

Acquisition of 14 India Street

The James Clerk Maxwell Foundation came into being on 11 February 1977 by Declaration of Trust. This Trust was created on the initiative of Professor Sydney Ross, BSc, PhD, Hon. DSc, CorrFRSE a chemist who had left Glasgow for the Renssler Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York State, USA. There, he became Professor of Colloid Science.

The original Trustees were Professor Ross himself, Professor Norman Feather, FRS and Mr. Malcolm McIver, a Glasgow solicitor.

For the purpose of seeking financial support for the Foundation, Professor Ross arranged for friends in Glasgow to visit Barr and Stroud Ltd. They were referred to Professor David Ritchie, then a director of Barr and Stroud, who had a portrait of James Clerk Maxwell on his wall. While he was a student at Cambridge, David Ritchie's rooms had overlooked the old Cavendish Laboratory. Clerk Maxwell had been the first Cavendish Professor of Experimental Physics at Cambridge.

David Ritchie thereafter became a Trustee of the Foundation.

When the possibility of buying 14 India Street (the Edinburgh New Town house in which Clerk Maxwell had been born) arose, the asking price was around £900,000 - well beyond the financial resources of the Foundation.

However by 1992, prices in the New Town of Edinburgh had dropped substantially, partly as a result of barristers no longer needing to live in the New Town where their legal papers had been delivered by hand cart on Sunday evenings for the week ahead. This drop in prices enabled the Foundation to start fundraising.

By the end of 1992, fundraising was in full swing and donors had contributed generously. The main donations were from Professor Ross (creator of the Trust), his sister Betty Ross, the Scottish Widows Fund, the Robertson Trust, Dr. Ian Kelly, Professor David Ritchie (a Trustee), the MacRobert Trust, Professor Neil Graham (a Trustee), Mr. David Forfar (a Trustee) and Trinity College, Cambridge. With some 150 additional smaller donations, the Foundation raised just enough to acquire 14 India Street for £450,000.

After acquisition of the property, there was much refurbishing and redecoration required and the advice of Historic Scotland was taken. A grant was obtained from the National Heritage Memorial Fund to help with carrying out this work.

Professor Ross donated several first editions of books e.g. the collected papers of James Clerk Maxwell and the collected papers of Peter Guthrie Tait (a scientific colleague of Clerk Maxwell who had been the Professor of Physics at Edinburgh University). This enabled the Foundation to start a library in India Street.

In 1993, following a UK Government initiative for universities to tender for a research centre for mathematics, Edinburgh and Heriot-Watt universities were looking, as part of the tender process, for a suitable location in Edinburgh and the first and second floors of 14 India Street was offered to these two universities by the Foundation. The competition was mainly from Cambridge University but the combined Edinburgh and Heriot-Watt tender was also considered worthy of support. Accordingly, in 1994, the first tenant of 14 India was the *International Centre for Mathematical Sciences (ICMS)* founded by these two universities. By 2010, ICMS had been so successful they required to move to larger premises and a new tenant was installed.

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