

The Chapels Society

Edinburgh weekend visit notes, 2-4 May 2015

One thing which is soon noticeable when you visit Edinburgh is the profusion and variety of church buildings. There are several factors which help to account for this:

- The laying out of the 'New Town' from the 18th century, north of what is now Princes St, whose population needed to be served by suitable places of worship.
- Divisions within the Church of Scotland, most notably the Disruption of 1843 which resulted in the formation of the Free Church of Scotland.
- Revival and revivalism from the late 1850s through to 1905/6, leading to the establishment of evangelical churches and missions from existing churches.
- The desire of every denomination to establish a presence within Scotland's capital, often of a suitably imposing and aesthetically satisfying nature (the Catholic Apostolic Church offers a prime example of this).
- The planting of new congregations in post-war suburban housing areas, although many of these have struggled to establish themselves and closures have already occurred.
- The arrival of new denominations, some taking over buildings constructed for Presbyterian use.

For example, Holy Corner (that's what you ask for on the bus!), around the junction of Morningside Rd and Colinton Rd, you can see Christ Church (Scottish Episcopal), Baptist (now Elim Pentecostal), United (now Church of Scotland / United Reformed), and the Eric Liddell Centre (formerly Church of Scotland). As a student here in the late 1970s, I remember the buses being busy with people travelling to Sunday morning worship. That may not be so now, but a surprising quantity of church buildings remain in use for worship.

Saturday 2 May

NB: today we shall be using Lothian Regional Transport buses, and you will need to purchase either single tickets (£1.50 each) or a Day Ticket on the first bus you board (£4.00). You will need the exact fare as no change is given. There is no concession for Senior Citizens from outwith Scotland.

10am **St Columba's Free Church of Scotland (tea / coffee available)**
Johnston Terrace, EH1 2PW
Buses: 23, 27, 41, 42, 67 to George IV Bridge. At the lights, turn into Lawnmarket, and the church is just along on the left.
Website: <http://stcolumbas.freechurch.org/>

Built in 1846 to designs by Thomas Hamilton and John Henderson, the church is Grade B listed. It was altered in 1908 to facilitate its use for the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland (most of this denomination's congregations had passed into the United Free Church in 1900).

Opposite St Columba's we see the former Highland Tolbooth church (see Sunday's notes, under The Hub). On the other side of Castlehill is the entrance to the Grade A listed Assembly Hall (1859), used for the Church of Scotland's General Assembly. This was designed by W. H. Playfair as part of a group of buildings which included New College, facing onto The Mound, and the Free High Church, now New College library. (In the quadrangle of New College is a statue of John Knox.) The Assembly Hall, by then owned by the United Free Church, was also the venue for the historic World Missionary Conference of 1910, a landmark event in the development of the twentieth-century ecumenical movement.

We then walk to our next venue (NB: the walk includes a flight of steps down).

11.10am **Magdalen Chapel**
41 Cowgate, EH1 1JR
Website: <http://www.scottishreformationsociety.org/the-magdalen-chapel/>

The chapel and associated almshouse were built in 1541 for the Incorporation of Hammermen, who were its patrons until 1858. It includes the only medieval stained glass still in situ in a Scottish building. Notwithstanding its Catholic foundation, the chapel may have been the venue for the first General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1560, under the leadership of John Knox. A spire and tower were added around 1620. The next two centuries saw it used by a variety of denominations: Episcopalians, Baptists, Bereans and the Church of Scotland. From 1878 to 1952 it and the building next door were used by the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society. For some years from 1966 the chaplaincy centre for Heriot Watt University, it was extensively restored in 1993, and is now occupied by the Scottish Reformation Society.

We then retrace our path (NB: back up the steps).

**12.10pm Central Edinburgh Quaker Meeting (tea / coffee available)
7 Victoria Terrace, EH1 2JL**

Website: <http://www.quakerscotland.org/central-edinburgh>

The Grade B listed building was erected for the Original Secession Church (Paterson & Sheils, 1865). Once the denomination merged with the Church of Scotland, it was converted by Basil Spence & Partners (1960) to become the city's Boy's Brigade headquarters. In 1987 it became the Friends' Meeting House (Walmesley & Savage).

For lunch, there are various sandwich shops, cafes, etc nearby.

From here we have a level walk (10-15 mins). On George IV Bridge we pass:

- Augustine United Church (see Sunday's notes).
- The Frankenstein Pub, whose gothic exterior is of more interest to us because it was built for the Reformed Presbyterians (Charles Leadbetter, 1859), passing to the United Free Church. By the 1970s it was used as the City Temple of the Elim Pentecostal Church, but was converted in 1999.
- The statue of Greyfriars Bobby (on the right-hand side).
- Behind it is Candlemakers' Hall (1722), home during the 18th century to an Independent church.
- The Bedlam Theatre, formerly New North Free Church of Scotland (Thomas Hamilton, 1848); closed in 1937, it became the University's Chaplaincy Centre.
- Bristo Place Adventist Church (Sydney Mitchell & Wilson, 1900).
- Jericho House, formerly St Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, closed in 1988 (built 1834).
- In the distance, further along Potterrow, can be seen the King Fahd Mosque, the city's main place of Islamic worship and education (Basil Al-Bayati, 1998).

**1.30pm Central Edinburgh Methodist Church
25 Nicolson Sq, EH8 9BX**

Website: <http://edinburghmethodist.com/>

John Wesley called Edinburgh 'the dirtiest city I have ever seen', but that did not stop him returning for a total of 22 visits! This classically styled building dates from 1816, and is Grade A listed. Halls were added to the side from 1916, and the chapel itself was modernised in 1972, and again in 1989 (when a chapel was added in the basement). The present church results from the merger of four congregations in 2008, and the recent redevelopment of the building (Page & Park), including an extension to the vestibule and a cafe area, has been nominated for a Scottish Design Award. The gallery hosts a heritage exhibition featuring artefacts from the four congregations.

Credits: <http://www.methodistheritage.org.uk/heritage-news-autumn-2014-colour.pdf>

From here we take BUS 47 at 2.20 pm, alighting in South Charlotte St.

**2.45pm Charlotte Chapel
204 Rose St, EH2 4PZ**

Website: <http://www.charlottechapel.org/>

This independent Baptist church was founded in 1808 and by 1816 had taken over a former Episcopalian building dating from 1797. This was its home until the present building, seating 1,000, opened in 1912. It has been altered at various points over the years, but its inadequacy for the present needs of a large congregation have necessitated a move, currently slated for later this year.

The congregation's new location will be at St Andrew's & St George's West, Shandwick Place (David Bryce, 1869, tower completed 1881 by Robert Rowand Anderson. This was built for the Free Church of Scotland, later passing to the Church of Scotland. A few years ago the church was closed, and is now being refurbished for use by Charlotte Chapel. Access will be subject to progress of refurbishment works.

We then take a BUS (several routes) along Queensferry Rd, alighting just short of it, at the far end of Buckingham Terrace (which runs parallel to the main road). At the end of Dean Bridge, we pass the former Holy Trinity Episcopal Church (1838, 1900), converted in 1957 to an electricity transformer station and now home to Rhema Church Scotland. Almost opposite our venue, in Dean Path, is Dean Parish Church (C of S; Dunn & Findlay, 1903).

4.30pm Bristo Baptist Church
41 Buckingham Terrace, EH4 3DJ

Website: <http://www.bristobaptist.org/>

The church, one of the earliest Baptist churches in Scotland, came into being in 1765 after the Independent pastor from Candlemakers' Hall, Robert Carmichael, adopted Baptist views and was baptised in London by John Gill. He was influenced in this by Archibald McLean, who was a prime mover in the 'Scotch Baptists'. (McLean became co-pastor of the church in 1767.) Scotch Baptists differed from their English co-religionists in their preference for plural (lay) leadership, and the practice of celebrating the Lord's Supper each week. Services were not restricted to one sermon but included several exhortations by various laymen. The Edinburgh church became effectively the mother church of this movement, and in time churches were formed not only in Scotland but also in Northern England and in Wales. The church removed the word 'Scotch' from its title in 1927, and now functions as an English Baptist church would.

Initially the church met in the Magdalene Chapel, but after various moved opened a place of worship off Bristo Place in 1836. From here they moved in 1935 to the present Grade B listed building, whose design (by William Paterson) has something of a Dutch feel to it which is quite unusual for a Baptist building.

Credits: [http://www.bristobaptist.org/Church-History\(2762401\).htm](http://www.bristobaptist.org/Church-History(2762401).htm)

Tea will be provided here. You will be able to leave by 5.30pm. To reach Waverley station by BUS, take service 19 or 37 (between them, every 10 mins).

Sunday 3 May – Suggested places of interest

The Royal Mile

Architecturally, this makes an interesting walk from the castle down towards Holyrood. Along the way, you pass:

- St Giles' Cathedral – correctly, the High Kirk of St Giles (14th century and after).
- The former Tron Kirk: built in the 17th century, the present spire dates from 1828. The church closed for worship in 1952, was subsequently gutted, and is currently empty.
- Carrubbers Christian Centre, 65 High St (John Armstrong, 1883), home to a long-established non-denominational Evangelical congregation which was until recently a mission rather than a church.
- John Knox House, 43-45 High St: now a museum, telling the story of the Scottish Reformation (not open Sundays).
- Canongate Kirk (1691, restored 1991). Among those buried in the graveyard is the economist Adam Smith.
- You could then retrace your steps and turn along Jeffrey St. Just before you reach North Bridge, on the left is the entrance to Old St Paul's (Hay & Henderson, 1884), a congregation of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

Roman Catholic Chapel of St Albert the Great

Location: 24 George Square, Edinburgh EH8 9LD (an Orthodox chapel is located at no. 23a)

Access: The chapel can be viewed through the gate but is not normally open other than during service times. See <http://scotland.op.org/edinburgh/services.php> for details.

Website: <http://scotland.op.org/edinburgh/> and

<http://www.simpsonandbrown.co.uk/architecture/churches/the-chapel-of-st-albert-the-great/>

The Chapel of St Albert the Great was designed by Simpson & Brown Architects and completed in late 2012. Built for the University Chaplaincy and the Community of Dominican friars who form St Albert's Catholic Chaplaincy, the Chapel is situated in the garden of one of the townhouses and replaced the old Chapel, which was located on the upper floor of the adjoining townhouses. The choice of materials and building form were important factors in trying to achieve the peaceful space required of a Chapel whilst also connecting it to its natural setting of the garden and the Meadows beyond. Four tree-like Corten steel columns support a curved, oak-lined timber roof over the altar and sanctuary spaces. A thick masonry wall, constructed out of large clay blocks clad with sandstone, interprets the historic boundary between the townhouses and provides a solid mass and weight to the building form. The west wall behind the sanctuary is glazed and connects the Chapel with the garden and the changing seasons. The external finish on the roof is sedum, again connecting the building to its garden setting and minimising its visual impact from above.

Greyfriars Kirk

Location: Greyfriars Place, Edinburgh EH1 2QQ

Access: The Kirk, the Story of Greyfriars Museum and shop are generally open from Monday to Saturday from April to October but the building is sometimes closed for services and concerts. The Kirkyard is open during daylight hours.

Website: <http://www.greyfriarskirk.com/heritage>

Greyfriars Kirk is a landmark building in the heart of the city. It has been a site of worship for four centuries and has played a prominent role in many of the most notable chapters of Edinburgh's history. Today it is a parish church and a world class concert venue as well as an important heritage site. The museum tells the story of religious activity on the Greyfriars site from Franciscan times to the present day and boasts, among other artefacts, one of only a handful of original copies of the National Covenant signed in the Kirk in 1638. The Covenanters were Scottish Presbyterians who signed the National Covenant to confirm their opposition to the interference by the Stuart kings in the affairs of the Church of Scotland. The Covenant had been prepared by Alexander Henderson and Archibald Johnston with revisions by others. It was signed by thousands in the Kirk after which it was taken into the Kirkyard where many more signatures were added. The Covenanters endured a period of very severe repression. Ministers with Covenanting sympathies were 'outed' from their churches by the authorities and had to leave their parishes though many continued to preach at 'conventicles' in the open air or in barns and houses. This became an offence punishable by death. At the Battle of Bothwell Bridge, which took place on 22 June 1679, over 1,200 prisoners were brought to Edinburgh and around 400 were held in Greyfriars Churchyard, in a spot now known as the Covenanters' Prison. They were kept there under guard for five winter months before being executed, transported abroad as slaves, or given their liberty on signing oaths of allegiance to the king. Many Covenanters died in the prison and were buried in the Kirkyard in the place traditionally reserved for criminals.

Augustine United Church

Location: 41 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1EL

Access: Contact the church via email at auc@augustine.org.uk

Website: <http://www.augustine.org.uk/contact/index.php>

The Augustine Church community began its journey in 1802 with the Rev John Aikman though the present church was built between 1857-61 by J J & W H Hay with Romanesque, Renaissance and Classical elements. The projecting centre is carried up as the 'bride's-cake' tower and was restored in 2005. Two stained glass windows by Robert Burns, formerly in the gallery, are now located on the ground floor. The Bradford computer organ of 1994 uses the pipes and case of the 1929 Ingram organ. The church has an ecumenical outlook and is in covenant with Greyfriars Kirk and with St Columba's by the Castle. It is also the home of Christian Aid in Scotland. In the 21st century Augustine United Church is a progressive and inclusive Christian community based in the heart of Edinburgh city centre and a member of the United Reformed Church.

Buccleuch Free Church, Edinburgh

Location: 10 West Crosscauseway, Edinburgh, EH8 9JP

Access: Contact via the church website at <http://www.buccleuchfreechurch.co.uk/contact-us.html>

Website: <http://www.buccleuchfreechurch.co.uk>

The church was built in 1857 by J J & W H Hay of Liverpool for the Free Buccleuch Congregation established at the 1843 Disruption and has one of the largest hammerbeam roofs in the country as well as an impressive spire 174 feet high. Although the church officially opened its doors on 18 December 1856, the spire was not completed until December 1861. Gothic in style, Buccleuch was fitted with solid pitch pine pews, which are still in use today. The church is filled with many original features including a large stained glass window and the congregation has sought to remain true to the original Free Church vision of reformed theology and evangelical outreach.

The Hub

Location: Castlehill, Edinburgh EH1 2NE

Access: Café open Monday to Saturday 9.30am to 5.30pm; Sunday 11.00am to 5.30pm

Website: <http://www.thehub-edinburgh.com/>

This category A listed building forms an integral part of the architectural fabric of Edinburgh as The Hub's spire is the highest point in central Edinburgh. The building was constructed between 1842 and 1845 as the Victoria Hall, to house the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. The architects were James Gillespie Graham and Augustus Welby Pugin. Curiously, the building was never consecrated as a church and in 1929 the Church of Scotland ceased to use it, after which it became a temporary home for a variety of congregations. It became the Highland Tolbooth St John's Church in 1956, before falling into disuse in the 1980s. In 1999, the building was transformed into The Hub, the offices and a performance space for the Edinburgh International Festival. The building is a stunning combination of award winning contemporary design and classic Victorian architecture.

Rosslyn Chapel

Location: Chapel Loan, Roslin, Midlothian EH25 9PU

Access: Open Monday to Saturday from 9.30am until 6pm and on Sunday from 12pm until 4.45pm. Guides provide talks throughout the day. These are included in the admission price and run at the following times on Sundays: 1pm, 2pm and 3pm.

Website: <http://www.rosslynchapel.org.uk/>

Rosslyn Chapel was founded in 1446 as a place of worship and services continue to be held there weekly. When Sir William St Clair, the Chapel's founder, died in 1484, the Chapel became the place of worship for the St Clair family for almost a century. But in 1592, when the Chapel was seized by Protestant reformers, it ceased to be used as a place of worship and over the years fell into a state of disrepair. Although some initial restoration work was carried out in 1736, it was not until the early 1800s that the St Clair family began work in earnest to restore the interior of the building. By 1862 the Chapel was once more a working church. Work to the Chapel in the early 1950s resulted in moisture becoming trapped in the stone. In 1995, in an effort to halt the deterioration of the building fabric, the Rosslyn Chapel Trust was established to care for the Chapel and ensure its long-term future. The Chapel has been a popular destination for visitors for generations but its profile greatly increased after the publication of Dan Brown's novel, *The Da Vinci Code*, in 2003, and the subsequent film.

The Robin Chapel

Location: Situated in the centre of The Thistle Foundation, Niddrie Mains Road, Edinburgh EH16 4EA

Access: Contact the administrator Craig Anderson on 0131 656 9912 or email canderson@thistle.org.uk

Website: http://www.robinchapel.org.uk/robin_home.html

The attractive chapel was built by Sir Frances and Lady Tudsbery in memory of their only son, Robin, a lieutenant in the Royal Horse Guards (The Blues), who was killed in Germany in the last days of the Second World War while serving with his First Household Cavalry Regiment. His parents sought not only to commemorate a beloved son but also to further the spirit of unity and concord among Christian people. In every aspect of the Chapel there is a sense of individual care in its creation. The architect was John F Matthew FRIBA, whose fine work is eloquent of his own personal skill as well as of his long association in partnership with the late Sir Robert Lorimer. The Chapel was dedicated in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother and Her Royal Highness The Princess Margaret on 20 August 1953.

St Mary Star of the Sea (Roman Catholic)

Location: 106 Constitution Street, Leith EH6 6AW

Access: Normally open

Website: <http://www.stmarysstarofthesea.org/>

Leith was once a thriving port for the city of Edinburgh, and in common with many ports, the docks are now going through a programme of regeneration. Leith is now the largest waterfront development in Europe; and is also home to the Royal Yacht Britannia. The church was designed in 1854 by the architects Pugin & Hansom in the Gothic style.

The National Museum of Scotland

Location: Chambers Street, Edinburgh EH1 1JF

Access: Open daily from 10am until 5pm

Website: <http://www.nms.ac.uk/national-museum-of-scotland/discover-the-museum/scottish-history-and-archaeology/>

The Scottish galleries guide the visitor from the Palaeolithic era to the present day, from the earliest cultures to space age science, prehistory to pop culture. They also show how Scottish innovation has helped shape the modern world and allow visitors to see how the lives of everyday Scots have changed through the centuries. The 'Kingdom of the Scots' exhibition follows Scotland from its emergence as a nation around 1100 to 1707, when the Union of the Scottish and English Parliaments created the United Kingdom of Great Britain. This gallery showcases some very precious objects: the tiny Monymusk reliquary, the Queen Mary harp and the famous Lewis chessmen, probably the best-known archaeological find from Scotland. The exhibition tells the story of key figures from Scottish history, from William Wallace and Robert the Bruce to Mary, Queen of Scots. It also traces the changing face of Scotland through developments in trade and the economy as well as fierce religious and political controversy.

Monday 4 May

9.30am Canonmills Baptist Church (tea and coffee will be available)

14 Canonmills, EH3 5LH

Buses 8, 36

Website: <https://canonmillschurch.wordpress.com>

According to historical records, the area of Canonmills was once owned by the Canons of the Abbey of Holyrood. It was where the mills used in the processing of grain on behalf of the canons of the Abbey once stood, there being a Canon Law that all baxters (bakers) must bring their grain to this site.

The congregation which now meets at Canonmills was formed in 1810 with only 17 members under the leadership of Revd Dr William Innes and their first meeting place was in Laing's Academy in East Thistle Street. They had come together to express their commitment to believers' baptism but, with an open mindedness remarkable for their time – the Constitution of the new fellowship accepted profession of faith in Jesus Christ as the only requirement for full membership. This remains so today.

The young church continued to meet in East Thistle Street until 1813 when they moved to Elder Street. There, the preaching of Dr Innes attracted large congregations and the membership increased until, early in 1856, the church meeting decided that the time had come to seek a 'new and larger place of worship'.

The church in Dublin Street was built on the site of a carpenter's workshop. The fine new sanctuary with its two halls was completed in the summer of 1858. It became well-known through the years as a centre for work among young people. Its pulpit was blessed with gifted preachers, and the congregation earned a reputation far beyond Scotland for its liberal views, its open membership, and its attempts to relate the whole of life to the Christian Faith. In 1987, after much heart-searching, the decision was taken to move to Canonmills. The building which had served us well for 130 years required major structural repairs. It was not felt possible to justify the huge financial outlay demanded for an old-fashioned, uneconomic, and inflexible Victorian building.

The building at Canonmills is actually older. A plaque on the wall records that it originally housed a school, which was attended by Robert Louis Stevenson in the 1850s. It had belonged to Dublin Street Baptist Church since 1855 when it was purchased as a 'mission station' and had quickly established itself in the area due to the many organisations which made use of the building.

On 15 October 1988, Canonmills Hall became Canonmills Baptist Church when the congregation moved to its fourth home. This area has historic associations for Baptists for, not a stone's throw from the front door, runs the stretch of the Water of Leith where, more than two centuries ago, services of believers' baptism were held.

Credits: <https://canonmillschurch.wordpress.com/about/>

We walk to the next venue (10 minutes).

10.30am **Bellevue Chapel**
Rodney Street, EH7 4EL

Website: <http://www.bellevuechapel.org/>

Bellevue Chapel began its life as a Lutheran Chapel, built between 1878-81 to provide a place of worship for German residents of Edinburgh and those that were building the Forth Bridge. It was designed by James B Wemyss of Leith for Herr Blumenreich and was described as 'bare and uninteresting' by *The Builder*. It is now an independent evangelical church with its roots in the Christian Brethren, the congregation having moved here in 1919. They have modernised the interior but have kept the original internal stained glass windows.

We walk to the next venue (10 minutes).

11.30am **Mansfield Traquair Centre**
15 Mansfield Place, EH3 6BB

Website: <http://www.mansfieldtraquair.org.uk/>

The Catholic Apostolic congregation in Edinburgh was one of the earliest to be formed, in 1834, and was to become one of the most influential in Britain. Its first building is just up the road (see below). In 1876, this Grade A listed church was built to a design by Robert Rowand Anderson, and arguably launched him on the road to recognition. The narthex was added in 1884, and from 1893 to 1901 the artist Phoebe Traquair worked on a remarkable series of murals expressing the Catholic Apostolic understanding of the Christian faith. A chapel on the south side of the nave includes stained glass from the previous church. The church ceased to be used for Catholic apostolic worship in the early 1960s, and in 1974 it was sold to a Reformed Baptist congregation. At the end of the 1970s the church was using the narthex for worship, with the sanctuary being used as a publisher's warehouse. By the 1990s, the church had vacated the building, which was in the hands of developers, and concerns were being raised about deterioration of the fabric and murals. Eventually the church was purchased by the Mansfield Traquair Trust in 1998. Restoration was

completed in 2007, and the church is now a prestige event venue, with office space below for the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organizations.

12.30pm Lunch break

There are numerous cafes on Broughton Street including Cafe Nom De Plume, the New Town Deli, Rapido Cafe and Asti. There is also the Broughton Delicatessen around the corner on Barony Street. For more substantial meals there is The Smoke Stack (<http://www.smokestack.org.uk/>) or The Olive Branch (<http://www.theolivebranchscotland.co.uk/#bistro>). If the weather is fine it would be possible to walk down to King George V Park (<http://www.kgvsy.org.uk/>) on Royal Crescent, just behind the Canonmills Baptist Church, to picnic. Alternatively, those with abundant energy may care to stride up onto Calton Hill to enjoy fine views across the city while eating their sandwiches.

During the lunch break you might also care to take a look at the following chapels:

Former Albany Street Chapel

Goldsmiths Hall, 24 Broughton Street, Edinburgh EH1 3RH

This Grade B listed building was designed in an idiosyncratic classical style for the Church of the Nazarene by David Skae and was completed in 1816. The Albany Street frontage follows the elaborate terrace design probably by William Sibbald, planner of the northern new town in 1801-02. The galleried interior was lost in 197608 when the disused Chapel was adapted by Baron Bercott as the main Edinburgh office of the Alliance Building Society. The building was fully refurbished and opened as the Assay Office in 1999 by Princess Anne. The Edinburgh Assay Office is the last remaining Assay Office in Scotland and one of four which remain in the United Kingdom.

Catholic Apostolic Church

22-4 Broughton Street, Edinburgh

The neighbouring building with its pedimented temple front and recessed Ionic portico was built around 1843-4 for the Catholic Apostolic Church, possibly by John Dick Peddie. It bears a similarity to his richer Trinity Church in Glasgow's Duke Street.

1.30pm Glasite Meeting House, Barony Street, Edinburgh 33 Barony Street, Edinburgh EH3 6NX

Website: <http://www.shbt.org.uk/properties-to-let/glasite-meeting-house-edinburgh/>

The Glasites (or Sandemanians) were a Christian sect founded in Scotland by the Revd John Glas and although the movement spread into England and America it is now practically extinct. Glas dissented from the Westminster Confession only in his views as to the spiritual nature of the church and the functions of the civil magistrate but his son-in-law Robert Sandeman added a distinctive doctrine as to the nature of faith which is stated on his tombstone: *'That the bare death of Jesus Christ without a thought or deed on the part of man, is sufficient to present the chief of sinners spotless before God.'* In a series of letters to James Hervey, the author of *Theron and Aspasia*, he maintained that justifying faith is a simple assent to the divine testimony concerning Jesus Christ, differing in no way in its character from belief in any ordinary testimony.

In their practice the Glasite churches aimed at a strict conformity with primitive Christianity as they understood it. Each congregation had many leaders rather than a central minister; instead the services were led by Elders and Deacons who were democratically elected by the congregation without regard to their educational background or occupation. The community also required decision to be made unanimously; if any member differed in opinion from the rest, he must either surrender his judgment to that of the church, or be excluded from its communion. To join in prayer with any one not a member of the denomination was regarded as unlawful, and even to eat or drink with one who had been excommunicated was held to be wrong.

Glas opened his first Meeting House in Dundee in 1732, followed by one in Perth in 1733. A year later the Edinburgh Meeting House was opened at a location near Chambers Street but no physical evidence of this building survives other than drawings dated 1792. In time more than 30 Meeting Houses were established throughout Scotland, including locations in Paisley, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Leith, Arbroath, Montrose,

Aberdeen, Dunkeld, Cupar and Galashiels. In 1834, tenders were sought for a new building for the Edinburgh congregation's recently purchased plot of land in Barony Street. A bid of £1,850 was accepted by the Elders in April 1834. The Glasites had purchased the land from the Herriot Trust and hired the Trust's surveyor, Alexander Black, to design their building. The Meeting House was Black's first commission as an architect and is unlike any of his later designs, possibly because the modest domestic exterior, simple interior and lack of decoration followed the Glasites' specifications. Work was completed on the building on 26 December 1835.

Alexander Black's detailed specifications include the massive moulded mantelpieces for the Feast Room (valued at 30 shillings each) and the cast iron railings for the main stair (7 shillings). All carpenter work was to be of Miramuc yellow pine, and the pews were to have no space for kneeling since they used the ancient practice of uplifting arms in prayer (cf. 1 Timothy 2). The external walls of the chapel were to be hand finished with ashlar, the blank windows on the exterior were to be filled with best Arbroath pavement and the windows of the 'feast room' (now the McWilliam Room) were of polished brown glass, to avoid being overlooked. Meals were carried upstairs by means of the dumb waiter located just off the kitchen.

The only features not mentioned in the original specification are the pulpit, designed by David Bryce in 1873, and the two circular windows added for ventilation in 1890 by James B. Dunn. The pulpit is arranged so that the Deacons occupied the lowest seat, the Precentor and the Reader the middle, and the four Elders sat in the upper row.

Credits: http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/1911_Encyclop%C3%A6dia_Britannica/Glasites and http://www.broughtonspurtle.org.uk/sites/broughtonspurtle.org.uk/files/story/glasite_meeting_house_history.pdf

We walk to the next venue (10 minutes).

2.45pm St Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral
61 York Place, Edinburgh EH1 3JD

Website: <http://www.stmaryscathedral.co.uk>

Bishop Hay, Vicar Apostolic for the Lowland District, chose the site in 1801 after his Chapel in Blackfriars' Wynd was burnt down by a mob, in the hope that the new site would be more secure as it was protected by the surrounding buildings. The design for the Chapel was commissioned from the prominent ecclesiastical architect, James Gillespie Graham. The first Mass was celebrated in August 1814. In its original form the Chapel was a simple rectangular building in the Gothic style with a shallow apse masked by a perpendicular Gothic facade, conveying the impression of a nave with flanking aisles.

Under the successors of Bishop Cameron, the Chapel was considerably embellished. In 1841 Bishop Gillis enlarged the sanctuary and had a new pulpit placed in the Cathedral. In 1866 Bishop Strain, at the time Vicar Apostolic of the Eastern District of Scotland, had a cloister chapel built, where the Lady Aisle now is. The embellished Chapel was therefore fit to become the pro-cathedral of the new Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh on the restoration of the Scottish hierarchy in 1878 and at the request of Archbishop William Smith it was named the Metropolitan Cathedral on 5 July 1886, with all the rights and privileges appertaining to such a Church.

However, it was Canon Donlevy, administrator of the Cathedral at the end of the nineteenth century, who was responsible for major changes in an endeavour to give the Cathedral a dignity worthy of its name although some of his changes were necessitated by the fire in the neighbouring Theatre Royal in 1892. Canon Donlevy had the side walls of the church made into arches, with aisles of considerable size on either side and replaced the separate cloister chapel with the new aisle on the Lady Altar side. The original saucer-shaped roof was left unaltered at the time for lack of funds, although the shallow sanctuary was extended backwards with three new arched bays. To achieve this, the priests' house in Chapel Lane was demolished and a new property at 61 York Place was acquired, which was connected to the Cathedral by a new tunnel built under Chapel Lane. The opening of the new sanctuary took place in 1896.

In 1932 it was decided to raise the roof of the Cathedral to the present height. The decorative carving of the nave roof structure is held to be particularly fine with angels with outstretched wings in varying colours spanning the spaces between the clerestory and others supporting the various trusses. Their breasts bear shields surrounded by the coats of arms in heraldic colours – first those of St Andrew, St Cuthbert, St Margaret and St David; then the Vicars Apostolic; then the Archbishops. The last coat of arms at the extreme end of the Lady Altar is that of Pope Pius XI.

Further changes were made in the 1970s. The porch and baptistery were removed and replaced by a more spacious porch on part of the old Theatre Royal site allowing the original facade of the Cathedral to be revealed in all its splendour for the first time for many decades. In accordance with the reform of the liturgy of the Second Vatican Council the sanctuary was also remodelled. A prominent feature of the Cathedral's interior is the painting of the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary as Queen of Heaven above the Sanctuary arch by Louis Beyart of Belgium.

Credits: <http://www.stmaryscathedral.co.uk/history.html>

From here, Waverley Station is a few minutes' walk up Leith St. Participants are free to leave the Cathedral at whatever time suits them.

However, those with time to spare before heading off might like to take a look at the following building:

**Lady Glenorchy's Low Calton Church
Greenside Place (Leith Walk), Edinburgh EH1 3AA**

In December 1843, the site of the building was purchased by a newly Established Free Congregation migrating from the original Chapel, which was taken over and demolished when the railway was constructed at Waverley. The Tudor collegiate front elevation of the church was designed by John Henderson in May 1846 though the church behind was completed in 1844 and had a simple spacious classical interior with a gallery carried on cast iron arcades. Cassell's *Old and New Edinburgh* by James Grant refers to the building as 'a low, square, squat-looking tower, with a facade in the tudor style forming a new front to an old house pierced with the entrance to Lady Glenorchy's Free Church, which stands immediately behind it.' Due to the steeply sloping site, the building had extensive basements underneath, making the very plain side elevations five storeys in height. The building fell from ecclesiastical use in 1978 when the congregation of Hillside Parish Church united with Greenside Church. In 1986 permission was given to demolish all but the principal elevation of the building although the development which eventually incorporated the facade was only recently completed. It is now part of Omni, a cinema complex.

For further reading:

Churches to Visit in Scotland (Scotland's Churches Scheme, various editions) – a number of entries are indebted to this fascinating reference work.

A Guide to the Mansfield Traquair Centre (Edinburgh: Friends of Mansfield Traquair Centre, 2006) – account of the building, the murals, and the conservation process.

Fiona Allardyce and Rosemary Mann, *Conservation of Phoebe Anna Traquair Murals at Mansfield Traquair Centre, Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: Historic Scotland, 2007) – a fully illustrated account of the process.

Ian L. S. Balfour, *Revival in Rose Street: Charlotte Baptist Chapel, Edinburgh, 1808-2008* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 2007) – remarkably detailed and lavishly presented history of an influential evangelical congregation, complete with CD.

John Gifford, Colin McWilliam and David Walker, *Buildings of Scotland: Edinburgh* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984).

Andrew T. N. Muirhead, *Reformation, Dissent and Diversity: The Story of Scotland's Churches, 1560-1960* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011) – includes an overview of post-Reformation Scottish church history and also an introduction to each denomination.

Music of the Catholic Apostolic Church – a virtually unique short CD recording of music written for the Edinburgh church.