



The Voice

Promoting and protecting the heritage of Queensferry

Autumn 2024

From the Editor

We are so lucky to be living in a great town, beautifully located next to three extraordinary bridges. On sunny days, and on not so sunny days, visitors come in great numbers to walk along the High Street, have a coffee or an ice cream, and generally enjoy the ambience. It is still a popular place for weddings in spite of the closure of the Registrar's Office. The several restaurants are never short of customers.

One of the town's great, but unsung assets is Hawthorn Bank Garden. It is the result of the vision and hard work of a few local citizens who saw how an unused and derelict piece of land could be transformed into a garden for all. It was further enhanced by the addition of some apple and pear trees a couple of years ago. This year the trees were bearing what was shaping up to be a bumper crop. We were looking forward to encouraging the local community to take advantage of this bounty when they were ready. But it was not to be. Sadly, persons unknown came into the garden recently, stripped every tree and then destroyed the apples and pears, bits of which were found both in the garden and round about. These actions were repeated on the new fruit trees that Cala Homes helped fund and plant in the land next to the garden. Such acts are felt deeply by those who care for the garden. The question is, can anything be done, or do we just have to accept that there are anti-social elements in society who want to destroy good things? There may not be answers, but we have opportunities to contribute to making Queensferry the kind of place everyone wants to live in. Read below about the Local Place Plan initiative.

Queensferry Heritage Trust (QHT) continues to provide members with an interesting programme of talks, from Autumn through to Spring. We interpret "Heritage" widely to mean not just the built environment and the natural environment, but also the cultural heritage in the form of artists, musicians and literary figures in the town. Last year we enjoyed contributions from author Esa Aldegheri, and in this new season we welcome Mike Ross, a musician who makes his own musical instruments. Additionally we engage with the various companies and organisations based in Queensferry.

News

A lot of topics are occupying the minds of the QHT Committee at present. As most of you know, the Heritage Trust has representation on the Queensferry and District Community Council (QDCC). It is the role of the latter body to convey the thoughts and views of the community to City of Edinburgh Council (CEC). This relationship means that we play an active part in commenting on developments affecting Queensferry citizens.

A critically important part of this work is to assist QDCC in drawing up a new Local Place Plan.



QDCC meets with local interest groups to discuss a Queensferry Place Plan

Queensferry Place Plan

Local Place Plans were introduced by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. Producing a Local Place Plan gives us a chance to shape the future of our local area by creating a plan that addresses local needs and concerns. By law, Edinburgh City Council must take account of registered Local Place Plans when considering the 2040 City Plan.

The scope is wide ranging and can include community views on new housing developments, provision of community facilities, utilisation of Council buildings, transport, leisure and recreational improvements as well as measures to improve public health, mitigate climate change and protect our heritage and our natural environment.

QDCC has initiated a process to produce a local Place Plan for Queensferry & Dalmeny and an initial meeting has been held with Community groups on Tuesday 24th September to discuss why this is important and what might be involved. David Learmond & Mike McDowall attended on behalf of QHT.

QDCC invited Julian Farrar and Gillian Smith of Ironside Farrar to facilitate this meeting and the process to develop our place plan. Ironside Farrar is an Environmental Consultancy with experience in all aspects of building a viable and sustainable place plan. See [Ironside Farrar](#)

Julian explained the process of identifying the key elements of a Place Plan and how to produce one which meets the registration criteria. Demonstrating that the plan has been built with active

Community Engagement is essential. We discussed the long outstanding issues facing our community as well as immediate issues such as the need for more capacity for High School pupils, the threat to our Museum and Library and the growing disconnect between our historic town core and new housing development schemes.

The next step is for Julian to draft an outline and possible approaches to developing our Place Plan. In Queensferry we are of course not starting with a blank sheet of paper when it comes to place planning. We pioneered an earlier version in 2016 and there have been many consultation exercises addressing elements of it since then. It is timely though to refresh our vision to reflect the major changes in recent years, such as significant population increases, stretched resources in healthcare and education, a societal shift towards homeworking and an eye watering budget deficit within Edinburgh Council.

It is important that we grasp this opportunity to update our vision of what we want our community to be and identify the enablers that will make this a reality, QHT welcomes this initiative and will actively engage and contribute to making it a success.

Further reading: [Local Place Plan Guide 2016 Queensferry Placemaking](#)
[Local Place Plans | Our Place](#)

Whilst 2040 may seem a long way in the future, changes are taking place as this newsletter goes out. The Committee is discussing its future response to the ongoing review of **Council assets** in the town. The old Burgh offices, (which house the Museum and the Queensferry History Group collections,) Rosebery Hall, the Library and the Community Hall behind the primary school constitute Council assets. We share a view that a single space to house all these community functions would be desirable, but the questions are, what, how, and where? As always, we are happy to hear from anyone who has a view. Public consultations on Council assets have taken place and we await the response from the Council.

Future of Queensferry Museum – a report by David Learmond.

You may have noticed that Queensferry Museum has been closed in recent weeks following a period of erratic opening times. A notice has been posted on the Museum's website stating that "Due to circumstances beyond our control, Queensferry Museum will be closed until further notice. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause."

I attended a meeting on Thursday 26 September 2024 organised by Queensferry Community Council with Karl Chapman, Head of Heritage, Cultural Venues, Museums and Galleries, along with other City of Edinburgh Council officers, to discuss the current situation of Queensferry Museum. Jenni Meldrum was also present as Chair of Queensferry History Group.

Mr Chapman explained that the current temporary closure was due to departmental budget pressures and high staff sickness absence. The cost of operating and staffing Queensferry Museum



had increased due to the decision to close the Registrar facility which previously occupied the ground floor of the building.

He further explained that he would make the following proposal to the Culture and Communities Committee on 3 October 2024:

“Queensferry Museum temporarily moves to an appointment-based service on specified days to enable school visits, and a regular time for residents and visitors to access the collections. Officers will maintain education and outreach work in the area, such as the Bridges 60th Anniversary project, and engage with local community groups to examine future service models.”

See: CEC Committee Report Page 157 [Mitigating Museums and Galleries Budget Pressures](#)

There was a wide-ranging discussion which included:

- Ideas regarding utilisation of the ground floor space, possibly including revenue generating facilities
- Possible options to relocate the Museum to alternative buildings
- Inviting volunteers to work alongside Museum staff
- Need for improved communication on opening times particularly with reference to Liner visits.
- The poor state of the Museum & Council Office building.

Keith Giblett of QDCC thanked the Council officers for coming to Queensferry and expressed the view that it was difficult to have a proper discussion about the utilisation of Council Assets given that the findings and conclusions of the public consultation (Assets review held in February 2023) had not yet been published by CEC. Karl Chapman said that the Museum is acknowledged as an important part of the High Street, the wider Queensferry history and community, and shares the frustration that it is currently closed. He would like to continue the dialogue with local representatives and would welcome a further meeting.

The Library

Edinburgh Libraries are developing a new Future Libraries Strategy that will provide a framework for service delivery and development for public and school libraries over the next five years. CEC Council Committee carried out an engagement and consultation process earlier this year. The next stage of the “Future Libraries” consultation is now live and will run until 18 December. Views of all individuals and stakeholders are now being sought. You can complete the consultation questionnaire which can be accessed here <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/futurelibraries>

The information gathered in the initial stage has been used to shape the new draft Future Libraries Strategy 2024 – 2029. The information has also helped to inform the identification of potential options for change to library opening hours and how the service manages events and activities. Both the draft Strategy and information about the potential options for change are available here <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/futurelibraries>

The Briggers

The Briggers is the Forth Bridge research and talks group. They supported Barnardo’s again at their *Your View at the Forth Bridge* fundraising event this September. Over three days they gave 66, 20-minute talks and interactive riveting demonstrations to more than 900 visitors. The event raised over £50,000 for Barnardo’s – their largest fundraising event in Scotland.

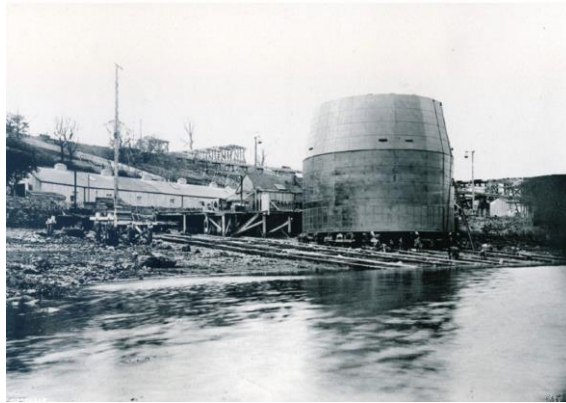
The Briggers extended team of presenters includes members of the Queensferry Rowing Club and the Queensferry Heritage Trust. Without their help, it would not be possible to carry out the exhausting task of giving so many talks to so many people.

This year, *The Briggers* have gone digital, presenting slides on a large TV to a seated audience. In previous years, they used large A1 display boards to a standing audience. Going digital allowed larger, clearer images to be used which helped our presenters as well as receiving a good response from the visitors.

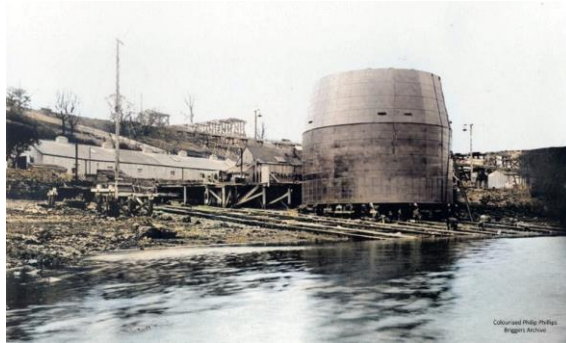


The Briggers team on top of the Forth Bridge

Another innovation was to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) colourising to the black and white images. This adds depth to the images and aids understanding of the more technical photographs. An example is given below:



Caisson Bridge Foundation under construction at Queensferry



Colourised Caisson Bridge Foundation under construction at Queensferry

WINTER 2024-5 TALKS PROGRAMME

October 23	Fife Pilgrims Way Iwan Thomas, Fife Coastal and Countryside Service
November 13	Queensferry at War, Norma Brown, Queensferry History Group
November 27	Making instruments and playing gigs. Mike Ross, Musical Instrument maker
December 11	When Icicles Hang By The Wall - Winter Festive Event', Jenni Calder
January 15	CALA Project Manager Gavin McCann, Project Manager CALA group Ltd
February 5	INEOS, Grangemouth. David East, Communications Manager

February 26	Voices from Port Edgar – Pete Collinson, local naval historian
March 12	Jane Walker, WW2 Spy. - Norma Brown, Queensferry History Group
March 26	The work of WT Architecture. - Wil Tunnell
April 2	Answering for Somewhere Else - Jenni Calder on her new novel.
April 16	Queensferry Heritage Trust AGM. Speaker tba.

Committee Members

Chair: David Learmond

Secretary: Eleanor Oakes

Treasurer: Mike McDowall

QHT Comms team (Spotlight, The Voice): Clare Meredith (co-opted), Lawraine Wood, Eleanor Oakes

Committee members: Jenni Calder (Minutes Secretary), Frank Hay, Ed Kelly,

Forth Bridge World Heritage Management Group, QHT representation: Frank Hay

Queensferry & District Community Council – David Learmond

Contact details: mail@queensferryheritage.org.uk