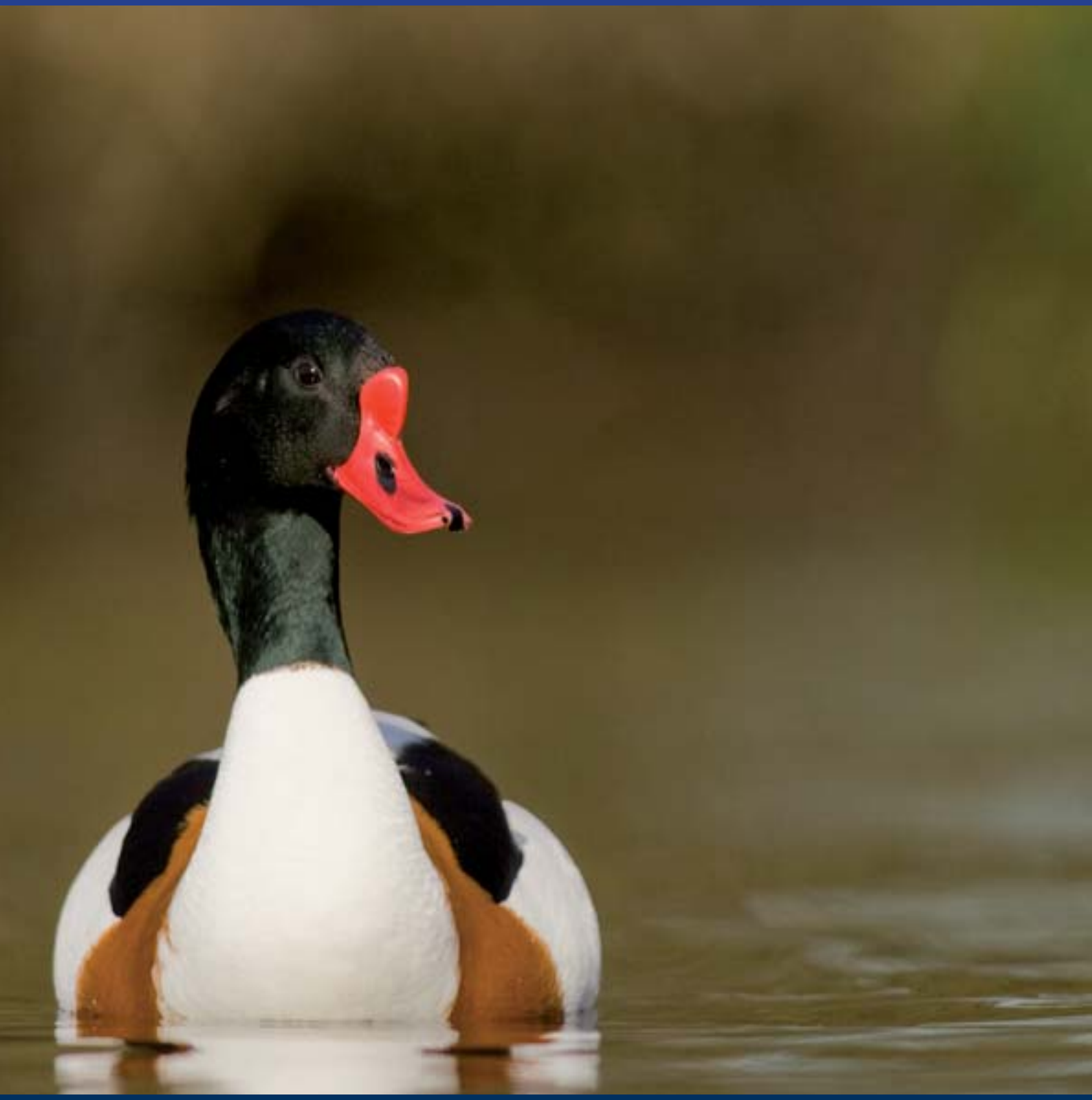
FORTH SIGHT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FORTH ESTUARY FORUM



Summer 2011 / Issue 22

Inside this issue:

Forum news & updates ⇨ Marine Scotland ⇨
Whitlock Energy Collaboration Centre ⇨
The Forthquarter ⇨ Spotlight on Newhaven ⇨
Invasives on the Forth ⇨ Futurescapes / RSPB ⇨
The Battle of Inverkeithing ⇨

cover image - the Shelduck // courtesy of RSPB

FORTH SIGHT

2 Welcome from Ruth Briggs, Chair of the Forth Estuary Forum

3 Forthsight

4 Forum News
Marine Planning in Scotland

5 The ForthQuarter

6 Invasives

7 RSPB Futurescapes

8 Whitlock Energy Collaboration Centre

9-10 Focus on Newhaven

11 The Battle of Inverkeithing

'Forth Sight' is a bi-annual publication on all matters concerning the work of the Forth Estuary Forum and sustainable development of the Firth of Forth.

The next edition is due out in Winter 2011. News, reviews and articles are welcome - as too are sponsorships. Contact staff for copy deadline.

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The views in this newsletter represent those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Forum.

Cover photo: Shelduck, courtesy of RSPB

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Please Note: If you no longer wish to receive copies of "Forth Sight", or your contact details have changed, please let us know by emailing us at secretary@forthestuaryforum.co.uk or contact the Forum office on 01383 420104.

Welcome

FORTH ESTUARY FORUM

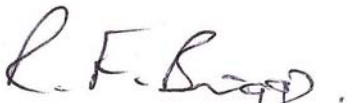
This time last year we could be forgiven for wondering whether we would still have a Forum as strong as we have just now. We had no guarantees of funding for the current year, pressure on all our sponsors', members' and supporters' budgets and an uncertain view of the role of coastal partnerships in the then equally uncertain political and economic times.

Well, here we are, actively engaged in key Forth issues from Government to local level, maintaining our focus on promoting understanding and collaboration among users and authorities relevant to the Forth, with a keen eye to the future both of the Forth Estuary and its Forum. Management and planning for maritime environments is high on the Scottish Government's agenda and we are ideally placed to facilitate and contribute to getting it right for the Forth.

Running the Forum costs a minimum of about £60,000 a year, a modest figure used thriftily by our staff and board of directors. In previous years additional special projects have been supported by separate project funds, and this facility remains an attractive one. I am very grateful to Marine Scotland for raising its contribution this year in order to keep us afloat and pay for work being undertaken by Chris Cutts and members to help in the development of measures to deliver marine planning partnerships under the Marine (Scotland) Act. I am equally grateful to all paid-up Forum members, whether corporate, charitable or local, for providing about a third of our income. The remaining balance of income is usually derived from a variety of sources and initiatives including fees for meetings and services, donations and any other project fees.

We've held membership fees at their present level for a number of years now, conscious of the demands on everyone's purses. But directors might need to propose an increase at this year's AGM. Take this as some advance warning and an opportunity to offer us any early views you might have on it.

Finally, a warm welcome to our new Forum Administrator, Sam Roger, who joins Chris in our Rosyth office. She takes over from Liz Allan who has left for a full-time job with our good wishes and thanks for many years of excellent service.



Management Group: City of Edinburgh Council *Julie Dewar,* The Crown Estate *Paul Bancks*, Falkirk Council *Richard Broadley*, Fife Council *Geoff Moy*, Forth Estuary Forum *Chris Cutts*, Forth Ports Ltd *Derek McGlashan*, RSPB *Toby Wilson*, Scottish Coastal Forum *Rhona Fairgrieve*, Scottish Natural Heritage *Niall Corbet*, Scottish Power *Moira Campbell*, Stirling Council *Robert Hunter*.

Directors: Ruth Briggs *Chair,* Iain Rennick, Derek McGlashan, Ian Howarth, Robin Hamilton, Hugh Henderson.

Staff: Chris Cutts, *Forum Manager*, Sam Roger, *Administrator*

THE MANAGEMENT GROUP NEWS

Questions were raised at our last AGM about the composition of our Management Group and how its members are appointed. As promised, directors have reviewed the position in order to identify any desirable changes.

Under the terms of our constitution the Forum has both a Board of Directors and a Management Group. The Management Group supports the directors through advice and information and comprises representatives from key interests and bodies around the Forth. Member bodies represented include Fife, Edinburgh, Falkirk and Stirling Local Authorities, national bodies like Scottish Natural Heritage, The Crown Estate, and RSPB and users such as Forth Ports Ltd and Scottish Power. West Lothian Council and SEPA are currently corresponding members with insufficient resources for full membership. New representatives usually attend as observers prior to formal election by Forum members at an AGM.

The Management Group meets quarterly to exchange information and updates relevant to activities or plans affecting the Forth and to review current Forum work and directions. Notes from its meetings are passed to directors.

Recent review by both Management Group and Board has identified that leisure and recreation interests could be better represented on the Management Group. Steps are therefore in hand to invite a representative of boating activities on to the Group in order to ensure that area is adequately covered in discussion.

Naturally it might be possible to argue the case for inclusion of an even wider range of representative interests on the Management Group. However, we also need to keep numbers and meetings manageable and meaningful. I hope that all Forum members feel that they can contribute views and suggestions through correspondence, website, members' meetings and personal contact with staff and directors. We are in important times for both the wellbeing of the Forth and for the future marine partnership that might oversee it.

Communication is what the Forum is all about, so do please keep in touch.

If you were at our last annual conference in January, you will know that the Forum was engaging on a large research project investigating sectoral interactions in the Forth and how these sectors or activities manage their access to resources around our coastline and offshore, given that some activities will have overlapping requirements. This work is now well underway and further details are in this issue of Forthsight.

Maintaining the theme of the annual conference: past, present and future Forth, Forthsight 22 has many varied examples from each. We include an article on Newhaven and the Great Michael warship, at the time Europe's largest, and how modern day inhabitants of Newhaven are honouring its memory in 2011, 500 years after it was built. Also included is an article on the Battle of Inverkeithing, 1651, and the plans of North Queensferry Heritage Trust to research the battle site.

For the present, see the articles on Edinburghs' newest park, ForthQuarter and The Whitlock Energy Collaboration Centre, one of Scotland's newest education, research and training resources for the renewable energy sector. Looking to the future, there are articles on new plans for estuarine management by the RSPB, building on their work at Skinflats (see Forthsight 20), new plans for the control of invasive species by the Forth Fisheries Trust, and developments at Marine Scotland.

Staying in the future, our 18th AGM and Annual Conference will be held in January 2012, rather than December of this year. A precise date and details will be released later in the year.
I hope you enjoy this issue. For further information on any of the following articles, please contact the Forum Manager at 01383 420104 or chris.cutts@forthestuaryforum.co.uk.

forum news

Recent beach clean at Cramond

The Annual Conference

The 17th Forth Estuary Forum AGM and Annual Conference 'Past, Present and Future Forth', took place on the 31st January 2011 (postponed from December) at the North Queensferry Hotel, and was well attended by over 70 delegates. Presentations included: the Central Scotland Green Network; seabird research by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology; the Communities Along the Carron Association; a new lobster hatchery at North Berwick; an environmental history of the Forth; Marine Scotland and Marine Planning; recording coastal archaeological sites at risk from erosion; and a presentation on the Forum itself on its planned work.

The presentations are available on the Forum website, and the Forum would like to thank the speakers and all the delegates for making it such an interesting and useful day.

Edinburgh Waterfront Signage Trail

In partnership with City of Edinburgh Council, the Forum has commissioned StudioArc of Leith to design a series of environmental interpretation panels to be installed along the Edinburgh Waterfront. Starting with panels at Port Edgar and finishing at Portobello, panels will also be sited at South Queensferry, Gypsy Brae, Granton, Newhaven, and Leith. Their content will highlight the nature conservation designations of the Forth, highlight important species and habitats, and will tell the story of the past and present human uses of the Forth around Edinburgh. They will also complement the existing signage at Cramond, which the Forum installed in 2009.

The panels will be installed in October, and have been funded by Scottish Natural Heritage, City of Edinburgh Council, National Grid, and Almond Neighbourhood Partnership.

Beach Cleans

The Forum still carries out beach cleans along the Forth coast with schools, community groups and businesses. So far this year we have taken Kennoway primary school to Leven beach in March, the children and parents of Meadows Nursery, Edinburgh to Musselburgh beach in April, and Black Horse Motor and Personal Finance cleaned Cramond beach in June. The latter clean-up was also in partnership with Scottish Business in the Community.

Research on Sectoral Interactions on the Forth

This research project is being carried out by the Forth Estuary Forum on behalf of Marine Scotland. The responses from stakeholders are currently being collated by the Forum Manager, and will contribute to the development of a Local Marine Plan for the Firth of Forth and Forth Estuary.

Marine planning is expected to provide a powerful tool for the management of the marine environment, and one key role is its potential to identify and deliver options for the sustainable management of interactions (both positive and negative) among sectors in the marine environment. However, this will only work if there is informed input from key stakeholders during plan development.

Therefore the Forum is conducting interviews with stakeholders on the Forth to identify their perceptions of where and when interactions between particular activities exist, and their nature. This project is a key opportunity to ensure that each sector's (e.g. natural heritage management, renewables, fishing, coastal development) perceptions and concerns are represented in the future management of the Forth Estuary.

If you would like further information or to take part in the research, please contact the Forum Manager. For further information on any of the above, please do contact the Forum Manager on 01383 420104 or chris.cutts@forthestuaryforum.co.uk.

Forum's last AGM/conference

marine scotland - towards marine planning....

Work continues apace after the May election to implement the Marine (Scotland) Act and develop marine planning for Scottish waters. The key points outlined below will be major milestones over the next few months but the timings may be subject to change:

JULY 2011- AUGUST 2011:
Revision of the pre-consultation draft National Marine Plan in response to comments made during the pre-consultation exercise and the Sustainability Assessment (SA)/ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) pre-consultation

AUTUMN/WINTER 2011:
Formal Consultation on the Draft National Marine Plan (12 weeks) taking place alongside the formal Consultation on the SA and SEA (12 weeks)

EARLY 2012:
Revision of the Draft National Plan in response to comments made during the Plan consultation and the SA/SEA consultation periods

SPRING/SUMMER 2012:
Laying draft National Marine Plan before Parliament and Parliamentary consideration of the proposed National Marine Plan: Final considerations, adoption and publication of the National Marine Plan.

SPRING/SUMMER 2012:
Publication of the SEA Post-Adoption Statement. A Statement of Public Participation for the Scottish National Marine Plan was agreed by Ministers earlier in 2011 and has been published on the Marine Scotland webpages at www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/sea-management/national/spp. It is designed to assist stakeholders and will be updated to reflect any changes in the timetable for producing the National Marine Plan.

Consideration of Scottish Marine Regions continues alongside this work. The analysis of the responses to the SMR consultation exercise from early 2011 is almost complete and will inform further work to determine the number of Marine Regions and their boundaries. These should be confirmed by the end of the year and work will begin to establish the first of the Scottish Marine Regions by spring/summer 2012. For further information, keep an eye on the Marine Scotland webpages.

the forthquarter....

A green oasis has been discovered hidden away within Granton's emerging waterfront regeneration area.

Landowner National Grid have created a natural open space with water features, walkways and cycle paths to attract investors and developers to this 110 acre site overlooking the Forth estuary.

Cycle and footpaths linked to the city network snake alongside a series of water features created through the opening up of the previously culverted Caroline Burn and through the introduction of a major sustainable urban drainage system that forms a beautiful small lake. Curving boardwalks allow access to the burn and a series of elegant steel and aluminium bridges reinforce links between the coastal landscape and the city while providing access to the new retail facilities and housing emerging alongside.

Groves of mature pine and oak trees provide shade and definition to the vast green areas while native reeds and marginal plants provide attractive flowers, foliage and a home for wildlife along the waters edge.

Avenues of poplar and birch trees create a boundary adding definition to the park and leading the eye to a copse at the western edge of the site and the waterfront to the north.

The park has been officially open to the public for two years and is now popular with local residents, especially families who feed the swans, ducks, coots and moorhens who have made this diverse space their home.

The park provides a spectacular location for a series of events including the annual Forth Neighbourhood Community Festival held in September. National Grid encourages local schools and organisations to use the facility for outdoor activities and biodiversity lessons.

Cycle paths and footpaths through The Forthquarter Park link up to the recently upgraded Granton promenade creating an attractive and sheltered diversion from the waterfront and providing a shorter circular route around the local area.

Information points soon to be erected along Granton promenade will provide direction and National Grid is currently working with students at Telford College to design signage for the park itself.

A new cycle map is also being produced that will include routes to and through The Forthquarter Park and other new routes throughout the waterfront area.

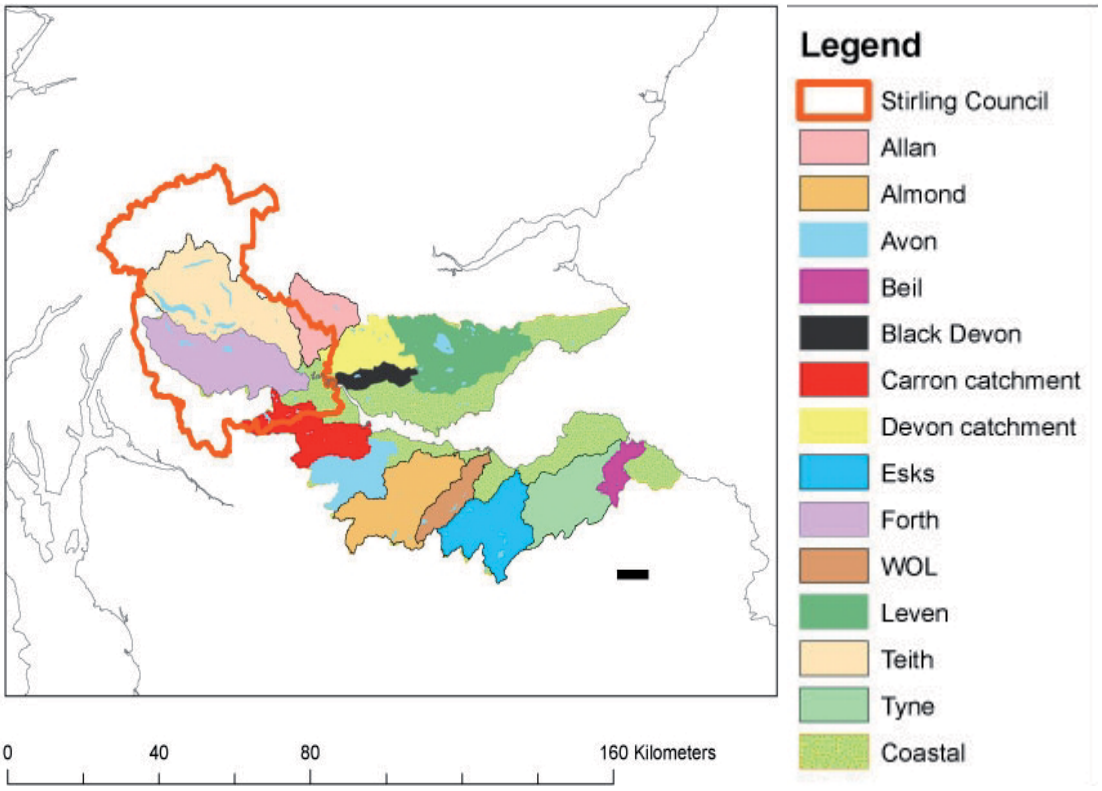
While the general understanding may be that development along the waterfront has ground to a halt, National Grid is proving that this is not the case by quietly and steadily moving towards its vision of creating a desirable and sustainable community from redundant brownfield land.

To find out more about this emerging new community please visit www.theforthquarter.co.uk

Images courtesy of National Grid

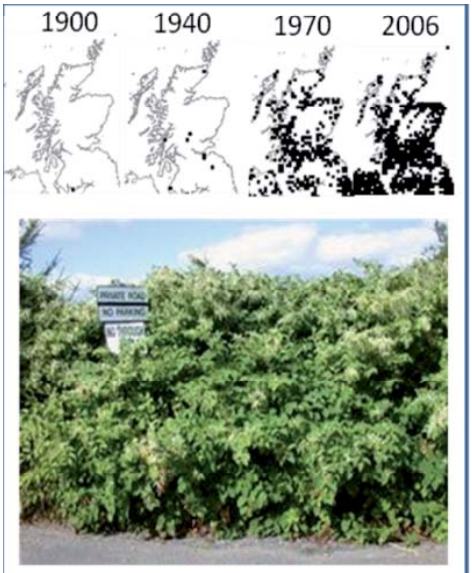
invasives - a huge challenge ahead....

Forth Fisheries District Management Units



The River Forth Fisheries Trust is the local fisheries Trust for the Forth Fisheries District, comprised of all the rivers that flow into the Firth of Forth. The Trust oversees the conservation of the 11 sub-catchments of the District .

The Trust has produced a biosecurity plan for the Forth District as part of a national biosecurity planning exercise initiated by RAFTS, the umbrella body for all the Scottish rivers trusts. A sustainable framework that will prevent, detect, control and eradicate invasive non-native species has long been lacking in this part of the world, with outlying areas such as the Tweed catchment taking the lead in catchment wide management of invasive species, as many invasives are invariably spread along water courses.



Japanese knotweed spread across Scotland 1900 - 2006

The Forth is home, by my count to no less than 27 invasive non native species (INNS) and this figure is likely to be an underestimate. In addition to this, there are a number of noxious invasives which could make their way into the District at any point. The Central belt of Scotland, including Forthside, is widely recognized as the most heavily invaded area in Scotland; largely due to its role as a road, rail and ferry transport hub for the rest of Scotland. This makes it particularly susceptible to new invasions by INNS, as highlighted by the appearance of Zebra mussels in the Forth & Clyde Canal in 2010.

Past efforts to tackle invasives have been undermined by being too localised, too short and ultimately not sustained; invasive species are more often than not far too resilient to be effectively tackled by a three or even 5 year programme.

A new approach

The Trust is therefore seeking support to enact a new approach which, as well as tackling the current problems faced in the Forth, will employ a 'reactive' rather than 'proactive' approach to problems that have yet to reach the District. The Forth Invasive Species Programme is unique as it will establish, test and mainstream community based control of INNS over 3,600 km2 of the Forth District. As such it will be a large scale and ambitious community based programme addressing the economic, social and environmental impacts of INNS in Europe. Although this scale of control and management is undoubtedly challenging it represents the most effective means of dealing with INNS.

The programme will establish an extensive network of volunteers and wildlife professionals in numerous local communities across Forthside, working together towards the common goal of large scale INNS monitoring and control, with the associated benefits shared across a wide range of interest groups.

As it's name suggests, it is a programme rather than a project and it is anticipated that it will establish catchment management of invasive species and their associated problems as the accepted level and scale of control, monitoring and prevention activities.

Anyone looking for information on the Programme and how they can become involved should contact Ben Tyser of the River Forth Fisheries Trust (b.tyser@fishforth.co.uk).

futurescapes / RSPB working in Partnership....

Skinflats, image courtesy of RSPB

The Inner Forth has long been recognised as an important place for wildlife. Huge flocks of wading birds have been coming here for thousands of years to feed on the wide expanses of mudflats. Saltmarsh, a scarce and declining habitat is found along the banks of the Inner Forth and plays a vital role in the ecology of the estuary and is home to plants such as thrift. While the fertile farmland that stretches away from the river, provides a refuge for farmland birds such as tree sparrows and yellowhammers.

Of course, the landscape has seen some dramatic changes through the centuries, and the long history of industrial and agricultural use has left an indelible mark. Today, there are new pressures, with issues like development, disturbance and climate change bringing further challenges to wildlife.

The RSPB's Futurescapes initiative aims to develop landscape-scale conservation across the UK, and the Inner Forth has been identified as an area with huge and exciting potential. The idea that 'bigger is better' in conservation terms is not a new one and the RSPB has shown in other areas of Scotland such as Forsinard in Caithness that landscape-scale conservation brings real benefits to both people and wildlife. Futurescapes will not only benefit wildlife but has the potential to make the most of opportunities for sustainable flood management, recreation and education.

The aim of the Inner Forth project is to provide rich habitats for wildlife via landscape - scale habitat creation and management around the Falkirk and Alloa area, centred around the RSPB Skinflats nature reserve. Equally important, it will provide diverse green spaces for people to enjoy. Given the ambitious nature of the initiative, a vital aspect of the project will be to build partnerships with Local Authorities, government agencies and other organisations.

Inner Forth Vision (Sandy Grant, RSPB)

The first stage in realising this vision is to investigate the feasibility for landscape-scale habitat restoration and creation, collate existing information and to explore and indentify interpretation and access opportunities in the area. A Project Officer (Scott Paterson) was appointed in September 2010 with the support of Central Scotland Green Network, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Forestry Commission. Scott is based near Skinflats and is currently exploring the Inner Forth area and making contact with interested parties.

More details on this exciting project are available from Scott at scott.paterson@org.uk or call 07748 077031.

engineering a sustainable future....

The Whitlock Energy Collaboration Centre promotes learning and knowledge transfer between key providers, consumers and developers of sustainable energy resources and provides learning, training, skills development and associated educational services for the energy industry with a particular focus on sustainability. It contributes to the effective adoption and utilisation of sustainable energy sources through conferencing, seminars, workshops, product launches, providing consultancy and technical editing services, funding advice, prototyping, research and development and providing opportunities for interactive laboratory demonstration facilities for emerging energy technologies.

Wind Turbine Technician Apprentices & Turbine © Carnegie College

Established in 2010, the Centre is the focus for Carnegie College's renewable energy training and development objectives. Situated at the hub of our established and highly respected engineering and technology facility in Rosyth, it is one of the UK's newest and largest educational research and training resources dedicated to supporting the growth of the Renewable Energy Sector and associated supply chain.

The Centre has already made a number of significant achievements having been awarded the RenewableUK Pioneer Award for their contribution in supporting the development and delivery of the first Wind Turbine Technician Modern Apprenticeship programme in the UK. They were also recognised for their training activities in the wider power sector by the National Skills Academy for Power having been awarded the Education and Skills Provider of the Year Award 2011. During its first year the Centre has hosted a significant number of provider and employer events culminating in their first major conference in May, "The Power of Partnerships" run in conjunction with Babcock and Fife Council.

Opening of the Whitlock Centre Oct 2010 © Carnegie College

Head of the Whitlock Energy Collaboration Centre, Jim Brown says 'We work with a range of industry stakeholders and major employers including, Renewable UK, Energy and Utility Skills, National Skills Academy for Power, Babcock, BiFab, Proven Energy, REpower, Scottish and Southern Energy, Siemens and the Weir Group to ensure the development of our training and education portfolio is employer led.'

'We are determined to support the needs of the large scale renewables sector and are now working with partners to establish a comprehensive range of industry training including height safety awareness with TAG using our on-site training tower, Falck Nutec on a wide range of Health and Safety provision and MTCS for ROV and Subsea High Voltage training. However, we are very aware that large scale renewables will not solve all of the UK's energy problems and we are currently developing our Sustainable Technologies Centre to support companies in the utilisation of advances in Energy Efficiency, Sustainable Construction and Micro-renewables.'

'We have made great progress in achieving our vision to 'engineer a sustainable energy future' and at the Whitlock Energy Collaboration Centre we look forward to continue working with industry and establishing the Centre as a hub supporting the development of the renewable energy sector and its supply chain.'

For further information contact Jim Brown, Head of Whitlock Energy Collaboration Centre, Carnegie College, Rosyth Campus, Wood Road, Rosyth Business Park, Rosyth, Fife, KY11 2EA email jbrown@carnegiecollege.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)844 248 0115 Ext: 5565 www.carnegiecollege.ac.uk/whitlock

The Power of Partnerships Conference May 2011 © Carnegie College

Whitlock Energy Collaboration Centre

Carnegie COLLEGE Creating futures

newhaven in the spotlight....

This article is, of necessity, an abridged compendium of all that has been written over many years about the village of Newhaven on the Firth of Forth and its most famous claim to fame as the home of the Great Michael, the largest ship of its time.

Newhaven existed on the shores of the Forth as a settlement and fishing communities in the mid1400s and Newhaven's origins can be traced back to the 1480s in various articles. It came to be recognised when a small fishing group moved out of Leith at the mouth of the Water of Leith and set up a community barely a mile away to the west further up the estuary. There, the fishing boats were more likely drawn up on the shingle shore before a breakwater and harbour were constructed.

By Alex Tait
(alexntait@aol.com)

"Newhaven Harbour"

"Working Mates Newhaven"

THE LEITH ARTIST
FRANK F MANCLARK

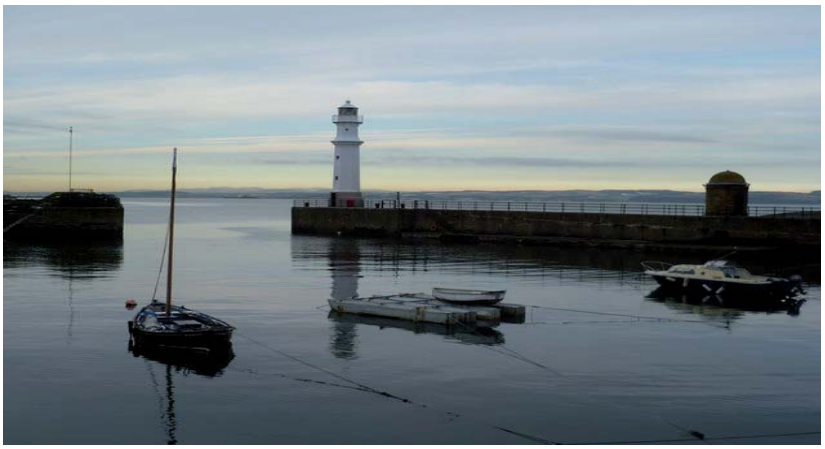
Frank Forsgard Manclark is a local artist, living in Edinburgh. He describes himself as 'The Leith Artist'. Until 2003, he owned the Preview Gallery in Ferry Road, opposite Leith Library.

Frank first exhibited, representing Scottish Schools, at the London South Bank Exhibition in 1950. He has since shown in galleries and open air one man shows throughout Europe.

The Forum gratefully acknowledges Mr. Manclarks' permission in allowing us to reproduce some of his paintings for this article. The Forum would also like to acknowledge Mr. Peter Stubbs (www.edinphoto.org.uk) for his help in acquiring these images.

STORIES OF FISHWIVES....

Fish was a significant element of the diet of the local and Edinburgh people as a cheaper form of meat and Fishwives travelled up to Edinburgh for centuries up 'Leith Walk' with their creels full of fresh fish. Tradition has it that they sang their choruses to shorten the journey and were reported as knitting on the way home when the creels were considerably lighter. Newhaven lassies are "sturdy and weel fit for purpose", as expressed by an author in the many articles written about the people of Newhaven. Such was their attributes that it was felt that a woman from any other area would not be fit as a fisherman's wife, being viewed as "heed o' the hoose" with her net mending, creel making and fish gutting skills. Newhaven weddings were community events and celebrated by the entire village. The heart of the community still beats but the village was physically transformed in the 1950s and 1960s, and it falls to the 'bairns' in the Primary School and the Gala to uphold the traditions.



The 'Wee Museum' in the School is a vital repository of the artefacts and history of the village, and the Newhaven Action Group is actively pursuing the reinstatement of a permanent Exhibition within a Heritage Centre.

The traditional fishing boats are missing now and the prophesy that "when the great willow tree growing in Willowbank decays, so the open sea boat fishing will also die away", is all but fulfilled. The Newhaven Action Group are striving to resurrect a Heritage Centre which will focus on the history of the village and reinstating an exhibition of artefacts.

the great michael....

The Great Michael returns to Newhaven by Frank F Manclark - The Leith Artist

The harbour was made famous by the building of The Great Michael, the biggest ship in the Scottish Navy of King James IV and indeed the biggest ship of its time. Driven by the arms race of the early 1500s and the ambitions of King James IV, along with the enthusiasm of one of his senior naval officers, Andrew Woods, he proposed to construct the world's biggest ship.

A recorded sandbank at Leith, which presented difficulties for the sister ship 'Margaret', although far smaller, being launched into the Forth meant that a deeper dock was required and the small natural harbour was modified at Newhaven where the launch of the Great Michael could be more readily achieved.

The Great Michael had a final weight of more than 1000 tons. It was a huge ship by the standards of the 16th century and the resources both in timber and finance some 500 years ago was to prove problematic. The ship required vast amounts of timbers reported to be 72 acres of forest and approximately £25,000 of King James' income. The keel was laid at Newhaven in 1507 and the ship launched in 1511 taking 4 years to construct and fit out.

When The Great Michael was launched Scotland's Navy became the envy of Rulers across Europe. King James IV achieved his ambition of surpassing the achievements of his contemporaries. To some extent it was a joint venture with France and was deployed in French waters under a 'hire arrangement', having not been widely used in service in the Scottish Navy.

The Great Michael was around 250 feet in length and barely 35 feet wide with enormously thick walls. Just how she accommodated her 300 man crew, over 100 gunners and berths for 1000 soldiers is something of a mystery. James IV's untimely death at Flodden prevented Newhaven's continuing as a ship building port.

The eventual fate of The Great Michael, when retired from service in 1523, is not authoritively recorded but she was either sold to the French and gave further years of service or dismantled and the timbers used in houses.

It is hoped that this article will sell to rekindle interest in Newhaven and its most famous achievement, the building and launching of the Great Michael – the greatest ship of its time.

the wee michael....

The Newhaven Coastal Rowers is a community group run by local residents and their aim is to nurture and further grow the vibrant community spirit that is evident in and around Newhaven.

The team worked tirelessly for eleven months during 2010 to build a beautiful skiff and they are now rowing it in regattas across Scotland.

Newhaven has had a close association with the sea for centuries – its' main occupation being fishing and the associated trades – one of which was boat building, providing fishing boats to the fishermen.

In addition, in 1505, over 500 years ago, Newhaven rose to great prominence when King James IV chose it as the site for building the largest warship of the time, "The Great Michael".

The skiff, "The Wee Michael" was named by pupils at Victoria Primary, the local school in Newhaven, in memory of this great ship.

Everyone was delighted that George Hackland, a local resident of Newhaven village who attended the last launch of a boat, the "Reliance", in Newhaven in 1928 could launch "The Wee Michael" at Newhaven Harbour in November 2010.

These threads link the skiff with local history, both recent and old, and will help to keep these local stories alive for the future.

If you want to know more about the Newhaven Coastal Rowers email the group at skiff@mapix.com or take a look at their website at http://newhavenrowing.wordpress.com

viewing points at the site of the battle of Inverkeithing....

An extensive series of earthworks have recently come to light on the edge of North Queensferry which throw new light on a great battle there which, arguably, speeded the end of the "English" Civil War in 1651.

The Trust's plan is to research details of the battle site and construct suitable viewing points to explain to visitors the whole concept as seen from the bridgehead / defence fortification wall constructed by the Cromwellian troops. Since 1651 much alteration to the contours of the battle site has taken place but the key places are still visible. From the top of the Ferryhills the visitor has an excellent view of the Forth estuary that shows the direction of naval and troop movements crossing the Forth prior to battle.

The defence fortifications were marked on the first official OS map dated 1856 and are located on the north sloping side of the Ferryhills, looking towards Pitreavie and Castland Hill with Dunfermline beyond and Inverkeithing on the right.

Access to the proposed viewing sites from Ferryhills Road is easy by way of an existing footpath. The land itself, majority owned by Tarmac Ltd with the remainder owned by Broomhall Estates, is part of the Ferryhills SSSI, designated because of its calcareous and neutral grassland. Part of the grassland, in recent years, has become overgrown with gorse but with agreement between the landowners and Scottish Natural Heritage this is scheduled to be cutback later this year. It has also been agreed that the requirements of the viewing points will be taken into account when the extent of the cutback is determined.In order to reach its objective the Trust is entering into discussion with landowners and SNH to further develop the project. Fife Council Archaeological services have already looked over the site and advised on the desirability of a survey and 'trial dig' to uncover part of the defence wall.

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It is envisaged later this year that a 'flying flock of sheep' will be brought to the site to control the unmanaged grass.In view of the importance of the grasslands the Trust envisages access to the site would be by a clearly defined path leading to suitably designed information boards on the history and context of the battle. These would ideally be displayed on stone, 'lectern style' plinths.

the battle of inverkeithing, 1651....

On the night of Wednesday 16/17 July, English ships bombarded the North Queensferry defences and an assault force under the command of Col. Overton crossed the Forth from Leith and occupied the whole peninsula. A defensive wall was dug across the Ferryhills and the forces were increased on the Friday and Saturday by new troops from Leith. Major General John Lambert, who had been instrumental in the victory at Dunbar, now took command.

The Scots in response sent a mismatched division of their forces under Lieutenant General Holburn, including battle - hardened Covenanters, raw recruits and Highlanders. They were joined by local militia from Dunfermline who had arrived at Inverkeithing on Sunday 20th July with the intention of holding back the English army at their bridgehead on the Ferryhills.

To begin with everything went well for the Scots. But with a mixture of inexperienced troops and surprise attacks by the English, they were pushed North into the valley towards Pitreavie and Mastertown, where, with the Highlanders, they were slaughtered or taken prisoner. According to traditional accounts,Highlanders fought to the last man, and the legend of the Clan Maclean reports that they lost 95% of their 800 men.

The Battle of Inverkeithing, on 20th July 1651, is viewed as a decisive turning point in the whole of Cromwell's Scottish campaign and the eventual outcome of civil wars which engulfed the three kingdoms of England, Ireland and Scotland in the 1640's and beyond. This battle virtually ended the resistance of the Scots against the Cromwellian army.

The story continues when Charles and what remained of his army decide to invade England in the expectation of joining up with English Royalists intent on restoring Charles to the English throne. The Scots forces marched south about the 30th July taking the western roads through Scotland and England. Their movements had been anticipated by Cromwell and the 16,000 strong Royalist force engaged with the 28,000 English force at the battle at Worcester on the 3rd of September1651 which effectively ended the English Civil War.

The defeated Scots lost 3000 slain and three times that number captured. Some 8000 Scottish prisoners were deported to New England, Bermuda and the West Indies to work as indentured labourers for landowners. The King made good his escape and after many adventures escaped to France. For nine years Charles was in exile while Scotland was united with England in an enforced union. After Cromwell's death in 1658 Charles was invited back in 1660 to be crowned King of England, Ireland and Scotland.

For further details on N Queensferry Trust please visit www.nqht.org