The Transformation of Edinburgh

*Land, Property and Trust in the Nineteenth Century*

This clear and lucid study explores the physical transformation of Edinburgh in the nineteenth century. It is based on a formidable amount of new archival research and is enriched with fascinating illustrative material. In a powerful analysis of how the law adapted to the new possibilities for profit created by urbanisation, Richard Rodger examines how the city of Edinburgh was transformed in the nineteenth century. A modern form of ‘feudalism’, he argues, was invented. It was the financial implications of this ‘feuing’ system, rather than an early form of town planning, that contributed much to the development of the Edinburgh New Town and, more significantly, to the character of urban development in nineteenth-century urban Scotland.

Richard Rodger shows how the Church of Scotland, famous schools and educational endowments, as well as private trusts and small investors, all contributed to and benefited from urban expansion. He also explains how interconnected rural and urban interests were with revenue from the countryside recycled through urban property incomes. These and other relationships associated with the building of the city are explored at various levels, including a study of the largest builder in Edinburgh, James Steel, in a rags to riches, bankruptcy to baronetcy story that unveils how the process of urban development actually took place.

Despite its genteel New Town and ‘douce’ suburbs Edinburgh, known locally as ‘Auld Reekie’ for its polluted atmosphere, experienced both environmental damage and congested living conditions. In the final section, Richard Rodger explores civic efforts to address these concerns. He also examines the achievements of a working men’s co-operative to provide ‘colonies’ of houses in an innovative attempt to improve urban lifestyles. And, in an ethnological approach, the adornment and decoration of the tenement is examined in the context of ego, myth and national identity.

Historians – whether political, urban, economic, social or legal – will find challenging new insights here which have a resonance far beyond the confines of one city.
RICHARD RODGER is Professor of Urban History at the University of Leicester and Director of the Centre for Urban History. He teaches courses in economic and social history and is interested in the application of computing to historical analysis. He has written or edited ten books on the economic, social and business history of cities, including Scottish Housing in the Twentieth Century (1989), European Urban History (1993) and Housing in Urban Britain 1780–1914 (1995). Since 1987 Richard Rodger has been Editor of Urban History (published by Cambridge University Press).
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*Land, Property and Trust in the Nineteenth Century*

Richard Rodger

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<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>accession number</td>
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<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>Building Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>DGC</td>
<td>Dean of Guild Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECA</td>
<td>Edinburgh City Archives</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECBC</td>
<td>Edinburgh Co-operative Building Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECL</td>
<td>Edinburgh Central Library, Edinburgh Room</td>
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<td>GG</td>
<td>George Grindlay’s Trust</td>
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<td>GHH</td>
<td>George Heriot’s Hospital</td>
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<td>GPIC</td>
<td>General Property Investment Company</td>
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<td>GWH</td>
<td>George Watson’s Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>HL</td>
<td>House of Lords</td>
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<tr>
<td>JGH</td>
<td>James Gillespie’s Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Merchant Company of Edinburgh</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMH</td>
<td>Merchant Maiden Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOH</td>
<td>Medical Officer of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAS</td>
<td>National Archives of Scotland (formerly Scottish Record Office (SRO))</td>
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<td>NLS</td>
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<td>PP</td>
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