



Leighton Letter No. 8

Newsletter of the Leighton Library¹

October 2023

This Leighton Letter celebrates the team that is managing the restoration project. Through their monthly Restoration Newsletters they have been keeping us wonderfully well informed on progress and the challenges encountered, with excellent photographs at each stage. The Restoration Newsletters and photographs will also serve as a record of this major project. You'll see that costs are rising after discovery of extra work needed, no surprise in a building opened 336 years ago. Fund raising efforts continue. Read on...



Also in this Leighton Letter:

- A major piece of work by Gordon Willis tells the story of the Leighton's second Librarian, Robert Douglas, who served in that capacity for over 50 years.
- Mary Birch provides an entertaining article on the implementation of Leighton's will directed by executor Edward Lightmaker, Leighton's nephew, who has featured in past Leighton Letters.
- Your editors report on news from the *Books and Borrowing* project, which continues its fascinating investigation on Library borrowers and the books they borrowed.

An important date for your diary! The Library is having a fund-raising **Coffee Morning** in the Cathedral Hall on **Saturday 2nd December**. All welcome. The team is looking for offers of help, and will be seeking donations of baking and other foods, raffle prizes, books, etc. Contact Dan Gunn at degunn@hotmail.com (tel: 07727 220420) or Celia Aitken at williamsfield62@gmail.com

Financial donations at any time to the cost of the restoration will always be warmly welcomed. An easy way to donate is via the Library website: <https://www.leightonlibrary.org.uk>.

The website also has previous editions of the Leighton Letter and restoration newsletters, and information and videos about the Library, Leighton, and the books.

Editors Frances and Hugh welcome comments and suggestions for articles. Email us at leightonfriends@gmail.com

News from the Executive Group

Talking about fund-raising... A total of £2,312.80 was raised at the Dunblane Fling at the end of May and the "Story of the Restoration" event at the beginning of June.

A further £1,087.33 was raised by the raffle at the Bridgerton event held in Stirling on 8 July.

Many thanks to all who contributed to those events! We continue to plan further events as donations are always required to meet not only the cost of the restoration but also related ongoing costs, e.g. it costs £828 each month for storage of the books, to date £8,280.

¹ Leighton Library Trust, Scottish Charity SC003010.

Following the current restoration works, Phase 3 will be about development of the Undercroft as a new visitor facility, engagement space, and exhibition area for the benefit of the community and visitors. The team working on future plans are grateful to all who completed the survey on that.

The Restoration Team

We asked the 3 team members to tell us about their work background prior to the Leighton project, and something about their involvement in the restoration project.

Alastair MacDonald

After a career in the Civil Service, I've done a variety of things, including Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland, member of the planning team for the Glasgow Commonwealth Games, Chair of Victim Support Scotland, and surveying whales and dolphins for a conservation charity.

At the start of lockdown, I took over a funding application to Historic Environment Scotland from the late Robert Black and then volunteered to lead the restoration programme.



It's been a fascinating journey where I have learned an enormous amount. It has immersed me in conservation procedures, architecture, procurement, historical research, planning consents, archaeology, fundraising, the list goes on! One of the most absorbing strands has been trying to see if there are any title deeds for the building. We've found nothing which satisfies the modern authorities, but we've arrived at a legal workaround.

Alan Clevett



My life pre Leighton Library was predominantly in Construction Management, full of fascinating challenges and thoroughly enjoyable, working on major schemes with great people and organisations across the UK and Europe. The projects included the first 10 years of construction for the Nissan Car Plant in Sunderland, the 2012 Olympic Stadium, the Millennium Dome and Arena, and Retail, Sport and Hospital projects... But nothing prepared me for the challenges of the Leighton Library!

Instead of constructing buildings for the future, I find myself involved in uncovering and making good 330 years of building history. The removal of the harling has revealed windows, door openings and support structure not previously visible and much stonework requiring replacement or repair. The timber roof support structure also requires detailed examination and several parts replaced.

These challenges have created pressure on programme and costs and in my support role I am very fortunate to be working with a totally committed professional team led by Rosalind Taylor of Tod and Taylor Architects, and I'm enjoying the workmanship standards and attention to detail of our contractor Gillies and Farrell.

Tom Astbury

My involvement taking photos during the Leighton Library restoration project has given me the opportunity to put my camera to good use and dust off my hard-hat and PPE from a spell in a previous life when I was making films for the Offshore Oil Industry. My working life, before ‘retirement’ and becoming a Leighton volunteer, was as a photographer, and then for 40 years or so as a Cameraperson within the film and TV industry. I have had the opportunity to work on a wide variety of productions over the years and travel often.



Volunteering with the Leighton has been perfect as it combines my interests in history, books, photography, and it’s close to home. It’s been fascinating climbing the scaffolding frequently as some of the building’s hidden history has been revealed. It’s also been so interesting watching the work of the stonemasons and other experts ‘up close’ and sharing the progress through my pictures.

Bespeak some Masters of a Ship...

(by Mary Birch)

Mary has been researching the origins of the Library in “The Life and letters of Robert Leighton” (Dugald Butler, 1903). She has unearthed some fascinating text from Leighton’s nephew Edward Lightmaker in his role as executor of Leighton’s will, keen to honour his uncle’s memory. This article proved a challenge to Spellchecker ...

Robert Leighton died in 1684, after a decade in retirement at his sister Sapphira’s house, Broadhurst, at Horsted Keynes in Sussex. His will, dated February 1683, said, “Only my Books I leave and bequeath to the Cathedrall of Dunblane in Scotland to remain there for the use of the Clergie of the Diocese.”

His nephew and executor, Edward Lightmaker, duly wrote to Robert Douglas, his uncle’s successor as Bishop of Dunblane, to inform him of Leighton’s death and of this legacy.

“My Lord, It hath pleased God to take of late to himself the soul of that Excellent persone Doctor Leightone, your singular good friend... I was one that had the honour to be related to him being joynt Executor with my mother of his will...he did desire me that ...we would soon after his deceass, wryte to your Lordship to acqwaint you that he hath ordered his Books to be sent to the Church of Dunblane... and therefor to desire your Lordship to bespeak some masters of a ship that is coming from thence to call for them att Londone, we having first packed them up in chists and trunks that are needful to containe them.”

The idea of a ship sailing from Dunblane to London may seem odd, but the Forth was navigable as far as Stirling. Lightmaker assures Bishop Douglas that “nothing shall be omitted that shall be necessary for the expediting of this [matter].” We know from the journal of Giles Moore², the Rector of Horsted Keynes at the time, that “Morley the carriour” brought goods to and from London, so probably took the heavy chests and trunks to stow them aboard ship. As a sideline, Morley also dealt in feathers for stuffing pillows and beds.

Lightmaker continues, “There was one thing more that was the desire of this worthy man (to witt) that I should transmit to your Lordship ane hundreth pounds for the accomodateing a chamber somewhere neir the Church for his books.” Bishop Leighton thought that it might be possible to use recycled building materials “out of some of the ruinous walls that are without the Church or of the Bishop’s ruined house,” and “desired that the room might be built of convenient largeness, and good

² The Journal of Giles Moore, ed. Ruth Bird (1971).

lights, and handsomely furnished with presses and shelves, and some desks for reading at them, and chaires or stooles to sitt on.”

The hundred pounds did not stretch that far. Bishop Douglas later wrote that his predecessor “was desirous that even after his death any thing that was to be a memorial of him should have as little pomp and splendour as could be... this chamber not so much in his mynd as the poor were: so that if any thing could be spared of this moyetie, let the poor have it, though the chamber be scrimpted.”

Lightmaker was a rich man, whose father had made a fortune in brewing. According to James Fall, Principal of Glasgow University at the time, “This Nephew is the Uncle redivivus, who has absolutely renounced the world, though he has an estat in it worth 500lb sterling yearly rent.” Lightmaker “designed two hundred pounds sterling to be stocked for yearly interest towards the maintenance of a Librarian,” also described as a Bibliothecarius. His most visible contribution to the Library was the cartouche, “a verie rich marble stand, of oval figure, weill cutt, having on it Bishop Lightones arms, with this inscriptione, Bibliotheca Lightoniana, and a gilded mitre on the top of it, which is sett upon the frontispiece of this house towards the streetts, according as my Lord Strathalane hath advised.”

Thus Edward Lightmaker sought to honour “that excellent persone Doctor Leightone,” the uncle who had been a much-loved member of the household at Horsted Keynes for the last decade of his life.

Updates from Books and Borrowing 1750-1830

(An Analysis of Scottish Borrowers' Registers)

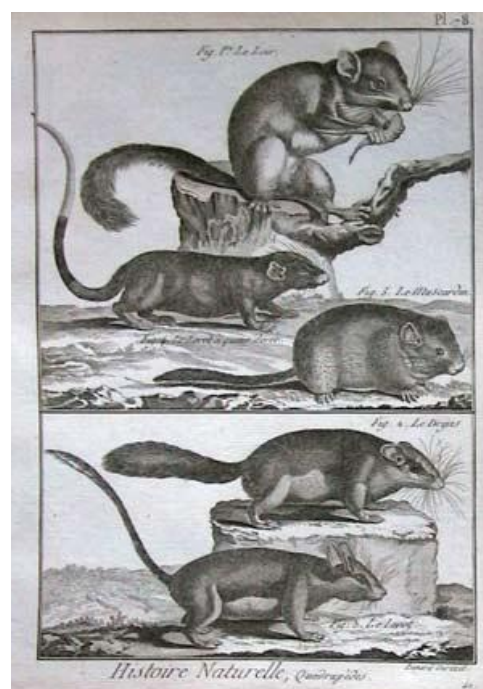
*The University of Stirling **Books and Borrowing** project includes an examination of the register of the Leighton Library's borrowers in the years 1780 to 1840. Borrowers were typically people who had come to the area to take the spa waters and so is known as the 'Water Drinker's Register'. You can catch up on news from the project here: [Project News – Books and Borrowing 1750-1830](#).*

The following articles from the project are of particular interest given that we hold copies of the books within the Leighton collection.

Josh Smith said it was his ‘surprise and joy [to stumble] on the name of Mr Bruce of Kinnaird in the Leighton’s borrowing register, better known to all as James Bruce of Kinnaird (1730-1794), the famed author and traveller in Africa’. Among the books borrowed was the Polyglot Bible, one of the favourite books of Leighton guides. You can read Josh’s article here: [James Bruce of Kinnaird, Leighton borrower](#).

A jewel in the Leighton collection is our 1749 copy of *Buffon's Histoire Naturelle, Generale et Particuliere* by Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon. We hold volumes 1-17 of the total published, and they have proved a firm favourite with library visitors over the years due to the profusion of superb engravings of birds and animals contained therein. **Katie Halsey** elevates our understanding of this marvellous collection: [Forgotten Bestsellers: Buffon, Natural History, General and Particular](#).

The Cottagers of Glenburnie by Elizabeth Hamilton, published in 1808, is set in the fictional Highland village of Glenburnie. *Cottagers* follows the story of Mrs Mason, a retired governess who, having spent most of her working life in England, returns at the start of the novel to her native Scotland to live with her relations, the MacClarty family. **Cleo Callaghan Yeoman** provides a highly entertaining account of this best-seller: [Forgotten Best-Sellers: The Cottagers of Glenburnie](#).



The *Books and Borrowing* project website offers many other interesting articles, including Josh's travels 'stateside' to iconic libraries in Philadelphia, New York City and Charleston: [Project News – Books and Borrowing 1750-1830](#)

Editor's Note: If you find yourself in Paris and visit the Jardin de Plantes, you'll find that M. Buffon features prominently there.



The Second Leighton Librarian: Robert Douglas

(by Gordon Willis)

In the last Leighton Letter, Gordon told us about the first keeper of the Leighton Library, John Littlejohn, who lasted in the post for only a year. In this article he tells us about the second Librarian, Robert Douglas, who served in that post for over 50 years.

The Episcopalians marginalised

When Bishop Douglas, following the lead of Leighton's executors, set out the principles that would guide his choice of librarian, he was clear (as modern politicians are fond of saying) that the successful candidate would be a divinity student of impeccable report and would hold the post for three, or at most four, years. As I outlined in my previous Newsletter article, the Bishop's first choice, John Littlejohn, fulfilled the criteria but seems to have relinquished the position within a year or so of his appointment, probably because the so-called Glorious Revolution of 1688 had ended his divinity studies.

The Revolution was also a profound shock to the career of Bishop Douglas, who was officially deprived of his temporalities in April 1689, though a couple of years later, according to the Hearth Tax returns, he was still residing in his six-roomed house in Dunblane. Much worse was the plight of his eldest son and namesake, minister of Bothwell near Hamilton, who also in April 1689 lost his charge and was forcibly turned out of his manse. The humiliated Mr Douglas, then aged about 30, probably had no option but to take temporary refuge with his father.

The Scottish bishops, unless they had private means, faced a precarious existence. Douglas's predecessor in Dunblane, Bishop Ramsay, was deprived from his next see as Bishop of Ross. He then removed to Edinburgh, where he died 'in great poverty' in 1696. Since it was not in the government's interests that the bishops' plight should excite too much public sympathy, a decision was taken shortly

afterwards to award all surviving bishops an annual state pension of £100, which in Douglas's case was a rather generous settlement, equivalent to half his original income.

Bishop Douglas provides for his family

Bishop Douglas was a member of the interrelated noble houses of Douglas (the Angus branch) and Hamilton, and his close relations were high achievers. He ensured that neither he nor his family would suffer the fate of Bishop Ramsay. His final home after he left Dunblane was Dudhope Castle, Dundee, the property of his kinsman the Marquess of Douglas, while another address he used was Glen Ogilvie, in the parish of Glamis, where his late father-in-law had been minister. And when his children married, they did so advantageously.

However, his eldest son never married, and the Bishop took steps on his behalf. First, he appears to have used one of his residual powers to nominate him as the new Leighton Librarian, even though Mr Douglas did not match the person specification so clearly set out in 1688. As an ordained minister he was over-qualified, while the three-year term was quietly forgotten. The salary for the librarian, the interest of £10 on capital of £200 sterling, was adequate to live on. In addition, the offer of free use of the undercroft meant that he would have somewhere to lay his head if necessary. It would be interesting to know who prompted Leighton's executors to augment the librarian's salary in 1704 by a further £2-10s: the Bishop must be a likely suspect. The date of Mr Douglas's appointment is not recorded, but for several reasons it is unlikely to have been before late 1691. There is no reference to it in the Bishop's Foundation Register, dated July 1691. In addition, the Hearth Tax was payable on fireplaces in occupied buildings, as surveyed in 1690-91, but the returns for Dunblane do not mention him or anyone else who might have lived in the library. Indeed, it was probably kept securely locked and shuttered throughout 1690, when contingency plans were in place for the books to be transported to Stirling Castle should an attack on the library be imminent. The threat was not only from the rabble: James Fall, the former Principal of Glasgow University, reported that the library project had enemies as highly-placed as the Privy Council of Scotland (NLS MS.3650).

Bishop Douglas employed a successful lawyer to look after his family's interests: George Robertson, former treasurer of Dunblane Kirk Session and the Leighton Library's first legal adviser. In a letter dated 2nd January 1700, Robertson informed the Bishop of the progress of several actions he had taken, of which two, or even three, were to the financial advantage of his son Robert (NLS, Glenbervie Papers, Acc. 10229/1). The Earl of Ruglen (a Douglas-Hamilton) had taken over an existing bond from which Mr Douglas was already receiving interest; there is mention of an assignation from the brother of the Bishop to benefit the latter's sons; and legal action is discussed to recover debts (perhaps compensation) owed by certain unnamed 'gentlemen in the west'. Mr Douglas therefore had more sources of income than his library salary.

Robert Douglas as librarian

What of Douglas's library duties? For example, how closely did he adhere to the ambitious opening times prescribed in 1688, that is, 10-12 am and 2-4 pm daily? The register of borrowings for his time in office is complete except for one or more lost leaves at the beginning (Stirling Council Archives CH2/101/9, within a volume of Kirk Session Minutes; also online on the ScotlandsPeople website). The first entry is for 26th November 1699 and the last for 8th August 1745. The form of words varies over the years, but generally borrowers (or in some instances their representative) write in their own hand that they have received specific books from Mr Robert Douglas and undertake to return them. Returns are undated, the relevant entries simply being struck through. There are 342 dates on which a borrowing is recorded in a period of almost 46 years, giving a remarkably low average of between 7 and 8 a year. Comparison with the historical calendars shows that borrowings occurred on every day of the week without any clear pattern emerging. Tuesdays (86) and Mondays (77) were favourite days, with Sundays (11) and Saturdays (30) the least common. June (46 borrowing days), July (37) and October (36) were peak months, with January (19) and September (20) the least favoured. Unfortunately we have no way of knowing when the library was open without a borrowing taking

place, but (with the keeper lighting a fire once a week, and only from 1st October to 1st March), there may not have been many occasions when a visitor chose to read without borrowing. It is noticeable that there were only 53 days when more than one person borrowed. The highest number of borrowers recorded in one day was five on July 27th, 1703, which happened to be a day on which the Presbytery met in Dunblane. Later librarians were specifically instructed to open on such days so that members of the Presbytery could borrow, but that did not seem to be the case during Douglas's tenure. One scenario that would fit the above evidence is that the keeper would only open the library on request, preferably by prior arrangement. That would be necessary because, as I shall demonstrate, he did have a career apart from library keeper, and he did not, at least in his later years, live in the undercroft, though he may have used it as an office. It could not have contained anything of value when his successor took over, since in order to let out the two 'vaults' for the benefit of library funds, it was necessary to buy a lock for the vault door.

Robert Douglas continued to serve as librarian right up until his death in 1746, aged about 87. There are indications that he was by then something of a liability. He was still opening the library, and there was actually an above-average number of days (74) in the period 1739-45 when borrowings were recorded. However, at their meeting of 8th October 1741, 'The Trustees Appoint two Compleat Copies of the Catalogue to be made out'. Despite being reminded in each of the two following years, Douglas never made those copies, whereas his successor, William Coldstream, reported after only five months in the post that he had completed the catalogues. Douglas had bequeathed his own books 'to Bishop Leighton's library in Dunblane in place of such books as may happen to be amissing furth thereof since he was keeper of the same (if any be)', together with 300 merks (about £17 sterling). Coldstream found that only a handful of books were missing, 'But that he had found above Seventy other Books in the said Library and Garret thereof that had never been inserted in the Catalogue.' It is hardly surprising that a man in his eighties had not recently ventured up the ladder to the garret. In appointing Coldstream, the Trustees immediately set new conditions: 'But as the sallary enjoyed by the said deceased Mr Douglas was much more than the trouble of the office required or the funds of the library can afford that yrfore the Same shall be restricted to the Sum of five pound Sterling annuall'. The librarian was even to buy coals out of his salary (though the Trustees later relented on this point). As Coldstream's main occupation was schoolmaster, and the Trustees stressed that those duties must not suffer, they were only expecting a limited commitment of his time. The £5 offered was exactly the same as his salary for his other part-time office as session clerk.

Mr Douglas's parallel career in the underground Episcopal Church

Douglas was described in his testament dated April 1746 as 'sometime minister of Bothwell, thereafter in Dunblane'. The injustice of his ejection from Bothwell still rankled after 57 years. But there is ambiguity too, probably deliberate: the description could also be understood as 'sometime minister of Bothwell, thereafter [minister] in Dunblane'. *And it is now known that while library keeper he conducted a parallel career as a minister in the underground Episcopal Church.* He was already styled 'Dean of Dunblane' when his nephew, Robert White, the son of his half-sister Susanna, was consecrated Bishop of Dunblane in a discreet ceremony in 1735 (see David M. Bertie, *Scottish Episcopal Clergy, 1689-2000*). That must have led to a rather satisfying collaboration! There were long periods in the first half of the eighteenth century when Episcopal worship was illegal, depending on the perceived level of the Jacobite threat, the cause with which the Episcopal Church was identified. Despite this, many local landowners, and others, continued to worship privately as Episcopalians, employing ministers such as Mr Douglas.

Douglas's testament: he lived in a three-roomed house

Douglas's testament (National Records of Scotland, Wills and testaments, ref CC6/5/25 Dunblane Commissary Court; online at ScotlandsPeople) was entered by the sole executor, his brother-in-law George Raitt, described as a physician in Dundee. Like many of Douglas's relatives, Dr Raitt had prospered. He was living as a country gentleman in Anniston House, a fine property north of Arbroath.

The testament shows that Douglas had lived in quite a substantial house, consisting of three rooms over two floors. There was an impressive quantity of household goods, including two very good beds and ample warm bedding. Four persons owed him money, and he had more than £63 sterling in cash in the house. His moveable assets (excluding his books) amounted to £1,672-17-2 Scots (£139-10 sterling), and he may also have owned the house. Doubtless some of his wealth was due to inheritance from the Bishop, who had died in 1716, but the amount of duplication in his household effects suggests that he also inherited goods from other family members.

This was the testament of someone of substance, even celebrity. The public roup to sell his possessions attracted a large crowd of no fewer than 53 successful bidders. The person who paid the most was Lady Kippendavie, who parted with over £63 Scots, including £41-10s for the better bed (someone else bought its feather bedding for £15-10s). Lady Kippendavie was Mr Douglas's niece, Margaret, the widow of the 4th Laird, Patrick Stirling (1704-1745); her sons who would become the 5th and 6th lairds were still children. Another purchaser was William Coldstream, who was one of the buyers for the 21 dozen 'chopine' (half-pint) bottles that were on sale (Mr Douglas had the equipment to brew his own ale). Three people came away with metal chimneys.

Two of the debtors owed arrears of interest on his librarian's salary: John Stirling of Keir (a year and three-quarters' interest on the £200 bond = £17-10s sterling) and Sir James Campbell of Aberuchill (five years and three-quarters' interest on £50 = £14-7-6). A third debtor was the prominent Jacobite, Alexander Drummond (McGregor) of Balhaldie, as guarantor for a bill drawn on behalf of his son. The total amount, including 12 years 4 months' interest, was £109-9s Scots (£9-2-4 sterling). The final debtor was Robert Douglas of Bridgetown in Dunblane, who owed 10 months' interest amounting to £8-1s sterling on a bond he had granted to the deceased. This last debt may have been the device by which Douglas was paid a salary as Dean.

Conclusion

The Trustees were arguably fortunate to find a keeper with Douglas's qualifications, commitment and integrity, and who would perform his duties faithfully for over half a century. On the other hand, the deal he had accepted was overgenerous, and drained money that was badly needed for maintaining the building. From Douglas's point of view he was fortunate to have been handed a part-time post that allowed him to pursue his vocation as a clergyman, while helping to fund a rather comfortable lifestyle.

Gordon Willis, January 2023

Editors' Note: Never one to leave any stone unturned, Gordon has been researching where the first librarian, John Littlejohn, moved on to after only a year in the post. Look out for that article in the next Leighton Letter.