

## The Tenement House

Our last visit of the conference was to the Tenement House, 145 Buccleuch Street, now administered by the National Trust for Scotland (NTS). A tenement house is a traditional form of urban housing in Scotland, typically being a stone building with flats on three or four floors, either side of a common entrance and central stairway. These houses served the needs of Glaswegians as the population rapidly increased during the 19th and 20th century. Built in 1892, number 145 was the home of a Miss Agnes Toward (1886–1975) from 1911 until 1965. After her mother's death in 1939 Miss Toward continued to live in the tenement, and apart from occasional redecoration and electric light installation in 1960, the rooms are largely unchanged. The house comprises a lobby, parlour, kitchen, bathroom and bedroom. The parlour and kitchen have box-bed style recesses and the furniture is traditional of this period.

The papers that she left reveal her life as a child and as a young woman, when she took dancing lessons, visited the theatre, wrote newsy letters, and attended Wellington Church. Miss Toward became a shorthand



The parlour in the Tenement House, showing the box bed within the cupboard

typist with the shipping firm Prentice, Service & Henderson until 1959. After she retired aged 73 Miss Toward became increasingly unable to look after herself and spent the last ten years of her life in hospital. The artefacts, notes and letters she left give a fascinating study of life in a Glaswegian tenement.

Concerned that the contents of Miss Toward's tenement might be broken up, Anna Davidson, a Scottish actress, purchased the property including the contents, and in 1982 sold it to the NTS. The house has been preserved by the NTS as a typical example of its time, and today tenements are still desirable places to live in the city of Glasgow.

*David and Valerie Bryant*