



# North Queensferry Heritage Trust

## Newsletter – New Year 2023



### Chairman's message...

Happy New Year and best wishes to you all for 2023... welcome to this Spring edition of our newsletter.

At long last the worst of the pandemic is behind us and we look forward with confidence to 2023. We are restarting our popular series of talks and demonstrations on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February, at 7:30 at the Station. Stan Green from Growforth/Plant Market will give his talk entitled 'When the Wind Blows'. This should be particularly informative and not to be missed for all garden lovers.

I would hope many of you will have seen the refurbishment work that has been undertaken in the past year by the Heritage Trust: at the Telephone Kiosk; the 'fisherman's hut', at the Town Pier, now transformed into a small museum; and new display and storage work at the railway station. All of these refurbishment projects have largely been carried out by Robert Irvine of Fine Art, Interiors & Renovations.

We are also planning a talk from a nonagenarian who was the last Captain of the Robert The Bruce ferry! Another important talk not to be missed.

Later in the year the Trust is planning to have talks on 'The Ferry and the Drove Roads of Scotland' as well as a talk from a local maritime explorer and navigator on climate change and the effect on the Forth.

The Heritage Trust and the trustees firmly believe that attracting visitors to the village is vitally important to the long term future for all residents. The work currently being carried out by the NQ LAP is making good progress across all topics being addressed to improve life in the village, including village traffic and facilities for locals and visitors.

Museums and their collections are an important part of life and much is currently being discussed amongst museums in the UK to have these unique attractions more relevant to the communities that they serve.

As part of the Heritage Trust's strategy, there are plans to create a single Museum on the old Pier incorporating the Light Tower as its central exhibit. The proposed new Light Tower Museum will hopefully become an officially **accredited** museum. This is to ensure with the ongoing financial climate, it will be eligible for government grants and funding. The Trust is only at the beginning of the process by proposing small changes to the constitution that will need to be approved by the membership. More information will be published as progress is made.

To those of you who use the Census Records you will be pleased to hear that the 1921 records are in the process of being obtained and should be available to view on the website later this year

Those of you who follow social media will see regular updates on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

In the meantime I hope you enjoy this newsletter. The Trust is always open to ideas for new articles or any feedback from published articles.

*James Lawson - Chairman*

### N' Ferry - the beginning... Catering for Pilgrims

Queensferry has catered for travellers from earliest times. Queen Margaret endowed a pilgrims' hostel with staff to 'wait upon the pilgrims with great care.' In the Middle Ages, most people were employed either manning the ferries or offering pilgrims food and shelter. Pilgrims visited the chapel dedicated to James, the patron saint of travellers, which King

Robert II granted to the monks of Dunfermline Abbey around 1320. At the time it would have stood on the seashore.

The surviving fragment in Chapel Place is the village's only medieval building.



### Albert Hotel... 'An elegant and commodious inn'

In the 19th century there were 13 places selling spirits in the village to serve the ferry trade. Opened in 1824 the Albert Hotel was Mitchell's Inn until a brief visit from Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in 1842.

It was so close to the water that drinkers could take a swim out the back. It was built on the site of the Hope Tavern. More recently it was the favourite howff of writer Ian Banks who called in once a week for a pint. He lived in the village. He may have found inspiration for his 1986 novel *The Bridge* - imagining the Bridge as a futuristic city.

Opposite, the Black Cat Inn is now a private house. Built in 1693, it displays the initials of its original owners – Thomas Peastie and Bessie Creech - on a lintel above a first floor window.



### The carriage trade

By the 1830s the centre of North Queensferry was very noisy and smelly given the amount of dung from horses and animals awaiting transport.



Mail coaches also passed through the village – ‘the Royal Mail’ from London to Aberdeen, the Defiance to Aberdeen and the Coburg to Perth. The first mail coach of the day with its four horses sounded its bugle at 4am as it passed through.

Fifty post horses were permanently stabled in the village. The Albert Inn had large stables for carriage horses on the other side of the road. Local boys used to steal lifts on the back of the carriages. The Brae was so steep and tortuous that some passengers left their carriages at the top and walked down.

### Defying time - Defiance

One of the best known coachmen was Captain Barclay whose Edinburgh-Aberdeen coach Defiance ran through the village from 1829-49. It was said, that it was so punctual that you could set one’s watch by the time of its arrival.

EDINBURGH TO ABERDEEN TIME-BILL for DEFiance	
Listing the coaching inns where horses were changed	
6.55am	Depart Waterloo Hotel, Edinburgh (every lawful day)
7.50	Boat at South Queensferry
8.20	Breakfast at Ship Inn, North Queensferry
8.40	Depart North Queensferry
	Old Inn, Cowdenbeath
	Kirklands, Kinross
10.50	Lomond at Glenfarg
11.30	Salutation, Perth
12.30pm	New Strathmore, Couper Angus
	Allison's Inn, Balbeggie
LUNCH	Castleton Inn, Nr Meigle
	Northwaterbridge Inn
	Gardenston Arms, Laurencekirk
	Bridge of Mondynes
	Stonehaven
	Boutrie Bush
	New Inn, Aberdeen
	Knox & Machray's Office, Union St, Aberdeen
7.10pm	Royal Hotel, Aberdeen

He was known as ‘the celebrated pedestrian’ as he had once walked 1000 miles in 1000 hours to win a bet of 1000 guineas. He boasted that ‘She’ll be in Aberdeen by 7.10 if naethn’ happens tae Aberdeen.’ Read a synopsis here of Defiance.

[Extracts from old articles about North Queensferry.](#)

### Telephone/Information Kiosk

As most residents will now know the kiosk has been transformed into an **Information Point for visitors and Book Exchange Centre for residents.** Its success is clear with the all the additional books that have been kindly donated. To enhance the display space, the Trust will be increasing the shelf space.

Hopefully, this will allow a better selection of sorted reading matter. It would be of great benefit to all users and indeed the Trust, if anyone would like to volunteer to become the 'Head Librarian' and 'keep an eye' on the display and advise on books of interest that could be added.



To those of you who have used the facility - our thanks and to those of you who have helped with a donation - our thanks, too.

*PS Check out the station's Book Swap area too!*

### The Light Tower and Museum

Visitors to the village are relatively low just now, no doubt in part due to the very cold and wet weather. However, we still see our regulars along with some national and international visitors and many of those do visit the light tower and the museum. We know this from the

comments that are written in our visitor books which are usually very encouraging and help us to plan our future museum collection and new information about the light tower.



Unfortunately, the Heritage Trust has experienced vandalism at the station. With the help of our CCTV the culprits have been identified. With this in mind, over the winter months, we have also upgraded the CCTV system facility on the Old Pier.

No surprise, but security is also a requirement for accredited museum status for our proposed Light Tower Museum. Once achieved, this will allow the Light Tower Museum to be eligible for much wider publicity and most importantly for funding to enable us to create a "must see attraction" for all our local, national and international visitors.

### Forth Bridge Heritage Centre @ NQ Railway Station

The centre has undergone further refurbishment during the winter months with additional display and to a much larger extent basement storage which is helping to enable all our exhibits and furniture etc to be stored in one place.

Plans for further exhibitions in the Gallery are being discussed as well as making more accessible use of the Meeting Room for exhibits. Watch out from more details of the planned **Fife Artline** Exhibitions.