

Time capsule under the Constitution Street Burns statue opened today

Historical find during the Tram to Newhaven works reveals writings relating to Burns, coins and newspapers.



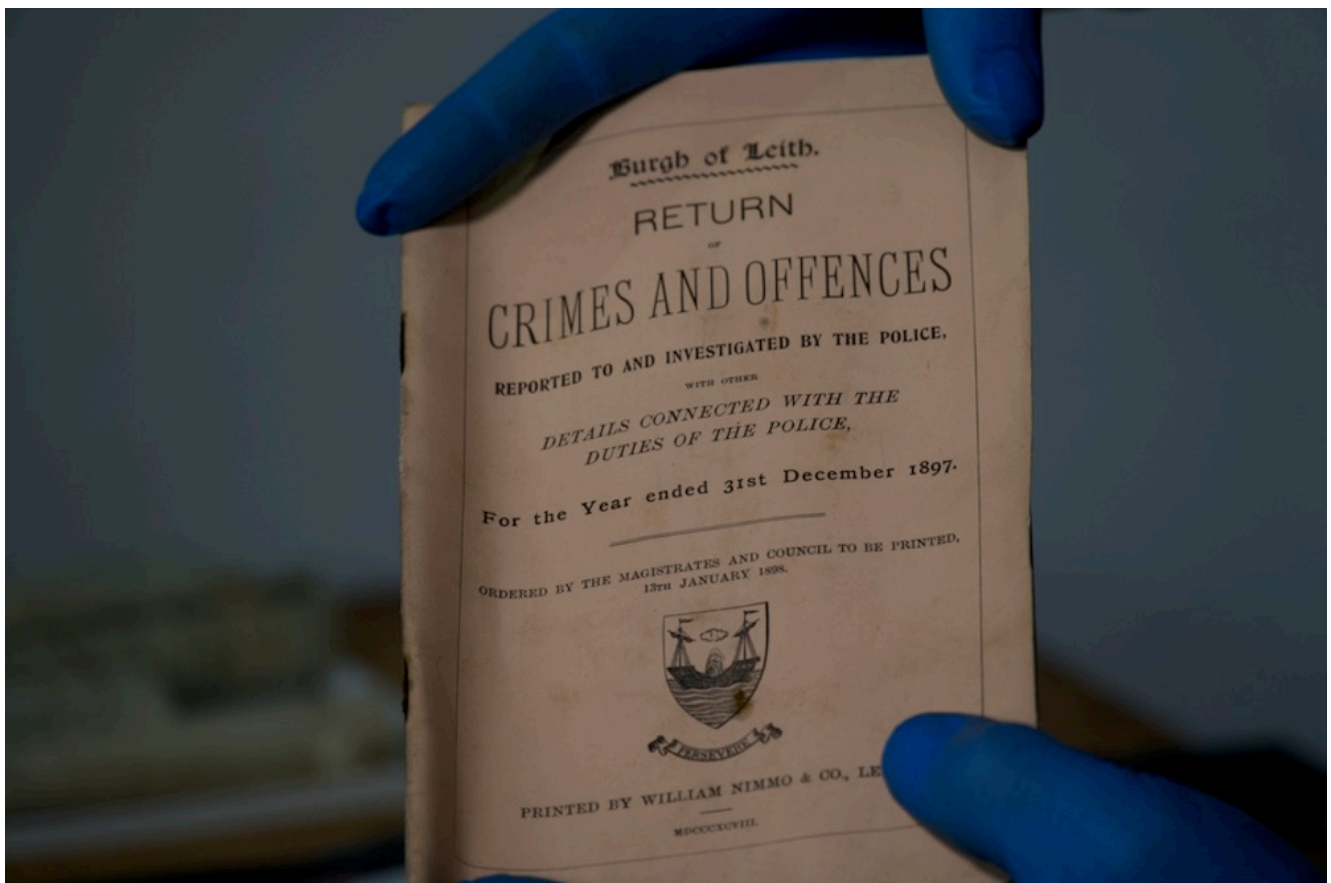
Burns Club booklet discovered in the time capsule below the Robert Burns statue. PHOTO ©2020 The Edinburgh Reporter

During the tramworks the Burns statue on

Constitution Street has been moved for safekeeping. This is not the first time the statue has been moved. It was also moved in 1961 by a mere 18 feet. This time, it has been sent to Nic Boyes for an overhaul while the tramworks make progress.

Workers found a time capsule which they believed dated from 1898 underneath it and today it was finally opened – but today we discovered that it had already been opened in 1961 and some artefacts added to it then.

It was placed in a specially carved place within the plinth, and was covered with lead. The various things inside included newspapers and coins with pennies from 1898 carefully wrapped in paper.



A booklet found in the time capsule giving us information on

Crimes and Offences in the Burgh of Leith in the preceding year PHOTO ©2020 The Edinburgh Reporter

Council Leader Adam McVey said : “It’s hugely exciting. Right now the experts are painstakingly opening the time capsule and seeing what’s inside – stuff from 122 years ago! What’s clear is that there is a whole range of messages in there from the past for us to open now. So it’s a hugely exciting day for Leith and for Edinburgh to see what exactly was going on and crucially what that generation wanted us to know now.

“I’m eager to find out what is in there to see exactly what the message it. It’s a hugely exciting day.”

The [@TramstoNewhaven](#) work has excavated a time capsule from 1898 which has a newspaper inside [@EdinburghTrams](#) pic.twitter.com/UPkM6M1hoK

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [January 24, 2020](#)



Conservator Nic Boyes was in charge of the opening of the time capsule PHOTO ©2020 The Edinburgh Reporter

Conservator Nic Boyes was in charge of taking down the Robert Burns statue and he was in charge of proceedings today. He was very excited and explained that he had to be careful with the contents which our predecessors had put in the vessel for us to find. He said ahead of the opening : "We have to open this in such a way as to conserve the contents. Conservation is all about recording. We are using handtools only and will remove the neck of the capsule before opening it by cutting it along the top."

Representatives from the Edinburgh Burns Group were present and one of the things discovered inside was apparently a list of their office bearers and a leaflet relating to the club.

It was considered most appropriate to open it today on the eve of the anniversary of Robert Burns birth on 25 January 1759.





The time capsule is made of lead and had to be opened carefully by hand PHOTO ©2020 The Edinburgh Reporter
The statue will be replaced when the tramworks in Constitution Street are completed. Edinburgh Trams will carry their first passengers to and from Newhaven in 2023. The Tram to Newhaven project will extend the line from York Place to Newhaven with stops at Ocean Terminal, Port of Leith, The Shore, Foot of the Walk, Balfour Street, McDonald Road and Picardy Place.

The York Place stop will be removed and the trams will stop just a little further along the street at the redesigned Picardy Place roundabout. There is a detailed timeline on the Trams to Newhaven website [here](#).



Image courtesy of The City of Edinburgh Council