



Morningside Masons and Medieval Stones : Researching a lost ‘local tradition’

A project funded by a Jean Guild Grant provided by the Old Edinburgh Club, to investigate the part that may have been played by 19th-century Morningside stonemasons in setting a number of ornamental stone fragments – likely medieval and ecclesiastical – into a local boundary wall.

BACKGROUND

Writing in *Historic South Edinburgh* (2000 p. 145), Charles Smith made reference to “a number of interesting and apparently very old ecclesiastical stones of varied motifs. Local tradition has it that these stones were set here by the owner of the nearby sculptor’s yard.” Could they have been from the 15th century Trinity Collegiate Church, demolished in 1848 for the construction of Waverley Station?



Trinity Collegiate Church, 1848
awaiting demolition to make way for Waverley Station
image Ross and Thomson, photographers, c. 1847
Source : Royal Collection Trust

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- To learn more about 19th century Morningside stonemasons
- To explore connections between them and the presence of the stones in a local Morningside wall
- To protect the stones in their current location, and encourage local interest in their history and their wider heritage significance
- To contribute to the OEC's purpose of exploring the history and development of Edinburgh

MEETING OUR OBJECTIVES

- As a starting point, a number of sculptors and stonemasons have already been identified from 19th-Century Post Office Directories and Morningside Census records. It is also known that there was a sculptor's yard at 8 Maxwell Street between c. 1883 and 1901, and by 1902 at 259 Morningside Road.
- Further research will be undertaken through the wide range of available sources such as the City Archives, Historic Environment Scotland, The National Records Office, Canmore, Dean of Guild Records, the National Trust for Scotland, Capital Collections.
- A dedicated project webpage is being set up on the MHA website (www.morningsideheritage.org), and information will also be available through the OEC website ([News & Views - The Old Edinburgh Club](#))
- As the project progresses we will develop exhibitions, give talks and run stonemasonry workshops

- Further outputs are the development of an interactive website and an on-site interpretation panel.

VIEWING THE STONES

If you would like to visit the stones and learn more about them
or become part of the team developing the project
we can be contacted on morningsidestones78@gmail.com

[Morningside Heritage Association is a registered Scottish charity, number SC044409](#)