



The Voice

Battle of Arras Centenary

One year ago Queensferry History Group's First World War exhibition went on display at the local museum. "Queensferry at War" was the result of many hours of research by the History Group whose intention always had been to highlight the stories of the men who left this area to fight for their country and who did not return.

The exhibition has been very well received by locals and visitors alike – so much so that its original run of six months has been extended to the rest of this year. "Don't dismantle it!" was just one of the many encouraging comments left in the visitor's book.

One hundred years ago significant events were taking place as the war grimly continued. The Battle of Arras began in April 1917. It is sometimes regarded as the forgotten battle, and as with other engagements of the war, when studied in isolation its success has been questioned by historians ever since. There is no doubt however about the massive losses suffered by both sides during this conflict. At least 150,000 British casualties and 125,000 German casualties.

1917 saw the greatest loss of men from Queensferry and Dalmeny.

On 6th April 1917 America declared war on Germany. The British Admiralty requested US Navy battleships to reinforce the Grand Fleet on its duties blockading supplies reaching Germany and also keeping the German High Seas Fleet in port.

Four American dreadnoughts had arrived in the Forth by the end of the year. An attractive young Queensferry girl caught the eye of one American sailor and is forever immortalised in a poem he wrote for her – Peggy of the Pier. The quest is now on for Queensferry History Group to discover the identity of Peggy – and whether she left Queensferry for a life on the other side of the Atlantic! Information about both the

above events and other aspects of the war during 1917 will be added to the “Queensferry at War” exhibition later this month.

H.M.S. QUEEN ELIZABETH



HMS Queen Elizabeth is due to move from Rosyth into her sea trial process and then sail to Portsmouth. However there have been a series of technical issues which is causing the delivery date to become later and later

HMS Queen Elizabeth's price tag is in the region of £3.5bn and she is the largest and most expensive surface warship ever acquired by the Royal Navy. The ship has been described as our most potent conventional weapon against the Islamic State.

Technically speaking, she is still a civilian ship and therefore not yet supposed to have the “H.M.S.” prefix to her name until she is formally accepted into service by the R.N. Until then, she will wear the Blue Ensign, which is the flag flown by warships on contractor's trials before being formally taken into service.

Once commissioned, the ship is entitled to wear the White Ensign, the traditional flag of the fighting fleet.

The Queen Elizabeth is not named after the reigning monarch. She is named after a battleship of the same name.

Whenever a date is set it should be a stunning sight to see the Q.E. setting sail down the Forth under the three bridges.



TRAFFIC ISLAND

The central reservation and traffic island on Ferry Muir Road near Ferrymuir Gait has been removed. Although the long central barrier at Tesco's service entrance was always planned for removal as part of the new bridge project, the island pictured above was meant to be retained. However both were taken away during the recent resurfacing and Transport Scotland now don't intend to replace the island because one side of the road has no pavement.

BURNSHOT AND DOLPHINGTON FLYOVERS

The bridge carrying Burnshot Road over the A90 has been closed to vehicles since shedding material in November. The areas of concern are half joints. Both Burnshot and Dolphington bridges were due for inspection, but the scope was widened to include consideration of repair tasks.

Early indications from this study suggest that the bridge at Burnshot requires extensive half joint repairs or complete replacement. Apparently no similar concerns have arisen at Dolphington, but the full report has not yet been issued.

Queensferry & District Community Council state the repairs could take up to 18 months. The temporary traffic restrictions are in place until July 2018 to allow the repairs to be carried out.

The Council will keep the public updated when they have further information.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations must be extended to Queensferry Primary School for launching a campaign to encourage parents to keep traffic congestion outside the school gates to a minimum. Pupils stood in a silent protest outside the school gates with banners they had designed which urged pupils to walk to school. The campaign will run for a month and the school is asking guardians to sign up to a “Park Smart Pledge.”

VISIT OUR REVAMPED WEBSITE

David Learmond and other members of the committee have been working on revamping our website.

Click on <http://www.queensferryheritage.org.uk/> to get details of upcoming events, leave a comment, share an idea, read blogs and access past copies of The Voice.

HERITAGE TRUST AGM

We shall be holding our second AGM on Thursday, 27th April in the Masonic Hall. The AGM will start at 7.30 and we hope that most of our members will be able to attend. The AGM will give you a chance to comment on this year’s events and to contribute to planning for next year.