



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

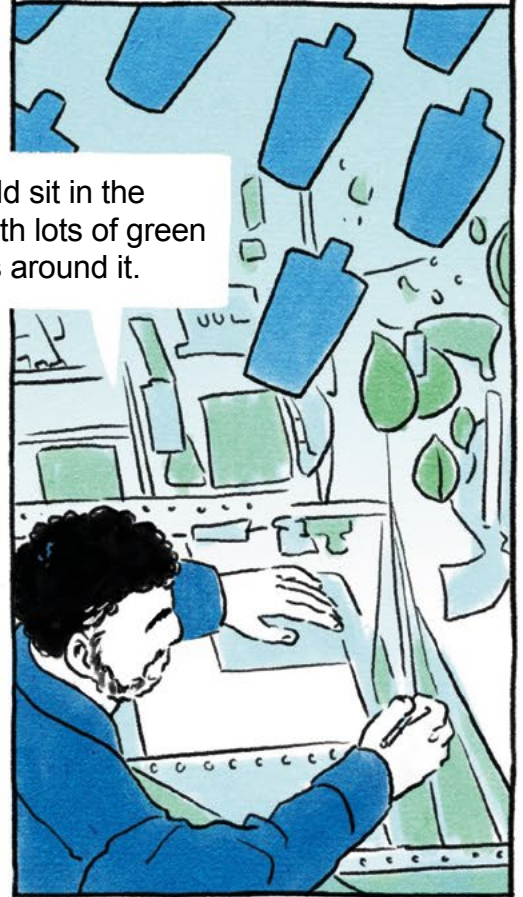
Our Words Parliament Tales

by Glencoats Primary School and Magic Torch Comics

The Scottish Parliament is more than just a place. It is a building full of stories.



It was designed by Enric Miralles, who had an interesting idea about how the building should be designed.



It should sit in the land with lots of green spaces around it.

The Parliament sits in the land because it belongs to the Scottish Land. We don't want to forget that the Scottish Parliament will be in Edinburgh, but will belong to Scotland, to the Scottish Land.

The Parliament should be able to reflect the land which it represents.



Enric Miralles liked the idea of planting Scottish wildflowers, trees and shrubs. He wanted to use the wild grasses and trees already found in the area as well as other trees from across Scotland.

Rowan trees, traditionally seen as a symbol of good luck and keeping 'witches' away, have been planted around the parliament. A solitary tree has been planted close to one of the entrances.



Though actually, everyone is welcome to visit. Witches too!



In his final presentation Enric Miralles laid out each building on the table – telling the story of what each building would do as part of the new Parliament.



At the end he placed his branches on the table and explained how the landscape would connect all the building.

There's your parliament.



And so it was.

The Queen agreed to present the Scottish Parliament with a Mace to commemorate the opening of the Scottish Parliament in 1999.



A panel of important people, including the then First Minister Donald Dewar, held a competition for Silversmiths to design the new Mace.



Michael Lloyd from Castle Douglas in Dumfries and Galloway created the winning design, a 'Spiritual Wand'. It included an embedded gold ring, which Michael crafted from gold found in Scottish rivers. It symbolised a wedding of the parliament, its people and the land.



The community gathered to celebrate the fact the Mace had been made in their town, a piper marched in front of the Mace as it was carried out on the start of its journey to Edinburgh.



For safe keeping before it was unveiled, the Mace was kept under lock and key in the main vault in the Bank of Scotland on the Mound, until the morning of the opening ceremony.



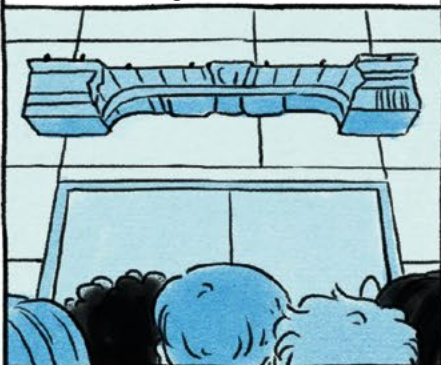
The Mace was presented by HM Queen during the official opening ceremony on 1 July 1999 and it has been used for every sitting of Parliament since then.



The Mace must sit outside its case in the chamber when business is taking place. The Mace is attached to the lid, which can rotate, so it can be moved inside or outside the box without being touched.



There are many more stories to be found in and around the building itself... Like the Arniston stone, which was a part of the old Scottish Parliament and now sits above the door leading to the Debating Chamber.



No one knew where it was for a long time, but it turned out to have been in the Gardens of Arniston House and was gifted back to parliament. It connects the old parliament and the new.



Or there's the twenty pence piece which is tucked away in the ceiling, put there by one of the builders...



The black and white lobby echoes the corridor in the Parliament's temporary home in the General Assembly Hall from 1999-2004. MSPs were often interviewed there. The idea was to recreate that tradition in the new building, but everyone films in the Garden Lobby instead.



Or there's Sigurður Guðmundsson's Pink Footed Goose Egg sculpture, symbolising the connection of the Scottish and Icelandic parliaments. The pink footed goose spends winter in Scotland and summer in Iceland...



And carved into the egg is a phrase from the Icelandic sagas 'Með lögum skal land byggja'.



"With laws the land shall be built".

So be sure to look more closely and listen as you explore the parliament.



It's so much more than just a building...



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0131 348 5000

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