North Queensferry Heritage Trust
Newsletter – Winter 2023

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Chairman's message...

Welcome to this newsletter, where we have lots of news and articles for your enjoyment..

Museums Gallery Scotland has approved our application for accreditation. Yes, that is the first hurdle… now the hard work begins in obtaining mentors and pulling together a workable business plan for full accreditation which we expect will take about 2 years. No surprise, that many other museums, applying for accreditation, are in the exact same position.

However, we hope to have more good news early in the new year as we search for appropriate mentors. If you feel you could help us, please get in touch - email below.

At this year Your View 2023, Barnardo's Children's Charity and Balfour Beatty had another successful



event with over 900 people visitors. The Trust had its usual exhibition that included the latest census records we talked about in our last newsletter. Many visitors had an interesting time initially researching their ancestors with a couple of success stories from those that found unknown relatives - probably working on the Forth Bridge during its construction. Of course the records can still be found on our website… where you can do a census search through every census since 1841.

The Heritage Trust is now a member of the Fife Museum Forum (FMF). We also attended their successful Get-Together on the 15th November. We met other members with similar interest as well as similar issues. The FMF has set up a Facebook group to allow members to compare notes on the many issues that face us all now. This is includes issues such as, the cost of energy, and maintaining a level of donations to keep the various groups and organisations going.

Those of you who follow social media will also see regular updates on Facebook and Instagram.

In the meantime I hope you enjoy this newsletter.
James Lawson - Chairman

NORTH QUEENSFERRY HARBOUR TOWER
– A lighthouse light you can light yourself!

This short article was written in Dutch by a Dutch Journalist and was featured in a local magazine. Here is the translated article.

The 24 steps are worn and narrow. There is only room for one person at the top of this small harbour light in North Queensferry, a village northwest of Edinburgh. But what a view: the mighty pillars of the Forth Bridge rising from the river. Every now and then you hear the sound of a train crossing the bridge - not so at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Then the watchman here lit a flame using whale oil every evening to guide boatmen to the pier. “The light reflected in the silvered copper reflector, across the Firth of Forth,” says James Lawson, Chairman of the Heritage Trust that manages the light and the mini-museum next door. “The height and position of the reflector were crucial. With a few degrees too high, or too low. the light would have been invisible from the other side.”



The Forth Bridge in 1890, followed by two road bridges, built over 3 centuries eventually made this Stevenson tower redundant. Now it is the only place in the world where you can genuinely light a Stevenson Harbour Light - by appointment only though.
by Esther te Lindert, freelance travel writer, www.heindeenverre.nl

Volunteering with the Heritage Trust

- got some time on your hands?

Volunteering with the NQ Heritage Trust has many engrossing topics that need attention as well as archiving. We are fortunate to have amongst our

volunteers High School students who find our volunteer activities help their own development. We also provide references for other activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. So. if you are at a loose end, or know of someone who would benefit from volunteering, do get in touch! NQHTinfo@gmail.com

Some of our Up & Coming Talks/Events, with more to follow…

King Robert The Bruce

Anniversary of his Birth &710th Anniversary of Bannockburn.

Shiela Pitcairn locaL historian- 15th February 2024

Columba's Bones

The aftermath of a Viking raid on Iona

David Greig 7th March 2024 (TBC)

David discusses his novel about the aftermath of a viking raid on Iona in 825, and the legacy in Fife of the early christian monks and missionaries.

Ancestry made Easy & Social consequences from the North Queensferry Census Records 1841-1921

Boyd Williamson - date 28th March 2024

Drove Roads of Scotland & England

The importance of the cattle drives from all over Scotland to the markets in the 17th-19th centuries, and its consequences

James Lawson - date tba

Telephone Kiosk - Information Box



The old BT Telephone Kiosk, or now a village Information Box is working well. It's prime purpose was as a book swap particularly for children's books. But as we go forward, it is being used more and more as a general book swap facility.

St James Chapel - Ivy

The state of St James Chapel has given us concern for the past few years… however, we have also been active over the last few years mapping out a plan that can manage the ivy.

As the Chapel is a Scheduled Ancient Monument there are a few loops to go through with various council departments as well as with Heritage Environment Scotland (HES).

We are hopeful that in the next few months we will be able to initiate a plan to manage the ivy and make the graveyard more accessible.

As many know, access to the Chapel is managed by the Heritage Trust on behalf of Fife Council. To facilitate this, volunteers who help at the Light Tower on the old pier have a key to allow visitors to gain access. The key is basically on loan for a deposit of £5, and a donation.

Museums Gallery Scotland accreditation -

Our plans for 2024, include:

- Finding suitable mentors to guide NQHT and the museum to full accreditation, our top priority.

- **Developing** an off-grid energy solution for our Forth Bridges Lighthouse Museum.

- **Investigate** a sustainable energy solution for the North Queensferry Railway Station managed by the Heritage Trust as a meeting & exhibition space.

- **Developing** a collections plan for our existing collection of Forth Bridge and the Queensferry Passage Ferry system memorabilia.

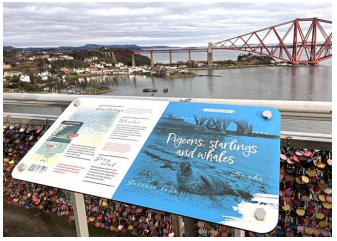
We believe our humble Museum will act as a jumping off site for those with an interest in Lighthouses - particularly ones built by Robert Stevenson. As noted we do run a unique service in allowing visitors to "light the lamp". The operational Ami Argand Lamp is the same as used originally in the Bell Rock and many other early Lighthouses across Scotland.



The low visitor numbers that were a result of Covid are steadily increasing towards the 10,000 plus per annum. Winter season is usually low, but we still get a surprising number from across the world.

Our current ongoing marketing plans include better distribution of our 'self guided walking tour' map of both sides of the river, a new printed booklet on ' A brief history of North Queensferry'. If you are interested in sharing our brochure, please get in touch.

Of course, our ongoing promotion via social media channels and our website www.nqht.org will also play a major part in our plans.



Forth Bridge Trail Signage… more to come.

Early in the new year we should start seeing more FB Trail signs laround the village.

This newsletter was created and edited by NQHT Trustees. Comments/feedback to NQHTinfo@gmail.com

Thanks to everyone who donated ideas, articles and photographs - Garry Irvine- Editor