



# The Voice

Queensferry Heritage Trust

September 2017



## Queensferry Crossing

Our new bridge across the Forth, the Queensferry Crossing, was officially opened by Her Majesty the Queen on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017 - fifty three years exactly to the day when the Forth Road Bridge was also officially opened.

In the run up to the opening of the Queensferry Crossing the High Street was festooned with new bunting, bollards on the street were covered announcing the opening date, large photo boards were displayed at the Binks and the steps at the Boathouse Steps were painted with a brightly coloured design. In the shop windows along the High Street posters gave different facts about the new bridge such as some 400,000 trees, shrubs and hedgerows have been planted as part of a comprehensive landscaping programme and the average weight of the deck sections is some 750 tonnes.

Some confusion however was created when flyers were delivered through many doors inviting people to a Tea Dance on the opening day. The address given for this event was 10 Farquhar Terrace and rather ironically it is likely that particular property was demolished to make way for the Forth Road Bridge! The mistake was soon realised and further flyers with the corrected venue of the Priory Church were hastily distributed.

Locals were also somewhat puzzled to see bright lights in the sky a week before the Bridge opened. This turned out to be a fabulous light show on the new Bridge to mark the occasion of the official hand over to the Scottish Government.

Hopefully all local people who wanted the opportunity to walk over the Bridge were given the opportunity to do so either by the ballot process or through various community Groups.

Since the opening many people have visited the town to view all three Bridges - each one magnificent in its own right.

The bunting has been taken down, the bollard covers and photo boards removed. Even the brightly coloured paintwork has disappeared from the Boathouse steps. No doubt many locals and travellers hope the queues of traffic they are encountering as they wait to cross the Queensferry Crossing will eventually do the same!

A quiz programme on Radio 4 reported that it was known by locals as Kevin. The Rail Bridge being Daddy and the Road Bridge mummy.

A report by Andrew Grant, about his experience as an ambassador, is at the end of The Voice

### **Doors Open Day:** [Inside the Vennel churchyard and St Margaret Lodge](#)



As someone who has peered through the locked gate to the Vennel churchyard dozens of times, the chance to step inside was not to be resisted.

QHT's Doors Open event offered just that opportunity, alongside an invitation to explore St Margaret Lodge and the history of Queensferry's freemasons.

The day was a joint project organised by QHT, the Queensferry History Group and St Margaret Lodge, and the event's success was a tribute to this very effective partnership. Two displays in the hall provided information about the Vennel church and churchyard, and about the origins and development of the Lodge and the building's earlier history as Queensferry's first school. Members of the History Group conducted highly informative tours of the headstones, focusing on some of the more intriguing and colourful figures now residing there.

The event attracted 140 adults and 14 children, and generated a lot of interest not just in what was discovered through the 'open doors' but more generally in QHT's activities and programmes. Our thanks and congratulations to all concerned, especially to Clare Meredith and Mike McDowall of QHT, Jenni Meldrum and the History Group guides, and to Norman Colborne and the freemasons of St Margaret Lodge.

### **Thursday 19th October**

**Reformers and Rebels - The Scottish Reformation.**

**A talk by Dr. Donald Smith , on the impact of the Reformation of 1517**

### **Thursday 26th October**

**A visit to Thomas Thomson House, Sighthill has been organised from 14.00 -16.00**

**The building is not normally open to the public and the visit was limited to a maximum of 15 people. Once Claire has confirmation of arrangements she will e-mail information to those fifteen people.**

**Linda Ramsay, Head of Conservation, will talk about the work of her Department and she will show items being worked on and explain the technical processes.**

**Jane Brown, Head of the Maps & Plans Unit, will discuss the work of that area of the archives.**

**There will also be a display of Queensferry related maps.**

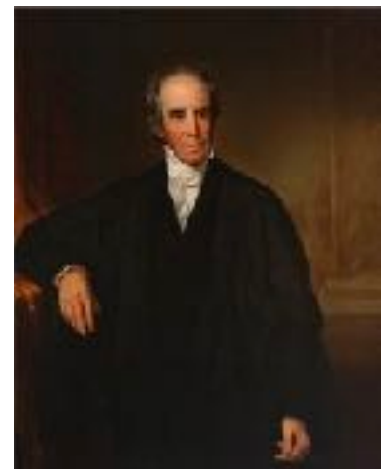
## Thomas Thomson House

The National Archives of Scotland is based at three locations in **Edinburgh**: HM **General Register House** (open to the public), West Register House in the city centre and Thomas Thomson House in the **Sighthill** area of the city. This is the main repository and also houses a conservation department and other offices. Access to the archives is open to members of the public.

By the 1990s both New Register and West Register Houses were filled to capacity and this resulted in a modern archive building being designed. In 1994 Thomas Thomson House was built at Sighthill and opened in 1995 by the Princess Royal. The building was designed to provide space for the national archives of Scotland until the mid 21st century. The building is essentially two separate buildings joined together. One high-tech block provides over 37 kilometres of environmentally controlled record storage while the other houses spacious records reception and sorting areas, staff offices and a purpose built conservation unit.

## Thomas Thomson

Thomas Thomson House was named after Thomas Thomson and is known by staff as TTH. In 1806 the office of Deputy Clerk Register was created to oversee the day-to-day running of the office. **Thomas Thomson** was appointed to the post and he laid the foundation of the modern record office. His thirty-five year term of office saw a programme of cataloguing and repair of the older records and the start of a series of record publications



## QHS leisure Facilities

Queensferry & District Community Council was delighted to announce that after much negotiation over the last few months, the design and plan now being submitted for the new Queensferry High School will include independently accessible shared community leisure facilities including a 6 lane pool with sauna and steam room.

This will deliver many of the long sought after facilities for the area including a dance studio, games hall, fitness suite, theatre and cinema facility.

## **Botanical Feature opposite the Boathouse**

A few weeks ago there was an eyesore in the High Street in the form of an alcove. The doors to the alcove had fallen off exposing old builders' detritus and rusting cans.

The Green Ferry team with support from Queensferry District Council cleared out the alcove and transformed it into an attractive botanical feature.

## **Flight Paths**

The proposals to add two new flightpaths at Edinburgh Airport have been blocked by the Civil Aviation Authority as there were fears that the "airspace change programme" would increase noise for residents in Falkirk, West Lothian and Fife and would affect 300,000 people not presently impacted by the airport. the CAA rejected the plan on "technical grounds."

## **Visit to Dundas Castle: 5th September**



Twenty members of QHT enjoyed a delightful visit to Dundas Castle on 5th September. Sir Jack inherited the castle in 1995 on the death of his mother. During the visit members were shown the restoration which was then done to the Keep and the castle. The Keep had not been inhabited for over three hundred years and Sir Jack had the parapet taken down and restored as well as much stonework restoration. Dry rot in the main castle meant many rooms had to be stripped in order to eliminate it. Once the work had been carried out Lady Lydia made a complete refurbishment of the house. At the end of the tour tea and cake were provided in the drawing room and Sir Jack and Lady Lydia chatted with members.

## Talks

The committee hope you will enjoy the new programme of talks and renew your subscription for 2017- 2018 talks will be held in the Masonic Hall on Thursdays at 7.30.They are free to members or £5 at the door.

Subscriptions will be collected at the first talk. The subscription rates are: **Full Member £10, Family member £15, Talk £5.**

If you could not attend the first talk, you can pay at the next one or send a cheque or cash to:

**Mike McDowall , Treasurer QHT,**

**41 Echline Park, Queensferry EH30 9XQ or**

**Pay direct to Clydesdale Bank (with your name) .**

**Sort Code 82 68 00. Acc NO 00103341**

Please remember to include:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ phone \_\_\_\_\_

## QUEENSFERRY CROSSING.

**Andrew Grant describes his experience as a volunteer ambassador during the two days when the public were allowed to walk over the bridge.**

*Before the bridge was open for the 'walk' I and 303 others had a few hours training at the climbing centre at Ratho with two other visits to GSI (who organised the event) to pick up our 'uniforms'. There were also about 100 pages of instructions on the web - not all pertaining to my specific role.*

*On Saturday morning at 05.45 I left for Ratho . From where I and some 130 others were transported to the bridge on brand new Lothian Region buses By 8.30 we were on site having negotiated several road barriers and security sections of roadway.*



### *The Welcoming and Departure Group (We were called the Event Ambassadors)*

*About 9 a.m. Nicola and her squad came along for the opening photo. There were about 50 press photographers present. The buses with the public started to arrive at 09.05. I and a few others stopped the approaching walkers at the bridge until 09.20. This gave the press ample opportunity for interviews taking photographs and videos. By the time of the opening some 1000 had gathered. Everyone was in a good humour and so it was all day and also on Sunday. Throughout the day buses from the pick up points arrived almost exactly 3 minutes apart and disgorged their passengers. Over the two days I must have taken over 2000 photos of individuals, families and groups. At the same time we had to watch out for unacceptable behaviour but there were no incidents of that nature and no litter. Our briefing included information about the bridge and its construction so I was well prepared to answer walkers' questions. Over the two days there were people in wheelchairs, babies in buggies the fit and disabled. The youngest individual I spotted crossing in her mother's arms was 14 weeks old; the eldest was in his 90's. For those unable to walk or who got tired there were golf buggies running back and forth throughout the day. Few made use of them though some of the 'ambassadors' did as they moved between the south and north sides of the bridge.*

*The police presence was very noticeable. There were four armed police officers patrolling at our end but they had no issues to deal with. When the bridge actually opens cyclists and walkers will use the Road Bridge, but two of the police arrived on bicycles and cycled from south to north and back again, on the wrong side of the road. They were probably the first and last cyclists to use the bridge.*



### *The law breakers cycling on the wrong side of the road*

*The people who walked from the south disappeared to catch the buses on the north to return them to wherever. As they disappeared we could see the advancing hordes from Fife come our way. The press gang then rushed over to the east carriageway to interview the early on-comers. The crowds thinned down to a trickle by 6 p.m. We had to stay on as all participants were given an hour to cross the bridge. On our side the last to cross were a family with two small children. They were given a huge, cheering reception when they crossed the line. Behind them was a group of ambassadors who acted as sweepers to ensure all were off the bridge. A group from our side did the same going northwards.*

*From 3 p.m. the people crossing were the men and women who had worked on the bridge with their families. By 5 p.m. the last few buses discharged three people, so we started to dismantle all the barriers, chains and materials in preparation for their removal prior to the official opening on Monday. It had been proposed we all stay on so all the others involved, e.g. those managing the hubs where the participants boarded the buses etc. could come and we would all walk over the bridge. However, the rain started and although we were well clad we decided to take the bus back to Ratho at 7.30.*

*I found the whole event was excellent, well organised and managed. To say it went like clockwork would not be an understatement.*