

# The Georgian House

7 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh

The last visit of the day was to the National Trust for Scotland's Georgian House, 7 Charlotte Square, in the heart of the city's New Town. Charlotte Square was laid out at the southern end of the New Town and was the only square 'designed as a single unified scheme' and the architect was Robert Adam (1728–1792) in 1791; construction of the Square did not finish until 1820. Number 7 was built in 1796 by Edward Butterworth and is three bays wide with a basement, three floors and an attic. The house was left to the National Trust for Scotland after the death of the last owner, 5th Marquess of Bute in 1956. Like Gladstone's Land, David Learmont and his team refurbished it in the 1970s.

Going up to the first floor Drawing Room we saw a square piano, a rare survival by the local maker Richard Horsburgh then in the next room, the Parlour, there was an unusual mahogany curved-front side table with a central drawer containing three metal tea-boxes. Next was the Dining Room, down the stairs to the ground floor where the room originally looked across to the sea. Apart from the table laid out for dinner the room was dominated by a splendid Edinburgh sideboard with its distinctive raised shelf at the back, and also kitted-out with fine knife boxes, decanters, wine coolers and pewter potty – hidden behind

a tambour front. The Dining Room also had another typical late 18th-century feature in Scotland that of a black marble fire-surround. Also on the ground floor was the main Bedroom; there are not many large urban houses open to the public and it still comes as somewhat of a surprise to see a grand bedroom on the ground floor rather than up on the second floor. The focal point of the room is the fine white painted four-post bedstead with floral embroidery on a white ground original late 18th-century hangings. The bed had originally come from another Adam house, Newliston in West Lothian. There was also a good Jameson of York spinning wheel in finely turned satinwood.

The rooms that I had wanted to see for many years were the kitchens, down in the basement. David Learmont's hotel training as a young man and his considerable skills as a cook impelled him to assemble one of the first below-stairs displays for the visiting public and it did not disappoint. Furniture-wise there was considerable discussion led by Bob Parrott and John Boram on two Windsor chairs.

*Treve Rosoman*