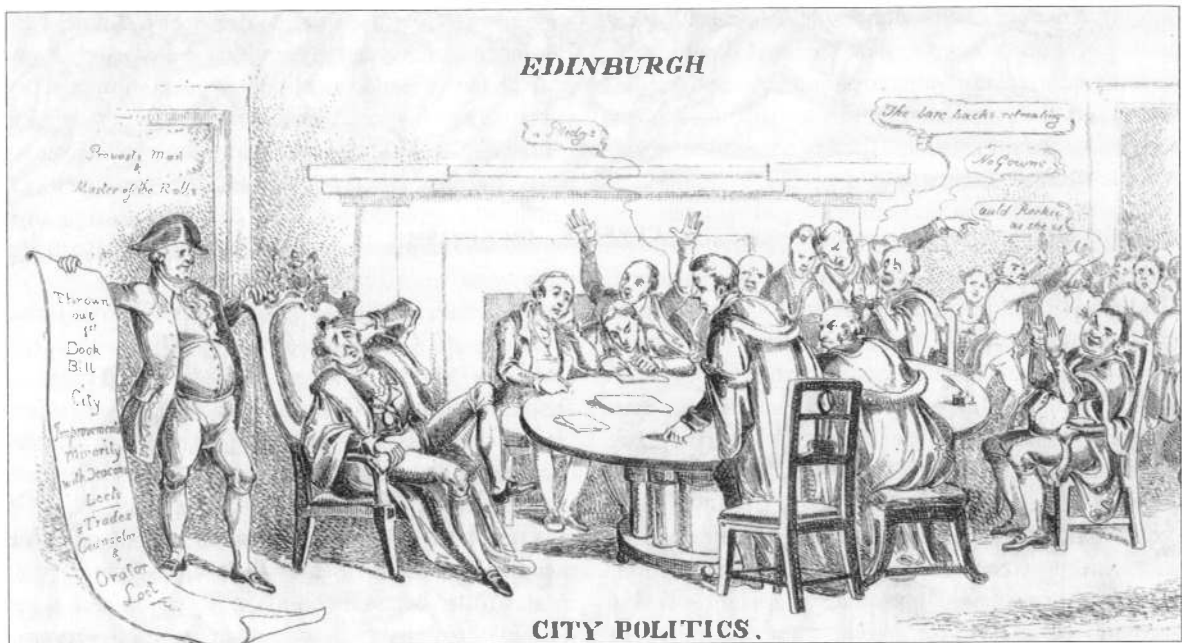


Fig. 6. 'Edinburgh City Politics', *Northern Looking-Glass*, October 1825. (National Library of Scotland.)

negotiable. As a consequence, certain Trades Councillors hatched a plan to nominate Trotter as an opponent. Taken by surprise, and conscious that a majority of both Trades and Merchant Councillors would support him, he equivocated. As the *Scotsman* put it, Dundas could 'only get his seat again by taking an undue advantage of the Provost's delicacy'.⁵⁰ The Dundas family machine moved quickly, however, Robert Dundas of Arniston and the Solicitor General, John Hope, visiting Trotter in his own home. 'He came into the room shaking and trembling and clearly ashamed of himself', reported Robert later to his uncle, Lord Melville.⁵¹ The pair reminded the Lord Provost that 'he was pledged to uncle William' and in due course Trotter informed his colleagues that he would refuse to stand. On 12 June, all but two members of the Council voted for William Dundas, who was nevertheless greeted with hissing from 'an immense crush' of public observers.⁵²

It was during 1826 that Trotter entered into a bitter squabble with the elected magistrates of Leith, something for which he was remembered long after. The business of the Dock Commission had been waylaid by bickering. It was not until December 1825 that Melville persuaded Leith's leading

merchants to drop threats of legal action over the composition of the Commission, and when it met in July 1826 to appoint a manager for the harbour works, Trotter reported to Melville that he had 'never seen a meeting where more want of good feeling & indiscreet temper, amounting almost to violence, was shewn'.⁵³

Unfortunately, the Lord Provost had used his casting vote to ensure that Leith's favoured candidate for the job was rejected. Relations continued to deteriorate: in August, South Leith's three magistrates, Alexander Burn, James Scarth and John Hardie, informed Trotter that they would not collect the Land Tax, or cess, because most of the proceeds were siphoned off to Edinburgh and the sum collected was far more than that required to maintain the court in Leith.⁵⁴ When the time came for the magistrates of South Leith to be appointed in October, it was rumoured that the Lord Provost would reject the 'long established privilege of nomination', by which they were chosen from a list originating in the port and, crucially, respecting the order in which the names were presented.⁵⁵ Alexander Burn stood down, intending his position to be taken up by James Scott, but alongside John

Hardie, Trotter picked Andrew Park and William Dickson.⁵⁶ Hardie immediately resigned and a public meeting was called to debate the 'insult' that had 'just been offered to the town of Leith'.⁵⁷ £200 was subscribed to take the case to Parliament and the forty police constables of Leith ceremoniously resigned their batons.

At a subsequent public dinner at the Leith Assembly Rooms on 24 October 1826, 258 'of the most respectable merchants of the town' met to drink the health of Hardie, Burn and Scarth, while in Edinburgh.⁵⁸

A number of watchmen, some say 50, were ... taken from their ordinary stations on the streets, and placed on guard at the Lord Provost's house in Abercromby Place, at the Assembly Rooms, George Street, and different other places of the city. The cause of alarm has not transpired ... [yet] the circumstance has given rise to various rumours ... Could it be for a moment imagined that a meeting of all the most respectable inhabitants in Leith for a public object could terminate in any riot or outrage against the Chief Magistrate? The supposition is too absurd to be for a moment entertained.

One correspondent to the *Courant* insisted that 'a large party of dragoons had been ordered to be ready to act at a moment's warning' and the *Scotsman* pointedly shared the following witticism with its readers:⁵⁹

A certain Chief Magistrate being at a dinner party the other day, was asked by the landlord if he would choose a little more of the *Port*. His Lordship replied 'I am extremely obliged to you, Sir, but I have had quite enough of that!'

During 1827 Trotter was also to encounter public opposition from within Edinburgh over the new Improvements Bill, the drafting of which began in the autumn of 1826. The aims of the bill were to lower and level the High Street, to open the view of the Castle from the High Street, to open a road around the south side of the Castle in order to connect the western districts directly to the centre of the Old Town, and to open a road to the south on a line with Bank Street. The third and fourth aims of this scheme were thus today's King's Bridge, Johnston Terrace and George IV Bridge.

On 11 December 1826, around 600 citizens met at St Giles Kirk to debate these proposals. Representatives from the wards which would benefit from western and southern approach roads argued in favour while those who resided elsewhere resisted

the imposition of additional taxation to finance the project. One method by which the Council might have paid for the bridges that would carry the roads would have been to feu land in Princes Street Gardens and the Meadows. There was considerable opposition to this undeclared, but suspected, intention from a group of New Town residents, led by Sir John Sinclair. One critic expressed 'his doubts if there was not a vested interest in Mr Trotter, as representative of Messrs Young and Trotter, to build to the full extent of their feu, to the west of his warerooms' on the south side of Princes Street.⁶⁰ Trotter replied that 'he never would allow any private interest of his to interfere with his public duty'. In fact, the extent of Trotter's ability to build was severely curtailed by a decree-arbitral of 1776 which had formed the conclusion of litigation between the Town Council and feuars on the north side of Princes Street. Under this decree, the cabinet-making workshops were restricted in height and the ground between today's Waverley Steps and Hanover Street was to be 'kept and preserved in perpetuity as pleasure ground'.⁶¹

The real matter of concern to Sir John Sinclair's group was to ensure that the land west of Hanover Street, protected by an Act of Parliament passed in 1816, should remain undeveloped. As Trotter's words were greeted with cheers, the advocate Henry Cockburn leapt to his feet, challenging the Lord Provost to deny that the Council sought to feu this western area. Trotter prevaricated and sought to trade the Council's right to build in exchange for the College of Justice's exemptions from local taxes, suggesting that this would reduce the fiscal burden of the Improvements upon other residents. The crowd cheered once again and the meeting broke up.

Cockburn's intervention is often cited as a defining moment in the preservation of the green space articulating the separation between old and new Edinburgh. It is clear from the newspaper accounts of this meeting, however, that Trotter gave as good as he got. In reality, the Council had no rights to defend and yet the legal establishment was later prevailed upon to concede its exemptions. In his pamphlet of 1849, *Letter to the Lord Provost on the Best Ways of Spoiling the Beauty of Edinburgh*, Cockburn sought to ensure that history would record that:⁶²

It was owing entirely to the firmness of a majority of the Faculty of Advocates, who refused to suspend their exemption from local taxation unless the fancied (but utterly groundless) power of closing up Princes Street was put down permanently by statute, that the accursed imagination was not realised.

While the oratorical power of this famous pamphlet is undeniable, in 1826 most citizens resented the privileges of the Faculty of Advocates and had little interest in an amenity accruing to wealthy Princes Street householders. Furthermore, after 1827, the Faculty had a whole series of delicate negotiations to pursue with the Town Council respecting the border between its planned library and the George IV Bridge.⁶³ During May 1827, William Dundas presided over a Parliamentary Committee to examine the new bill. It was passed but with an adjustment irksome to the Town Council: a provision forbidding any future building upon the Meadows or Bruntsfield Links. There was nothing that Trotter, in London to lobby on behalf of the bill, could do, and in Edinburgh, the Council voted eighteen to ten to concede the point.⁶⁴

Meanwhile, the parliamentary friends of Leith introduced into the House of Commons a measure to reform aspects of the port's local government. During this period, local Police Acts provided for a range of municipal services including police, courts, water, drainage, cleaning and lighting. The Leith Police Bill sought for the first time to define the town's boundaries, to ensure that local Police Commissioners retained control of the Land Tax proceeds, and to allow for a more democratic election of magistrates. The Home Secretary, Robert Peel, mindful of the damage that might be done to public order and the administration of justice were matters left as they were, amended the bill to provide a Sheriff-Substitute's court in Leith, under the Sheriff for Midlothian. As a compromise to both sides, the government further suggested that the South Leith magistrates be selected by the Lord Provost from a list of nine candidates presented by the outgoing magistrates.⁶⁵ The chairman of the committee examining the bill, James Abercromby, and the Solicitor-General, John Hope, made public their agreement that the deal was acceptable, and yet Trotter still appeared before the committee in a last ditch attempt to defend Edinburgh's privileges.⁶⁶ Politically, this was foolish, and the managers of Scotland's public business cannot subsequently have

retained great warmth for the capital's Lord Provost.

Trotter remained in London during June and, from his base at Blake's Hotel in Jermyn Street, attended such functions as the Distribution of Rewards from the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, at the King's Theatre Opera House, and a dinner at Vintners' Hall in the company of the Sheriffs of London and Middlesex.⁶⁷ One notable engagement shortly before this, on 11 May, was the opening of the National Scotch Church, in Regent's Square, where Thomas Chalmers's former assistant, Edward Irving, would shortly pioneer a form of apocalyptic evangelicalism.⁶⁸

In Edinburgh, public debate came to focus on which approach road should be undertaken first. Trotter favoured the western project, estimated at £10,346 as against £33,146 for the southern, and in the face of vocal opposition from south-side taxpayers, work started on what was to become the King's Bridge. The foundation stone was laid with great ceremony on 15 August 1827, and at a dinner later that evening, 291 guests drank more than forty toasts.⁶⁹

As Trotter's term in office drew to a close in October 1827, the press ventured an appraisal of his achievements. The *Edinburgh Observer* believed that:

the head of the magistracy was neither partial nor narrow minded, and that he had acquitted himself throughout a very trying period with no ordinary discrimination ... The cool dignity displayed by Mr Trotter, as contrasted with the intemperate language employed by some of the leaders at Leith, is not the least creditable trait in his character ... No person unconnected with public affairs can well form an idea of the labour, bodily and mental, the responsibility, and the innumerable petty crosses that concur to fatigue, burden, and harass the Chief Magistrate of this city; and we are warranted in saying, that Mr Trotter retires from the office with a reputation that places him on a level with the most popular men who have taken upon them the often ungracious task of superintending the affairs of the community.

This was too much for one Leith citizen who, in the *Scotsman*, under the pen-name 'Verus', praised the dedication and moderation of the Leith leadership in the face of 'every species of spleen and resentment' exhibited by the Lord Provost.⁷¹ The *Observer* dismissed his letter, however, as 'proof of the gross perversion of judgment that may be achieved by private prejudice'.⁷² The *Scotsman's* editors chose to steer a middle course:

Without meaning to say that the Leith people have been at all times models of courtesy and temperance, we think it cannot be denied that Mr Trotter's impatience and irritability inflamed differences which might have been adjusted by a more prudent deportment on his part.

Yet overall, Maclaren chose to recognize that Trotter's 'path has been strewn with considerable difficulties' and that 'as far as Edinburgh was concerned [i.e. the improvements], he was extremely anxious to carry public opinion with him'. The *Scotsman* concluded:

He was courteous to all the citizens without distinction of party, indefatigable in his duties, splendid in his hospitality; and we have heard even those who opposed him say, that the few errors he fell into were rather to be attributed to the influence of old party connections than to any thing wrong in his own views or intentions.

William Trotter did not immediately retire from politics. As Old Provost, he continued to attend Council meetings and in June 1829, as his successor, Walter Brown, approached the end of his two year term, Trotter was spoken of as an alternative to Brown's favoured candidate, William Allan. Once again, Allan and Trotter became the focus of letters written to the *Scotsman* dissecting their reputations. The management and reduction of Edinburgh's debt remained a pressing issue. In addition to the Old Town improvements, one correspondent insisted that:⁷⁴

no inconsiderable sums have been spent in carrying on litigation arising out of the unseemly disputes in which Mr Trotter, when Provost, involved the Town Council with the Merchants and Inhabitants of Leith.

This writer, 'Burgess', also reminded his fellow citizens that:

had it not been for the greater prudence of some of his coadjutors, the city would have been involved in a further debt of £60,000 at least, for the purchasing and furnishing a mansion house for himself and his successors in office.

This scheme, to purchase the former Excise Office in the centre of what had recently become Drummond Place, had been proposed by Trotter in June 1826. The sum of £50,000 had been aired as the cost of purchase and fitting out.⁷⁵ Nothing came of the idea, but one project which had gone ahead was the new St Stephen's Church at the foot of St Vincent Street. Another commentator, 'Civis', described this as a

'mighty monument' to Trotter's profligacy.⁷⁶ To cite St Stephen's was unfair since the project began in 1822 and Trotter oversaw the selection of the lowest tender to build Playfair's design. The final bill of £21,000 came in at roughly 10% more than the estimate. Given that St Mary's Church had cost £23,000 to build in 1824, or that St George's had set the Council back £33,000 in 1814, this was not exorbitant.⁷⁷ Furthermore, there was scope to pay for church building through the subsequent seat rental. And yet the civic debt loomed large in many minds.

If some commentators felt that Trotter was not to be trusted with Edinburgh's finances, others sought comfort in his apparent sympathy towards the evangelical movement. Provost Brown's acquiescence in the appointment of the moderate Dr Muir as minister at St Stephen's enraged a certain 'A. B.', for in spite of declarations of 'orthodoxy', Brown had shown little opposition:⁷⁸

to false or unsound doctrine, to pluralities, to neglect of parish duties, to political subservency, to the nomination of clergymen who cannot spell, or of sick-neglecting, ball-following, card-playing, play-haunting ministers.

A. B. thus felt that William Allan's pledge only to bring in ministers who would meet with the acceptance of congregations was equally untrustworthy and that Trotter was the safest choice. Trotter could probably also have been relied upon to enforce a certain sabbatarian discipline. An advertisement in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* towards the beginning of his second year in office had let it be known that:⁷⁹

The Right Honourable the Lord Provost and the Magistrates of the City of Edinburgh ... strictly prohibit ... all resort to ale houses or taverns and other places of refreshment during Divine Service ... [as well as] driving cattle or sheep through the High Street on the Sabbath.

A fortnight later the editor of the same paper had confided to his readers:⁸⁰

We are well aware of our worthy Chief Magistrate's connexion with the descendants of the Great Reformer, and accordingly are less astonished than we otherwise would have been at the excessive strictness evinced by him and the Town Council, not only as to tippling, but also as regards the comfort and cleanliness of our labouring poor on the Lord's day ... We were much astonished some days ago, to observe in the windows of several barbers shops, a strict injunction against shaving on Sunday.

In the event, Trotter was not put to the test on this or any other issue, declaring his withdrawal from the contest at the end of July when it became clear that he did not have enough support within the Council. The *Scotsman's* editors were relieved that bad feeling in Leith would not be rekindled but did allow that Trotter 'did not betray any undue anxiety to obtain the office'.⁸¹

During the 1820s, until the time of his death, Trotter was engaged in entrepreneurial activity on several fronts. He was Chairman of both the Edinburgh Joint Stock Water Company and of the Edinburgh and Leith Glass Company, as well as a director of the Edinburgh Gas Light Company.⁸² Limestone was extracted from the Ballindean estate and burnt to supply the Tayside building trade.⁸³ David Jones has described Trotter's involvement in the letting of Edinburgh property.⁸⁴ A variation of this was his acquisition of the house of Nellfield in Burntisland and the adjacent lands of Lamberlaws. Sea bathing had become popular by the 1820s and Trotter advertised his furnished letting houses at Lamberlaws as 'a most desirable summer residence [where] bathing machines are kept for the use of tenants'.⁸⁵ This idyllic enterprise was rudely disrupted shortly before February 1832, when he launched a joint action in the Court of Session, along with eleven other property owners, to prevent the Burntisland Whale-Fishing Company from using its buildings near the harbour to boil down whale blubber in the production of oil.⁸⁶

The litigants' horror comes over forcibly in the case put before the court: whale oil production was 'one of the most offensive and disgusting nuisances known, very prejudicial to health, and utterly destructive of comfort, attended with the most intolerable stench'. Nellfield was about 300 yards away from the proposed factory although some of the other litigants, for example Alexander Campbell Beatson of Rossend Castle, were less obviously affected. In fact, many of the complainers did not live in their Burntisland properties and their underlying fear was that industrial activity would undermine the 'great beauty of the situation, the salubrity of the air [and] the excellent accommodation for sea-bathing, and, as a result, greatly deteriorate in the market the value of their property'.

A riposte from James Farnie, managing partner of the Whale-Fishing Company, on the one hand

emphasised the investment he had made in 'apparatus ... of such a nature as to exclude all risk of nuisance', and, on the other, called into question the existing unspoilt amenity of the town. He drew attention to the vitriol factory which had formerly occupied the grounds of Lamberlaws as well as to the curing and smoking of herrings which already gave rise to 'offensive smells of the most disagreeable description'. Burntisland, he insisted, was a fishing town, not a leisure resort. He drew attention to the:

common gutter of great extent running along the links, direct to the spot allotted by the complainer, Mr Trotter, for sea-bathing machines, by means of which the refuse of the numerous herring works of the town is conveyed and lodged in the sands of the sea-shore, and lies stagnant there for months.

Although some of Trotter's allies were motivated by self interest, the dispute essentially involved two competing groups of investors seeking to promote apparently incompatible forms of land use. Farnie's lawyer's submissions noted that his activities would provide employment in addition to profit and, although his six partners were professionals and tradesmen from Edinburgh, Leith and London, Farnie's local status was contrasted with the absenteeism of the complainers. Farnie's concluding argument was that his own house lay nearer the boiling works than any other, a point which Trotter's lawyer gleefully asserted to be irrelevant since 'effluvia arising from storing and boiling his own blubber may not prove offensive to the respondent'. The judge, Lord Mackenzie, ordered a trial of the works in operation to be monitored by Professor Leslie and a number of other chemists from Edinburgh University. The results are unrecorded because the case was withdrawn, but other sources make it clear that the factory was not built.⁸⁷

The records of the Court of Session show that on occasion Trotter took legal steps to encourage clients in the payment of outstanding accounts. It was not only in business, however, that he found himself fighting legal battles. In June 1819, his brother Charles, a Colonel in the military service of the East India Company, died at his home in Pallamcottah (now Palayamkottai, Tamil Nadu). William and another brother, Young Trotter, were appointed executors under Charles's will. Following the dispersal of gifts to relatives and dependents in India, the residue was to be divided between Young, William, Mary Pitcairn, Alexander Pitcairn and

Christian Trotter. Complications arose, however, from the fact that ten years previously, Charles had remitted money to William, who was granted power of attorney, to lend out on Scottish heritable securities. At Charles's death this part of the estate amounted to three bonds worth £2,922. As the two executors moved to liquidate the estate, 'a difference of opinion arose' with respect to these heritable bonds. As the subsequent printed papers issued by the Court of Session put it:⁸⁹

The will not being conceived or executed in the terms and according to the forms requisite by the law of Scotland for the conveyance of heritable property, the three heritable bonds remained unaffected by the will, and passed to Young Trotter, the brother and heir-at-law of the defunct.

In other words, Young Trotter, as the eldest surviving brother, was able to claim most of the residual estate, contrary to Charles Trotter's expressed intentions. The other four beneficiaries took the matter to the Court of Session and by 1823 the Second Division were consulting English counsel as to how the will would have been interpreted in England. For although Charles was Scottish, and the dispute involved Scottish property, the will had been written, and its author had died, in 'English' India. The case was referred to the Attorney General in England, and finally, in June 1829, to the Lord Chancellor.⁹⁰ The conclusion drawn at all stages, however, was that the will remained invalid.

Two of the bonds, worth £2,200, were actually drawn against Young Trotter. The money had almost certainly been invested in his papermaking mill at Broomhouse, near Duns in Berwickshire. The mill, which was reckoned one of the largest in Scotland, had been established by John Pitcairn in 1786.⁹¹ Pitcairn had taken his brother-in-law into the business in 1790 when Young had returned to Scotland from the West Indies. The family business connections were thus very close: capital accumulated by one brother in India feeding the manufacturing business of another in Scotland, itself founded on the enterprise of a sister's husband, and the finance facilitated by yet another brother. Rather remarkably, in spite of his wife's role in the court case, John Pitcairn remained in business with Young Trotter until John's death in 1824. Perhaps William was the prime mover in the decade-long legal process.⁹²

Two of William's sons were beneficiaries of Dundas political patronage. His eldest, Robert Knox Trotter, was provided in 1825 with a cornetcy in the 7th Dragoon Guards, later rising to become a Captain in the 17th Lancers.⁹³ At the time of Robert's leaving home, aged eighteen, his father, writing to thank Viscount Melville for the commission, voiced concern that 'the Regiment to which he is appointed may be one of good moral as well as good military discipline; as his principles & feelings are at present just what a parent would wish them to be'.⁹⁴ The following year Trotter expressed his obligation to Melville once again, this time for an India Writer's appointment for the sixteen year old William Thomas, 'a steady young man' whom he had no doubt would 'acquaint [sic] himself well' at the East India College.⁹⁵ After service in India, William Thomas married a French woman and retired to France.⁹⁶ In March 1833, Robert married the daughter of the judge, Lord Rollo, whose country seat, Duncrub, lay eight miles south-west of Perth, and just two miles away from Pitcairns, the home of William's sister, Mary. This was an impressive alliance to have secured and Ballindean was settled upon Robert at the time of the marriage. After his father died, Robert appears to have shown no interest in either business or politics.

As a postscript to the life of William Trotter, the dispersal of material from Ballindean in the twentieth century offers a glimpse of his artistic tastes. When Robert Knox Trotter died at Cheltenham in 1876, Lyon and Turnbull appraised the furniture and moveable effects at Ballindean to be worth £1,317. 13. 0.⁹⁷ Robert's wife died in 1886 and Ballindean passed to two of her daughters, Margaret and St Clair, her only other surviving child, Agnes, having married her cousin, Lord Rollo. Margaret married an English baptist minister, William Stead, and the couple had four children. Margaret and St Clair died within a fortnight of each other in 1914 and Stead in 1934.⁹⁸ Ballindean was sold in 1930 and some of the furniture was auctioned at Dowell's in Edinburgh.⁹⁹

Most of the lots that featured in the sale of *Valuable Furniture* on 31 January 1930 were unexceptional, although lot 176 stands out: 'a mahogany cheval mirror ... inset with brass plate, inscribed *This glass was used by His Majesty King George IV in the Palace of Holyrood during his visit*

to Scotland in August 1822'.¹⁰⁰ During June 1933 various family relics were disposed of, including Robert Knox Trotter's military uniforms and the family portraits.¹⁰¹ The latter included Thomas Trotter by William Millar, the Rev. Dr John Trotter, and three full-lengths by Sir William Allan: William Trotter as Lord Provost (dated 1832), Robert Knox Trotter, and the 'Hon. Mrs Trotter Seated and Infant Son' (both dated 1839).¹⁰² The portrait of the Lord Provost was acquired by the City of Edinburgh Council in 1977.¹⁰³ Those of Robert and his wife were exhibited at the Scottish Academy in 1839.¹⁰⁴ They are mentioned in a letter from Allan to David Wilkie of November 1838:¹⁰⁵

I spent 2 months in Perthshire this autumn at a beautiful place in the Carse of Gowrie called Ballindean, the property of Captain Trotter, where I filled up my time in painting 2 large whole-length portraits, one of Captain Trotter and the other of his wife and child.

Predictably, three portraits of John Knox were offered, the artists 'unknown', but far more interestingly, there was lot 128, Sir William Allan's 'John Knox Admonishing Mary Queen of Scots', which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1823 and, after being sold to William Trotter, at the Institution for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts in Scotland in 1826.¹⁰⁶ On 17 June 1933 it sold for just £1. 15. 0 to J. Kemp of Saxe Coburg Place. The best price by far for any of the paintings was £5. 15. 6 for Turner's 'Opening of the Bridges in the New Southern and Western Approaches to the City of Edinburgh, 15 August 1827', but it would appear that this was an entirely deceptive attribution. No record exists of any such painting by Turner and no depiction of the event was exhibited at the Scottish Academy in 1828, contrary to a claim in Dowell's catalogue.¹⁰⁷ A work which Trotter directly, and quite flamboyantly, commissioned was his bust in marble by Samuel Joseph (fig. 7). This was exhibited at the Scottish Academy in 1831 but it was not sold at Dowell's and it is not known how or when it entered the collections of the City of Edinburgh Council.¹⁰⁸

William Trotter died in London on 16 August 1833, just days before the passing of the Burgh Reform Act and the appointment of trustees for the creditors of the City of Edinburgh. Leith would henceforth have its own Council. Edinburgh's debts stood at £402,000, less than in 1819 yet rising at a faster rate than ever before.¹⁰⁹ It was not until 1838

that an agreement was reached between the government and the creditors, and no substantial progress was made with the development of Leith Docks before 1847.¹¹⁰ The King's Bridge was virtually complete by January 1833, however, and the George IV Bridge opened to traffic in the summer of 1834. The Improvements Commissioners had not imagined that the works would take so long but nor had they adequately assessed the costs of the project: completion was only made possible by resorting to greater taxation and more borrowing, under Amending Acts of 1831 and 1833.¹¹¹

Thus Trotter's legacy was, at the time of his death, an embarrassment within Edinburgh. Yet it would be unfair at this distance to treat his memory with the disdain that he sometimes received during his period in office. Provosts Henderson, Brown and Allan were all vilified by political opponents and the Town Council's financial shortcomings were endemic. Trotter had the good taste and practical sense to adopt Thomas Hamilton's plans for the Improvements, rather than any of the alternative proposals. In his defence of

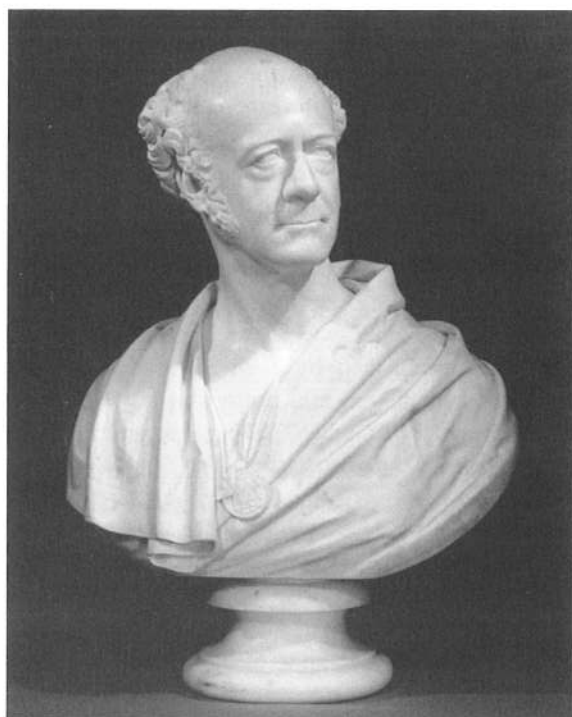


Fig. 7. William Trotter, marble bust by Samuel Joseph, c. 1827. (The City of Edinburgh Council.)

civic privileges, he was not the only public man whose actions would, after 1832, be interpreted as an irrelevance of the past. In business his energies took him far beyond his calling as a merchant upholsterer, and within the Trotter family, he

represented the pinnacle of its success. Many new discoveries concerning Trotter furniture are likely to be made in years to come and it is important that the biography of the man behind that furniture becomes more widely known.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 There is a short summary in [Marguerite Wood], *The Lord Provosts of Edinburgh, 1296–1932* (Edinburgh 1932), pp. 108–109.
- 2 For example, David Jones, 'William Trotter's Furniture for the "Chinese" Rooms at Kinfauns Castle, Perthshire', *Furniture History*, XXXIII (1997), pp. 240–253.
- 3 Francis Bamford: 'Some Edinburgh Furniture-Makers', *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club (BOEC)*, 32 (1966), pp. 32–53; 'Trotter of Edinburgh', *Scotland's Magazine*, vol. 52, no. 3 (March 1956), pp. 35–37; 'A Dictionary of Edinburgh Wrights and Furniture Makers, 1660–1840', *Furniture History*, XIX (1983), esp. pp. 28–34. All three essays are essentially drafts towards a final version which, regrettably, Bamford did not live to complete.
- 4 Henry Cockburn, letter to Thomas Francis Kennedy, 14 May 1827, *Letters chiefly Connected with the Affairs of Scotland* (London 1874), p. 164. In another letter to Kennedy, Cockburn called Trotter an 'idiot'; p. 137.
- 5 Sir Bernard Burke, *Landed Gentry*, 4th edn (London 1863) and 15th edn (1937). These printed genealogies are an important starting point but there are errors and omissions. Additional information has been pieced together by Helen Smailes, National Galleries of Scotland, and the present author, from letters and official documents. There is no reason to believe that the family were in any way connected to the Trotters of Mortonhall.
- 6 Thomas Trotter senior's portrait by William Miller survives in the collection of the National Gallery of Scotland. I am immensely grateful to Helen Smailes for information on Thomas senior.
- 7 In around 1826, William's daughter, Mary Montague Trotter, began pleading with Lord Provost William Trotter, her cousin, to assist her financially embarrassed husband, William Ewan. In November 1827, in settlement of Ewan's debts to a group of five creditors, Trotter acquired some property in the Cowgate, property which appears to have been sold before Trotter's will was drawn up in March 1831: Dundee City Archives, GD/Ba17/48; National Archives of Scotland (NAS), SC70/1/51/f.641. Dr John Trotter was presented at Ceres in 1752 and translated to London in 1770: Hew Black, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanæ*, 9 vols (Edinburgh 1925), V, p. 132.
- 8 NAS, RD 3/303/1, Trust Settlement of Thomas Trotter junior, dated 3 June 1797 and registered 2 July 1804. I am grateful to Helen Smailes for this reference. The son-in-law was John Pitcairn (1743–1824), laird of Pitcairns, Dunning, Perthshire.
- 9 Alexander Pitcairn (1746–1819) married Jane as his second wife: Constance Pitcairn, *The History of the Fife Pitcairns* (Edinburgh 1905), pp. 518–519.
- 10 NAS, RD 3/303/1. This document values the partnership's stock in trade at £12,000.
- 11 Sebastian Pryke, 'At the Sign of the Pelican', *Regional Furniture*, VI (1992), p. 19. This excellent essay unfortunately illustrates and captions a portrait by William Miller of Walter Ferguson of Kinnaird as being Thomas Trotter, an error originating in the filing system of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery.
- 12 Specifically, David Knox, a surgeon, St Clair's grandfather and William's uncle, was the great-great-grandson of John Knox's brother, also John Knox, minister of Melrose: Burke, *Landed Gentry*, 15th edn (1937).
- 13 NAS, SC70/1/51, p. 594; quoted in Bamford, 'Dictionary of Edinburgh Furniture Makers', p. 134.
- 14 Ian Gow, 'Pugin and Trotter', *Architectural Heritage*, 8 (1997), pp. 60–73. See also Ian Gow, 'New Light on Late Trotter', *Country Life*, vol. 182, no. 32 (11 August 1988), pp. 100–103.
- 15 Rev. Thomas Pitcairn, son of Alexander Pitcairn and Jane Trotter, officiated at the wedding of St Clair Stuart Trotter to the Russian diplomat, Antoine, Baron de Struve: *Times*, 11 April 1836. The Rev. Thomas Pitcairn married an Ann Hay Trotter, whose relationship to other members of the Trotter family is unclear. Thomas was minister of Cockpen from 1833 until the Disruption, following which he served as Clerk to the Free Church Assembly: Pitcairn, *History of the Fife Pitcairns* (note 9), p. 519.
- 16 Papers relating to the sale in May 1820 are contained within the miscellaneous Ballindean estate papers held by Dundee City Archives, GD/Ba17, in particular Bundles 12, 13 and 14. Wedderburn's father, Sir John, bought the estate shortly after his return to Scotland from Jamaica in 1769. A synopsis of Ballindean's history is given in Lawrence Melville, *The Fair Land of Gowrie* (Coupar Angus 1939), pp. 94–96.
- 17 Dundee City Archives, GD/Ba17/Bundle 62.
- 18 *Times*, sale advertisement, 10 April 1820; Dundee City Archives, GD/Ba17/Bundles 12 and 18.
- 19 Gow, 'Pugin and Trotter', p. 62.
- 20 Dundee City Archives, GD/Ba17/Bundle 73.
- 21 *Edinburgh Post Office Directories*.

- 22 Burke, *Landed Gentry*, 4th edn (1863).
- 23 The Edinburgh Directory listed civic appointments annually and the Edinburgh newspapers confirm these. When, during Trotter's provostship, Old Provost Henderson died, he was replaced by 'Old Provost' Mitchell. Victoria Garrington has undertaken a full study of Trotter's early Council career and the results are to be published in *Regional Furniture*.
- 24 The system is partially outlined in House of Commons, *Report from the Select Committee to whom the Several Petitions from the Royal Burghs of Scotland were referred* (Edinburgh 1819), pp. 14–19. See also *An Historical Sketch of the Municipal Constitution of the City of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1826).
- 25 *Scotsman*, 30 July 1825.
- 26 Quoted in *Northern Looking-Glass*, VI, 18 August 1825. The *Glasgow Looking-Glass* was published irregularly between June 1825 and June 1826, changing its name to the *Northern Looking-Glass* in September 1825. The drawings appear to be by William Heath.
- 27 *Scotsman*, 3 September 1825. This reference to Tweedle-dee and Tweedle-dum precedes by 30 years the earliest citation in the *Oxford English Dictionary* of the phrase in this sense of two allegedly different things in fact so alike as to be indistinguishable. Dromio and Dromio are the twin slaves in Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*.
- 28 NAS, GD 51/5/749/f.350.
- 29 National Library of Scotland (NLS), MS 2/f.71, 14 May 1825. Trotter was in correspondence with William Dundas in April 1825: NLS, MS 9858/item 20.
- 30 *Scotsman*, 3 September 1825.
- 31 NLS, MS 2/f.81, 7 June 1825.
- 32 For the true limit to Sir John Marjoribank's dispute with Melville see the correspondence between them: NAS, GD51/5/749/f.361, and NLS, MS2/f.95.
- 33 W. Forbes Gray, *Historic Churches of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1940), p. 128.
- 34 Irene Maver, 'The Guardianship of the Community: Civic Authority prior to 1833', in T. M. Devine and Gordon Jackson, *Glasgow: Beginnings to 1830* (Manchester 1995), pp. 239–277.
- 35 *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 28 September 1826; *Edinburgh Star*, 21 October 1826. For Cleland's own account of his time as Superintendent of Public Works see James Cleland, *Historical Account of the Grammar School of Glasgow* (Glasgow 1825).
- 36 *Scotsman*, 21 September 1825.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 15 October 1825.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 12 October 1825.
- 39 *Ibid.*, 5 October 1825.
- 40 *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 11 June 1825. See also David Robertson, 'George IV Bridge and the West Approach', *BOEC*, 18 (1932), pp. 79–99; and A. J. Youngson, *The Making of Classical Edinburgh, 1750–1840* (Edinburgh 1966), pp. 166–189.
- 41 NLS, MS2/f.71.
- 42 Bruce Lenman, *An Economic History of Modern Scotland, 1660–1976* (London 1977), p. 151.
- 43 House of Commons, *Report from the Select Committee to whom the Several Petitions from the Royal Burghs of Scotland were Referred* (Edinburgh 1819), p. 19. See pp. 19–36 for the monetary detail.
- 44 James Campbell Irons, *Leith and its Antiquities*, 2 vols (Edinburgh 1897), II, pp. 198–221. Abercromby was the third son of General Sir Ralph Abercromby and until 1830 sat for Calne in Wiltshire. In 1832 he became one of the two new MPs for Edinburgh, and between 1835 and 1839 was Speaker of the House of Commons: H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford 2004).
- 45 Henry Lord Cockburn, *Memorials of His Time* (Edinburgh 1856), p. 429.
- 46 For the detail see newspaper reports of 27 June 1825 and Melville's correspondence with Henderson, NAS, GD51/5/749/f.368. The composition of the Commission was set out in a Management Act of May 1826: Irons, *Leith and its Antiquities*, II, pp. 214–216. The Commission was reformed in 1833.
- 47 *Northern Looking-Glass*, IX, undated but October 1825. Baillie Morton was quickly replaced: *Scotsman*, 29 October and 12 November 1825.
- 48 Andrew G. Fraser, *The Building of Old College: Adam, Playfair and the University of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1989), p. 226; Sir Alexander Grant, *The Story of the University of Edinburgh*, 2 vols (London 1884), II, pp. 32–35.
- 49 *Scotsman*, 7 June 1826.
- 50 *Idem*.
- 51 Michael Fry, *The Dundas Despotism* (Edinburgh 1992), p. 368.
- 52 *Scotsman*, 14 June 1826.
- 53 NAS, GD51/5/615.
- 54 *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 10 October 1826. The territorial limits of Leith were not at this time well defined and only South Leith had resident bailies.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 7 October 1826.
- 56 *Ibid.*, 9 October 1826. Trotter only selected Hardie when it emerged that his first choice of individual resided outwith the parish: Irons, *Leith and its Antiquities*, II, p. 235.
- 57 *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 10 October 1826.
- 58 *Scotsman*, 28 October 1826; see also *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 26 October 1826.
- 59 *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 28 October 1826; *Scotsman*, 28 October 1826.
- 60 William Inglis, probably the Writer of 49 Queen Street: *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 12 December 1826.
- 61 Youngson, *Classical Edinburgh*, p. 90.
- 62 Lord Cockburn, *A Letter to the Lord Provost on the Best Ways of Spoiling the Beauty of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1849), p. 11; new edn, edited by T. Levinthal and H. Suslak (Edinburgh 1998), p. 9.
- 63 Iain Gordon Brown, *Building for Books: the Architectural Evolution of the Advocates' Library, 1689–1925* (Aberdeen 1989), pp. 127–133.
- 64 *Scotsman*, 16 May 1827; Cockburn, *Letters Connected with the Affairs of Scotland* (note 4), p. 164; Robertson, 'George IV Bridge and the West Approach' (note 40), p. 95.
- 65 Irons, *Leith and its Antiquities*, II, pp. 245–247.
- 66 *Scotsman*, 16 May 1827.
- 67 Invitations and other ephemera from the visit to London

- appear to have been bound into a single volume by his granddaughter's husband: NLS, MS 9858. There are also letters in this volume which predate 1827: one, item 20, dated 15 July 1823, suggests that Trotter visited Paris in that year.
- 68 NLS, MS 9858, item 35. Irving's preaching was such a popular phenomenon that even Robert Peel felt compelled to attend: Sheridan Gilley, 'Edward Irving, the National Scotch Church and the Catholic Apostolic Church', *Architectural Heritage*, 8 (1997), pp. 37–46.
- 69 *Scotsman*, 18 August 1827.
- 70 *Edinburgh Observer*, 2 October 1827.
- 71 *Scotsman*, 3 October 1827.
- 72 *Edinburgh Observer*, 5 October 1827.
- 73 *Scotsman*, 6 October 1827.
- 74 *Ibid.*, 24 June 1829; Burgess in response to A. B. of 20 June.
- 75 *Ibid.*, 10 June 1826.
- 76 *Ibid.*, 1 July 1829; Civis in response to A. B. of 27 June. The editors of the *Scotsman* had themselves opposed the expenditure on St Stephen's, from both ecclesiastical and architectural perspectives: 7 February 1827.
- 77 Lord Sands, *The Story of St Stephen's Edinburgh, 1828–1928* (Edinburgh 1927), pp. 5–15. Trotter supplied the oak pulpit at St Stephen's in the autumn of 1828 and the church opened in December.
- 78 *Scotsman*, 15 July 1829, A. B. in response to Civis of 1 July. Brown had, however, in 1828 ensured the placement of Thomas Chalmers as Professor of Divinity at the University.
- 79 *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 19 October 1826.
- 80 *Ibid.*, 6 November 1826.
- 81 *Scotsman*, 1 August 1829; see also 11 July, for opinion in Leith.
- 82 *Ibid.*, 30 November 1825; *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 1 January 1825, 23 June 1825. The Glass Company brought together two previously separate concerns and was largely engaged in producing bottles, alongside some window glass. The Gas Light Company's Governor was Lord Provost Alexander Henderson.
- 83 *Scotsman*, 25 January 1826.
- 84 David Jones, *The Edinburgh Cabinet and Chair Makers' Books of Prices* (Cupar 2000), p. 3. See also NLS, MS 9858, item 17, John Pitcairn to William Trotter, 12 March 1825 — 'but you may have your eye upon any nice place that happens to come into your books'.
- 85 *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 19 April 1825.
- 86 NAS, CS 235 T17/2.
- 87 Charles Boog Watson, *Traditions & Genealogies of some Members of the Families of Boog, Heron, Leishman, Ross & Watson* (Perth 1908), p. 21. The 'proposed boiling house' is marked on a map of 1824 which also marks Nellfield and Lamberlaws as Trotter's property: see M. R. Apted, 'Two Painted Ceilings from Mary Somerville's House, Burntisland', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 91 (1957–8, printed 1960), plate 12.
- 88 For example, NAS, CS 239 T/15/3 (Maria Tooley, relict of John Menzies of Culdaws, 1803) and CS 238 T/8/8 (William Cunnyngname Cunnyngname Graham of Gartmore, 1821).
- 89 NAS, CS 235 T/16/17.
- 90 *Scotsman*, 17 June 1829.
- 91 Young Trotter & Son Limited, *Historical Account of Papermaking in Berwickshire* (Edinburgh 1923), pp. 14–15.
- 92 In 1823 Young took his son George into partnership, and following Young's death in 1841, the undertaking moved to Chirnside. Rather ironically, when George retired in 1869, ownership of the mill passed to Robert Slight, the son of William Trotter's daughter, Charlotte. Charlotte and her sister St Clair had had to resort to the Court of Session in 1836 in order to extract from their father's trustees a sum of money bequeathed to them by their aunt, Christian Trotter: NAS, CS 238/T/9/68. Such evidence does not point to happy family relations.
- 93 Robert became a lieutenant in July 1826 and left the Dragoon Guards in August 1827 on purchasing his captaincy. He served as a captain in the Lancers in Britain and Ireland between January 1829 and December 1836, moving to half pay as a Sub-Inspector of Militia until his retirement in 1859: *Army Lists*.
- 94 NAS, GD51/6/757, 14 May 1825. See also NLS, MS2 f.73, 1 June 1825.
- 95 *Ibid.*, GD51/4/1604, 17 November 1826.
- 96 Burke, *Landed Gentry*, 15th edn (1937).
- 97 Dundee City Archives, GD/Ba17/Bundle 90. The effects and financial assets were in total worth £18,659. 7, 10, a sum which does not include Ballindean itself.
- 98 *Times*, obituaries, 17 and 30 November 1914.
- 99 *Times*, property market report, 3 February 1930.
- 100 NLS, MS Acc 7603/44. Ballindean material accounted for 23 lots in this sale. Lot 176 fetched £9. 19. 6. Lot 189, a 'Louis XVI parqueterie commode ... stamped N. Petit' (£32. 11. 0), most probably arrived at the house after 1833.
- 101 NLS, MS Acc 7603/57/23, *Valuable Antique Furniture*, 9 June 1933, lots 144–148; MS Acc 7603/57/24, *Valuable Oil Paintings and Water-Colour Drawings*, 17 June 1933, lots 109–132 (paintings) and lots 173–177 (engravings).
- 102 Lot 120, Thomas Trotter, painted in 1767, was bought by the National Gallery of Scotland, for £6. 6. 0. Lot 111 was another portrait of 'Thomas Trotter, Esq. Merchant of Edinburgh' and lots 114 and 115 may have been by William Shiels of Thomas Trotter junior and his wife, Charlotte Knox. The catalogue entries are not entirely reliable, however, and it is remarkable that the family were apparently unable to identify a number of the subjects. Lot 113, of Dr Trotter, identifies the sitter as minister of the Scots Church in London. The three full-length portraits were lots 130, 131 and 132 (lot 131 mis-catalogued as 'W. Trotter Esq. in Uniform Beside a Horse'). All three were bought by A. Sinclair, framemaker of Lady Lawson Street, for a total of £1. 1. 0.
- 103 I am grateful to David Patterson, Edinburgh City Council Museums and Arts, for this information. The painting is illustrated in *The Lord Provosts of Edinburgh* (note 1), p. 108, but is difficult to photograph in its present location.
- 104 Thirteenth Exhibition of the Scottish Academy of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, 1839, catalogue numbers 82 and 118.
- 105 NLS, MS 9836/f.149, 30 November 1838. I am most grateful to Helen Smailes for this reference.
- 106 Helen Smailes and Duncan Thomson, *The Queen's Image* (Edinburgh 1987), catalogue number 43, pp. 85–87. Smailes's insertion of Charles Trotter into the painting's

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provenance is an understandable error. The panel has been in an American private collection since 1986.

- 107 Lot 129; the purchaser was one Cochrane and the measurements were recorded as 32" x 45". The catalogue did not record whether the picture was in oil or water-colour. I am grateful to Ian Warrell, Tate Collection, for guidance on the market in false Turners during this period. Joe Rock (personal communication) has suggested that Hugh Williams might have been responsible for this painting but further research is

impossible until it can be located.

- 108 Fifth Exhibition of the Scottish Academy of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, 1831, catalogue number 362. Acquisition by City of Edinburgh untraced: David Patterson (personal communication).
- 109 Youngson, *Classical Edinburgh*, p. 262.
- 110 Irons, *Leith and its Antiquities*, II, p. 302.
- 111 Youngson, *Classical Edinburgh*, pp. 182-187.