



The Voice

Promoting and protecting the heritage of Queensferry

Winter 2024

From the Editor

As we enter the winter months, it's always cheery to see folks out enjoying festivities, as they did recently at the switching on of the lights. It is a great opportunity for the children of Queensferry and Dalmeny to get involved with the schools' carol singing. It is worth remembering that this event only happens every year because of a lot of voluntary (and hectic!) effort by Christmas in Queensferry. See: [About Us – Christmas In Queensferry](#). The big innovation this year was to have a Laser Light show instead of the, not so environmentally friendly, Firework display.

As I write, three of QHT's new season of talks have taken place, each one well attended. You can catch up with these below.

City of Edinburgh Council's consultations rumble on, and a report of the various stages also appear below.

QHT's intrepid researcher, Frank Hay, has been delving into the history of the Queensferry gateway road signs. His long article in this issue on their refurbishment is fascinating reading, and we look forward to the new signs going up when they are ready. Two of the gateway signs will be moved to better positions which will ensure that most visitors entering Queensferry by road will see the signs.

Members might want to make a note of an upcoming event, **Community Carols in Queensferry, 20th December at 6pm** in the Hawthorn Bank Gardens. Hot drinks and mince pies will be available and there will be a collection in aid of the garden. The event will be led by the Ferry Blend Choir.

News

Membership now stands at 75. A reminder that if you have not yet paid your subscription, it is still possible to do so. **Contact our treasurer, Mike McDowall at mail@queensferryheritage.org.uk.**

City of Edinburgh Council Budget

The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) is currently consulting on how they can balance the budget. (see link below).

CEC needs to save £30million in the next financial year and £109 million by 2028/29.

Currently, there is not enough money to deliver all the services the Council is trying to provide and funding from the Scottish Government is not keeping up with rising costs. CEC is working to change and improve service delivery, reduce spending and generate more income. A consultation is being undertaken to reduce spending and generate more income and the consultation seeks to determine what citizens view as the priorities. There are plans to increase Council Tax by 10% and to introduce a **Visitor Levy** (a consultation on this ends shortly). The budget consultation includes sections about spending on social care and education and notes about the possible impacts of decisions. Those on education are likely to impact teachers, for example. Some serious suggestions are being made about reducing expenditure in these areas and you are encouraged to have a look.

The outcome of the ongoing review of **Council assets** in the town may include decisions to sell off the buildings, however, at the time of writing, we are still awaiting publication of the findings. 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. Those on the High Street could have a strong impact on the integrity of the High Street conservation area. The feedback received will help CEC make a final decision about Edinburgh's budget in February 2025.

The consultation is open until 14 January 2025.

<https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/ce/edinburghs-budget/>

The Library – Consultation to close soon

As reported in the Autumn issue of The Voice, Edinburgh Libraries are developing a new Future Libraries Strategy that will provide a framework for service delivery and future 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 Future Libraries Team are now half-way through the consultation. If you are interested in the Library, we would like to remind you about the questionnaire and let you know that you have until the 25th of December to complete it.

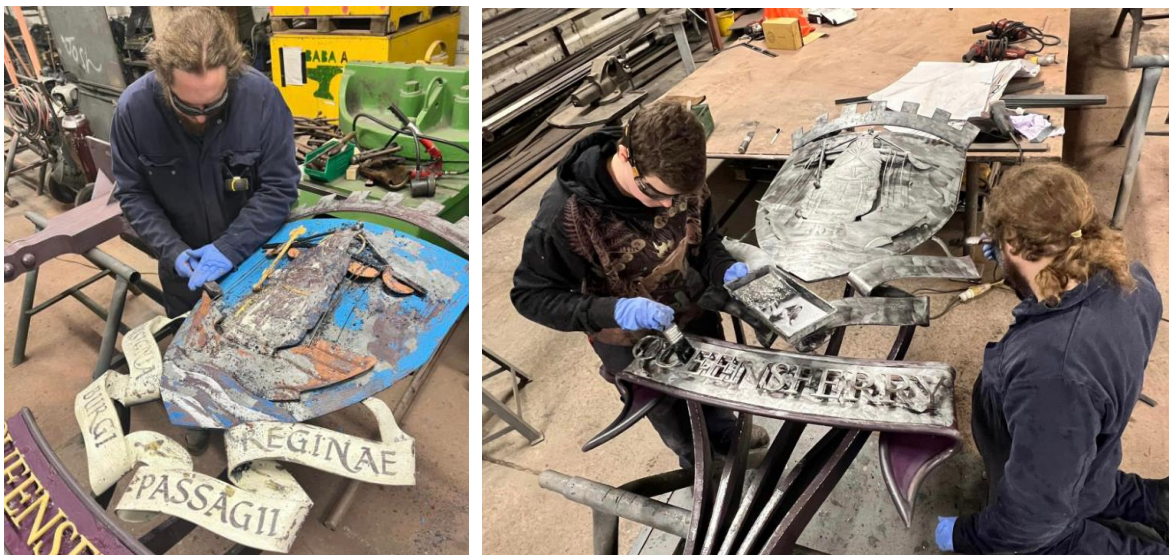
The Future Libraries Draft Strategy, information about potential options for change, are available at <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/futurelibraries>. We hope that you might find some time to give the team your views on this Draft Strategy along with any proposals for change to opening hours, as well as how the service manages events and activities.

LAR housing

Representatives of QHT were recently invited, along with others, to join the first walk through tour at the old Naval Barracks at Port Edgar and were invited to provide feedback. QHT was able to provide some history of the site, whilst others were ready to advise on the environmental aspects of the site in terms of planting. It was suggested that tenants might be willing to give an input as time and interest allows. There remains plenty of scope for local groups to be involved in helping to make this a site that the local community and new residents can be proud of. LAR will continue to work closely with local groups to ensure the site maximises benefits for the wider community as well as new residents through the provision of meeting spaces and include learning, employment and wellbeing opportunities for the whole community. LAR is taking comments on board for future public visits. Representatives from LAR housing were Ann Leslie, CEO; Philip Walker, Development Director; Aileen Aitken, Community Engagement (organiser); Catriona Love, Media & Marketing Manager.

Queensferry Gateway Road Signs Refurbishment – Frank Hay

The three gateway road signs displaying the coat of arms of the former Royal Burgh of Queensferry (on Bo'ness Road, Kirkliston Road, and Hawes Brae) are currently being refurbished at P Johnson & Company's Ratho Byres Forge:



Refurbishing Queensferry gateway signs at Ratho Byres Forge

© P. Johnson and Company

The funding for the refurbishment is through the City of Edinburgh Council's allocation from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The project has been run by the Forth Bridges Tourism Group and managed by Karen Stewart, the Forth Bridges Area Tourism Strategy Manager.

Research on Queensferry's coat of arms revealed that the colour scheme of the arms on the signs was not the same as the recorded colours in the Lyon Register, and the refurbishment was an opportunity to match the colours of the signs to those in the Register.

The Lyon Register or, to give its full title, *The Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland*, contains all recordings of Coats of Arms in Scotland from 1672 to the present day. Coats of Arms cannot be used legally in Scotland unless they are recorded in the Register, which is maintained by the Court of the Lord Lyon, the office responsible for heraldic matters in Scotland. The Court of the Lord Lyon is a court of law and can prosecute those who use unrecorded arms. Queensferry was one of the first Royal Burghs to record its arms c.1673. A coat of arms is defined by text, known as "blazon", rather than by an image. Blazon is like a language and has its own vocabulary and syntax. The blazon for the Royal Burgh of Queensferry's arms as recorded in the Lyon Register is:

Argent in ye sea azure a Gallie with her saills trussed sable, on ye midle part thereof Queen Margaret of Scotland standing richlie apparrelled & crowned proper, holding in her dexter hand a scepter ensigned with a flower de lis Or and in her sinister Lying on her breast a book folded Purple.

A translation of the above is:

On a white shield, a galley with trussed up sails, all black, in a blue sea, standing on which is Queen Margaret, crowned and richly dressed, with a sceptre, topped with a fleur-de-lys in her right hand, both yellow, and a closed purple book in her left hand.

A mock-up of the revised colour scheme compared with the original scheme has been provided by Ratho Byers Forge:



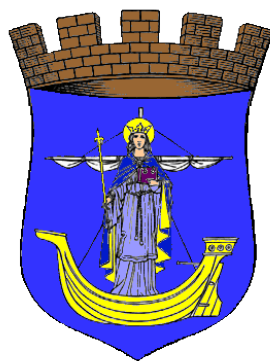
Comparison of the previous colours with a mock-up of the revised colours

© P. Johnson and Company

The “tinctures” in heraldry include Metals and Colours. The Metals are Or (yellow) and Argent (white), representing gold and silver. The Colours are: Gules (red), Sable (black), Azure (blue), Vert (green) and Purpure (purple). Queensferry’s arms are the only arms of the Royal Burghs to use Purpure – on Queen Margaret’s miraculous gospel book. The “rule of tincture” states that, “metal should not be put on metal, nor colour on colour”. This is to ensure good contrast and visibility. This rule is employed in the revised colour scheme which has improved contrast. Arms that break this rule can be described as “armes fausses” (fake arms). A get-out clause for tinctures is “Proper” meaning its natural colour. Queensferry’s coat of arms are probably the most confused of all the Royal Burghs. This is likely due to the Royal Burgh’s preference for using representations of its burgh seal rather than its arms, and also the efforts of John Patrick Crichton-Stuart, 3rd Marquess of Bute.



The Marquess of Bute in his later years took an interest in coats of arms, particularly those of the Royal Burghs. He found out that many of the Royal Burghs did not have coats of arms or, if they had, they were not registered in the Lyon Register and so he created arms for those not registered. He then published the recorded arms and his versions of the unrecorded arms in a book: *The Arms of the Royal and Parliamentary Burghs of Scotland* published in 1897. Copies of the book were sent to each Royal Burgh and presumably they placed the book in their Burgh library. Of the registered arms the Marquess copied into his book, the one he got wrong was Queensferry’s. He missed out the first part of the blazon: “Argent in ye sea” (White in the sea). Unfortunately, this left blazon which could be interpreted as a coat of arms. Not realising his error, he then severely criticised the then Lord Lyon for registering arms which broke the rule of tincture, and he proposed his own version of what Queensferry’s arms should be:



The proposed arms for Queensferry

The Marquess's book had a significant influence on representations of the Burgh's arms, for example - the very popular crested ware souvenirs:



Until recently, even Queensferry Museum would show a copy of the Marquess's erroneous arms to any visitor inquiring about the Burgh's arms. Another variation of the arms was used by the now defunct Queensferry Arms Hotel (now the Orocco Pier):



Queensferry Arms Hotel sign

Reports from the Winter series of talks

Fife Pilgrims Way - Iwan Thomas, Fife Coastal and Countryside Service

For 400 years, St Andrews, along with the popular disciple destinations of Rome (St Peter) and Santiago de Compostela (St James the Great), was one of the main pilgrimage destinations in Medieval Europe. The bones of St Andrew, one of Jesus' disciples are said to be deposited there. Going on a pilgrimage was considered to be the next best thing to being in the Holy Land and walking in the footsteps of Jesus himself. Pilgrims were also drawn to [Dunfermline](#) to visit St Margaret's miraculous shrine within the abbey. There were two starting points, one in South Queensferry and the other at Culross.



Iwan's well attended talk on 23rd October opened our new season of talks, and it was heart-warming to see that Iwan was already well acquainted with many in the audience. As well as relating the history of the Pilgrim's Way, Iwan also told us something of how the idea of re-creating the Way came about, and how most of it involved connecting up and improving existing footpaths along the old route.

Queensferry at War – Norma Brown, Queensferry History Group

Norma's talk on 13th November focussed on the story of the men of Queensferry who fought in the Great War. Queensferry at the time was a small, close community and it is likely, Norma pointed out, that most of the men would have known each other's families. The talk showed the painstaking research that the History Group undertook in order to piece together their stories, and it was particularly poignant that Norma's well-received talk took place just two days after Armistice Day.

Making Instruments and Playing Gigs – Mike Ross, Musical Instrument Maker

Mike entertained a large turnout on 27th November with a Master Class in the history and classification of musical instruments. Did anyone know that you could play a tune with only a 2 metre length of garden hose? His passion for anything that could make music, shone through as did his patience in building and repairing musical instruments and inspiring others to do it too. He described his ongoing quest to develop his perfect 'main instrument', and along with many diversions and side-quests, illustrated the classification and evolution of familiar and more unusual instruments, the basic principles of musical instrument design, and the materials used in their construction - particularly wood. Whilst Mike demonstrated that he could smoothly move between a host of musical instruments, the cittern was clearly a personal favourite as is his love of performing. A magical evening from yet another

immensely talented Queensferry resident.



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 – Celebrate winter and the festive season with Jenni Calder and friends
January 15	CALA in Queensferry. 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, WWII Spy. Norma Brown, Queensferry History Group
March 26	The work of WT Architecture. Wil Tunnell, Principal.
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 (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