



QUEENSFERRY  
HERITAGE  
TRUST

# The Voice

**December 2021**

Queensferry Heritage Trust is a Registered Charity no SCO4564

2020 and 2021 have been tough years for everyone, but as an organisation QHT has weathered the storm and found strong foci for future projects. COVID provided a limiting constraint but the committee continued to meet regularly and the vaccine uptake is now giving us hope for the future and we look forward to a brighter 2022.

The arrival of coronavirus and its attendant restrictions impacted the continuation of our talks programme and although pragmatic scepticism has been maintained regarding the likelihood of a return to crowded indoor events we have arranged an interesting talks programme for 2022.

Funding permitting we hope to produce outdoor performances under the guidance of Gowan Calder .

Frank Hay produced a benchmark and sundial walk of 4kms which promoted safe exercise for members with a community history explanation at the same time. The walk was launched and included in the “Doors Open Day“ in September.

A significant number of hours have also been expended by committee members in other areas. The articles covering some of these activities make for a bumper but informative read. The committee would really welcome comment on any of these areas.

Stay safe and please don't drop your guard so we are able to meet at talks once again.

## **Proposed dates for talks.**

These talks will most likely be held by Zoom unless we notify a change.

19th Jan - Karen Stewart, Forth Bridges Tourism Strategy;

16th Feb - Frank Hay, Emily Borrowman's Archive

9th March - High St, Members Forum;

30 March - Rev David Cameron, The Disruption of 1843

20 April. - AGM

Other talks are in the process of being organised for the rest of the year.

## **The Brigger's Wife – a tale for Scotland's Year of Stories 2022**

Next year is Scotland's Year of Stories. Visit Scotland and Museums and Galleries Scotland have a funding scheme available to support events and performances that celebrate Scottish storytelling, people, places, iconic stories and local tales. This is an opportunity for QHT to produce an outdoor performance inspired by the Forth Bridge story and celebrating the World Heritage Site status of the bridge. Queensferry has local talent in the shape of writers, directors, actors and musicians, and potential venues for outdoor performances

The plan is for a play with music called *The Brigger's Wife* which tells the story of the construction of the Forth Bridge through the eyes of the wife and mother of men who worked on it. It will reflect Queensferry life as the bridge was being built as well as the impact on families of husbands and sons engaged in such dangerous work. It will include the voices of many of those involved, from Sir William Arrol to the youngest members of the riveting teams. We're hoping for four outdoor performances over a weekend in September. The play will be written and co-directed by Gowan Calder.

QHT is currently preparing a funding bid. This is an ambitious community project and we hope to be able to work in partnership with as many local groups and organisations as possible. It will bring together local professionals and amateurs and we'll be looking for all kinds of help – additional funding, performers, provision of rehearsal space, help with costumes, on the ground help on performance days. We won't know if the funding bid has been successful until the middle of April so (fingers crossed) serious work won't start until then. But in the meantime if you think you have something to offer do get in touch.

Gowan Calder

Jenni Calder

[jenni.calder@gmail.com](mailto:jenni.calder@gmail.com)

## **Queensferry Harbour**

On 12th July this year we received an update from Edinburgh Council's Structures and Flood Prevention team advising that following the removal of the seaweed, a full inspection of the harbour walls had been carried out in March. We were also advised that the Project Manager was leaving on 16<sup>th</sup> July, but a replacement would be appointed soon.

On 5<sup>th</sup> November last year QHT submitted a request to Historic Environment Scotland for the harbour, (a Category B listed structure) to be included on their 'at risk' register. In June this year we received a reply stating that the harbour did not meet the criteria for the register which *'focuses on long-term disused vacant heritage assets.'*

Clearly, the harbour would have to be 'unusable' to be considered 'at risk'. However *'it was felt to merit further monitoring in case it failed to secure funding towards repair'*.

HES were also advised by us that the Council intended carrying out £500,000 worth of repairs and that we were concerned that HES should be involved.

Nothing further was heard from anyone until QDCC sent an e-mail on 23 November to Paul Lawrence, Executive Director of Place, complaining of lack of communication and apparent lack of progress. Included with the e-mail was the photo (see below) of the end of the harbour, taken by a member of the Boat Club, which clearly illustrates why we are all concerned.



From correspondence in early October, QHT was aware that CEC had appointed Richard Berry, a Senior Engineer, to the Structures team. Richard had asked for a copy of '*The Harbour – Queensferry's Maritime History*' which he received, along with a copy (in our possession) of the four-page Specification for the harbour repairs prepared by Robert Stevenson in 1815.

Stephen Knox, Transport Manager, Structures & Flood Prevention, who is the Engineer in charge of the project, replied to QDCC. He stated that they were aware of the crack from previous inspection reports and suggested that it was not new or exhibited significant deterioration. (but see below). With regard to progress since the July update, he stated that Sean Fahy has taken over from the previous Project Manager and had met with members of the Boat Club on site to discuss the project.

He further states that they are progressing the design and procurement, but – 'There is a bit of background work to do at the moment as we progress discussions with HES and CEC Planning on the listed status of the harbour, investigating suitable materials for repairs, confirm the state of the pier under the surface, write the contract documents and engage with suitable contractors.'

We agree with his final comment – 'This is a complex project which we need to plan properly to get the best results for our limited budget, rather than jumping into site works without due regard for the constraints.'

With regard to possible deterioration of the harbour structure over the years, we have several photographs taken in March 2010 prior to storm damage repairs carried out by the Council using £7,300 of emergency funds. We will be undertaking a low tide walk-around on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December to make a proper comparative assessment. Findings will be reported to CEC.

Mike McDowall

*'The Harbour – Queensferry's Maritime History' By Michael G McDowall*  
*HES: Historic Environment Scotland.*



## High Street Update December 2021



Edinburgh Council published a scheme in June 2021 which featured a detailed plan for the High Street which included a One-Way system running West to East and a contraflow cycle way in various sections of the core area of the High Street. Elements of the scheme were clearly aimed at securing significant funding from Sustrans, a UK wide cycling & walking charity which the Scottish Government has charged with allocating public funds to active travel projects.

It was originally hoped that a decision on whether Sustrans would allocate funding to our High Street improvement project would be taken in August 2021. However, 3 months on, at the time of writing, no decision has been communicated.

This was raised with Kevin Lang, our local councillor who sits on the Edinburgh Council Transport & Environment Committee. Kevin said that his understanding was that a decision on funding would be made soon but, in any case, he wanted to make it clear that he believed that Edinburgh Council was committed to the project and that if the funding did not come from Sustrans it would come from other sources in the Council budget. QHT has also asked if any quantitative survey of traffic flows in surrounding routes in the town has been undertaken since the introduction of the one-way system.

In the meantime, the Spaces for People initiative, designed to allow more pedestrian space during the Covid 19 pandemic, has been implemented in the High Street which effectively has provided a trial of a West to East one-way system for vehicles except for cycles which continue in both directions.

Some elements of the scheme have, or are in the process of, being implemented, including the turning circle at the Hawes Pier, Traffic Lights, and pedestrian crossing at the foot of The Loan and a 'speed table' at Rosshill Terrace, designed to slow traffic.

QHT invited local resident Ian Spence, architect/urban designer & town planner to join a small group to take a close look at the detailed proposal. The group believe that overall, the plans represent a significant improvement for our High Street. We support the proposal of a one-way system and particularly welcome the idea of a "Trafficked Footway" to allow priority for pedestrians in specific sections of the High Street. The group has some ideas on this to improve it further.

The group has concerns about the safety of a contraflow cycleway and is disappointed that parking congestion and lack of connectivity between the High Street and other parts of the town have not been fully addressed by the scheme.

The date for the implementation of the overall scheme is now believed to be late 2022 at the earliest. QHT hope that this will allow the opportunity for further discussion to refine the proposal with the benefit of experience of the one-way system currently in operation. We will provide an opportunity to discuss the issues and our ideas for improvement with QHT members in coming months when hopefully the funding issues will have been clarified.

David Learmond

**Have an enjoyable Christmas and best wishes for 2022.**

