



UPDATE

by Dr George Venters
Clerk to Newhaven Heritage

From the news reported on page two, you will see that things are in the pipeline which should benefit Newhaven. The Forth Ports activities may open doors we thought were closed and the benevolence of the "Liston Legacy" strengthens the photographic archive considerably. You can see a good example of the value of this collection at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3Ish4aZw2E&ab_channel=NewhavenActionGroup

We have been exploring the concept of a "Virtual Museum" - having a "front door" on the internet through which anyone interested could get access to our picture and sound archives as well as the Newhaven-specific material held electronically in other local and national collections. So far responses from Museums and Galleries Scotland and Edinburgh City have been positive and we are diligently organising our electronic archive.

The idea is that you will be able to browse the pictures and stories already collected and maybe add your own. This should give an archive focused on, for and generated by our forebears, ourselves and our descendants. We will be the custodians of the history that matters most to us. One of our trustees, Sophia Abrahamsen, has provided, in another project for Historic Scotland, a wee example of what could be done. The link is: <https://auntyemily.wordpress.com/2015/03/06/maritime-memories-of-leith-and-newhaven/>

You will also see, in the interesting article by Frank Ferri on the first Newhaven Gala, how much the community put into making it a success. In recent years the bulk of this effort has come from Victoria School. It would be good if the wider Newhaven Community could reinvigorate its commitment to the Gala. If you wish to help please let us know by leaving a message at: events@newhavenonforth.org.uk

IT'S A FAIR COP

IN THE LAST issue of the Bow-Tow, we highlighted our bid — unsuccessful as it turned out — to purchase the police box at the old Fishmarket which would have become a community hub. Although disappointed at the time not to have won the bid, Newhaven Heritage is now delighted to learn that the new owner has similar views on the importance of community benefits utilising this iconic little building.

The new owner is Johnathan Elders, an artist who intends to use the police box as an art gallery with an added important bonus.

Johnathan explains, "My main plan for the box is to use it as a space where I can make and occasionally display art. I am also very keen that the box is used to support or be part of community events. Once the box has been repainted, had a little TLC and is ready for use, then my intention is to invite artists and groups such as Newhaven Heritage to use the box for events free of charge.

"As part of my plan for the box I have been working with other box owners to create a police box festival in



July. The festival will be an opportunity for the public to see into these much loved but previously inaccessible spaces. It will also be an opportunity for a small community of creative types who have bought boxes to share their creative produce.

"We plan on having a launch night on May 29th at the Box in the harbour to which all subscribers to the Bow-Tow are invited."

Newhaven Heritage is delighted that the old police box will become an asset to the village and be an additional part of the harbour's appeal to the visitor.

We wish him well in his new venture.

SHIP AHOY!

NEWHAVEN HARBOUR is alive once more. There's a great deal of excitement around the harbour nowadays with small craft coming and going and a number berthed at the pontoons.

The observant amongst those that live in the village will have noticed dredging work going on in Newhaven Harbour. This is in anticipation of the arrival of 'super' cruise ships to the waters off Leith and the need to tender to port the passengers and crew who wish to step ashore. The dredging will increase the draft for the tender craft that visit to enable passengers to alight.

All in all, eight ships are scheduled to visit Edinburgh and Leith with the potential of 30,000 visitors disembarking for their visit at Newhaven which had been in competition with South Queensferry to be the arrival port. However, the proximity of the many transport connections to the capital as well as Newhaven's closeness won the day for harbour.

A trial run was made last year when Cunard's Queen Victoria visited in late May 2014, It was deemed to be a success by the ship's officers and passengers alike.

Of course, many passengers will head for Princes Street and the Royal Mile or journey the short distance to Ocean Terminal and the Royal Yacht Britannia. However, as readers of the Bow-Tow will recognise, there is much to encourage a more prolonged visit to the village itself. Newhaven Heritage is seeking to work with the Forth Ports Authority to enhance the Newhaven experience for the passengers that land at the harbour. In the absence of a Heritage Centre that would have been a magnet for such visitors, the group is looking at ways to promote the historical significance of the village and its surroundings. We are currently working on a booklet "A Walk Around Newhaven", a self-guided tour of the village from Anchorfield to Starbank Park which we hope will interest the visitor wishing to explore the streets and learn about Newhaven's history. This can be achieved relatively quickly.

In the medium term, we have already identified a need - an urgent need - to mount plaques identifying historical artefacts of the village such as the 16th century wall of the original chapel of The Virgin Mary and St James, or the Armada Stone, or the former St Andrew's Church, the Fishermen's church. Interpretation boards at strategic places around the village have also been proposed. Quite apart from funding, permissions will need to be obtained from Edinburgh Council and so will be unlikely to be completed this year.

Long-term, of course, our ambitions remain fixed on re-opening the museum within the structure of a multi-faceted Heritage Centre but that will require a site on which to build a premises, or by some miracle, some suitable building that can be customised to tell Newhaven's story in a modern idiom.

This is our best chance to date to enter into negotiations with the Forth Ports Authority. Who knows, the door to opportunity might be pushed ajar as we are uniquely placed to demonstrate to cruise ship passengers and city break visitors alike, as well as new local residents, the rich heritage of which Bow-Tows are rightly proud?



ABOVE: Dredging work has begun.

EASTER EGG TIME AT THE PARK



©Newhaven Heritage 2015: The Liston Legacy

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AN EASTER tradition that has existed at Starbank Park for generations is rolling hard-boiled eggs down the steep slope on Easter Sunday. The eggs, of course, represent the stone that rolled away from Christ's tomb on that First Easter. Inevitably, the eggs broke as they tumbled down the hill but the seagulls were not complaining. Neither, according to Sophia Abrahamsen who remembers the early 50's, did the Park Keeper who normally on any other day would chase anyone who dared to walk on the grass.

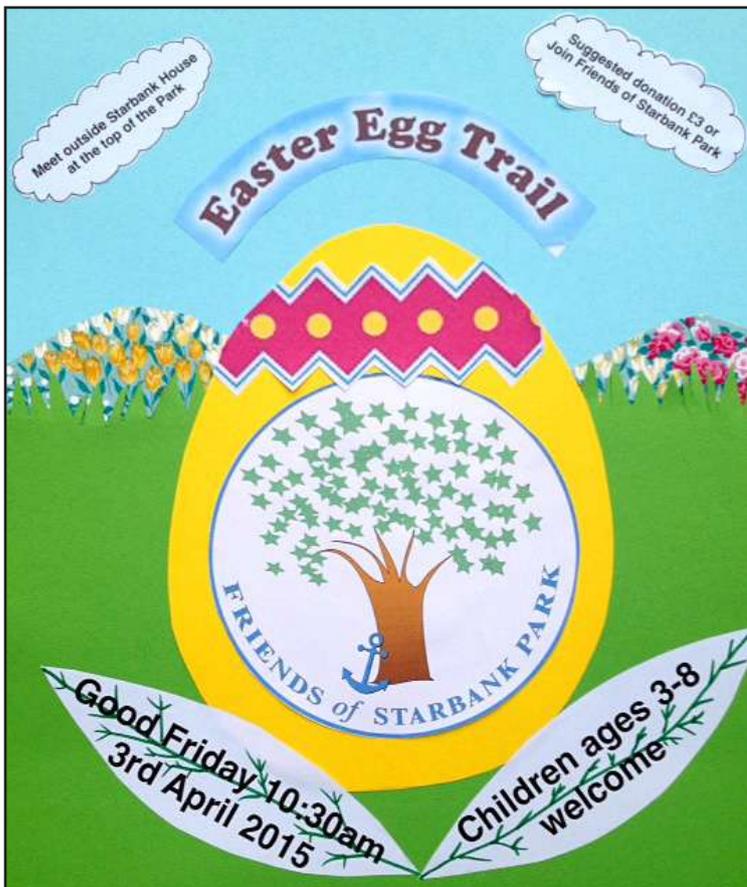
Traditionally the hard-boiled eggs were boiled along with certain vegetables or food dyes to colour the eggshells and additionally were often painted with patterns or faces. Families would come from all across Edinburgh, not just from Newhaven, Trinity and Granton, to roll the eggs. Many still do to this day.

For a while recently, the Park was looking a little tired but thanks to the valiant efforts of the Friends of Starbank Park who are working alongside Edinburgh Council Parks Department to return Starbank Park to its former glory, it can be enjoyed by all throughout the year and not just on Easter Sunday.

TOP LEFT: Postcard of Starbank Park in 1891

LEFT: The Park Keeper worked hard keeping the Park immaculate. Picture taken 1964

FRIENDS OF STARBANK PARK



2015 AT STARBANK PARK by Alastair Robertson

2015 WILL BE a busy year for Friends of Starbank Park. Our first event is an Easter Egg Trail for 3 to 8 year olds at 10.30 on Good Friday, 3rd April.

There's plenty gardening too. We will build a Fernery, funded by a Keep Scotland Beautiful/ Tesco Community Grant, and a cold frame, funded by Trinity Community Council. The Friends and the Council will replant many borders and we are working together for a Green Flag. And, of course, there's weeding.

It is Starbank Park's 125 year anniversary in 2016 so we are assembling a park history. Please contact Alastair Robertson at friendsofstarbankpark@gmail.com if you have stories or photos we could use.

We garden every Wednesday and Saturday, 10.00-11.30. Please join us. Find out more at www.friendsofstarbankpark.org.

THE GREENING OF NEWHAVEN



A QUIET SPACE?

by Gordon Young

ON A FINE sunny Spring morning, my friend and I had a walk around Newhaven and lingered for a while at the railings protecting Newhaven's Old Burial Ground, formerly the garden of the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin and St James built by James IV in 1506. The gable ends of the original church still stand but there is nothing to point to this significance.

The grassy areas looked careworn and unloved. It seems to me a tragedy that one of the few green spaces in Newhaven — and a historically important one at that — is not made more of. The garden faces south and, on that morning, was bathed in sunlight.

It strikes me that this would make a fine place to make a Quiet Space, a Peace Garden, where one can sit contemplating their thoughts in this old cemetery, at the heart of the village and amongst many antecedents gone before.

It also struck my friend and me that it would take little effort and money to enhance this garden area. It only requires the political will of Edinburgh Council and community volunteers to tend the flowers and plants as well as seek to maintain the tranquility of the place generally. Out of deference to those interred here, and respect for the residents whose houses surround it, the gates to the garden would only be open from a time after sunrise and locked again well before sunset. It would not be allowed to become a playpark.

A memorial of some sort to those Newhaven fishermen who died at sea could also be erected to honour what is even yet a perilous occupation.

If you have any thoughts or contributions — positive or negative — to make to this suggestion, do please get in touch with the writer at gordon.young538@o2.co.uk.

HARBOUR AREA SPRING CLEAN

WHERE:

*Meet at the Harbourside on
Pier Place*

WHEN:

Sunday 19th April

TIME:

10 am

Last year's Spring Clean was a great success with committee member Janet McArthur and a group of friends turning out to de-weed and de-litter the harbour railings and steps at Pier Place. This year we hope to repeat the exercise and extend the area for attention. We ask anyone willing to get their sleeves rolled up to come to the Harbour on Sunday 19th April at 10 am. Please bring your own brushes, hoes, spades, block scrapers, etc with you.



The more the merrier — many hands make light work and all that. We aim to finish about noon but any help, even for a short time, would be much appreciated.



Janet is coordinating the event once more. If you are attending could you please send your email or mobile phone number to Janet so that we can contact you in the unlikely event that we

need to cancel due to inclement weather? Her email address is janetmcarthur126@gmail.com

We look forward to good response. And thank you.

Note from the Editor: I have to admit to a fair bit of confusion. I had presumed that Newhaven Gala Day was something that had been celebrated for many generations as I had seen photographs of what I thought were Gala Days from the 50s and earlier. This is not so. The Newhaven Gala Day has had a fairly chequered history and, within the context of what we now celebrate, did not in fact begin until 1984 by the then Newhaven and District Community Association. The Bow-Tow therefore asked Frank Ferri, who was chairman of the community association at the time, for his recollections of



THE FIRST CHILDREN'S GALA DAY 1984

by Frank Ferri (left)

"WE HAD JUST fought a concerted campaign to preserve what we could of the character of Newhaven during the period of redevelopment.

At this point, our mission accomplished, our councillor, Tom Nisbet, suggested that having gathered this momentum and acquired a high profile, bringing the residents together, it would be sad not to capitalise on it and become a community association.

This advice was taken and we reformed as the Newhaven & District Community Association, bringing in the support and involvement of councillors of all parties. I led this group for about ten years bringing community activities to all sectors of the village.

With the village now re-developed, it then became our aim to regenerate an interest in Newhaven's past and traditions and to bring back a pride in being a part of what was once a very close community. So what better way to do this than to get the whole community involved by re-instating the crowning of the village Queen and have a mini festival lasting a whole week, culminating in the Gala on the Saturday?

This took a lot of planning and having zero funds, we had to arrange this quickly by holding Winter and Summer Fayres in the school and distributing to every pub in Newhaven wooden fund appeal boxes which a joiner I knew made up free of charge. We also appealed to businesses for donations either in cash or in goods which we could raffle.

On the big day, stalls lined Main Street from the Square to Whale Brae. In the square we had a big arctic trailer as a stage featuring a pop band, Wild West cowboys having gun fights, a Dixieland jazz band, the police putting ID marks on children's bike, pipe bands, Boys' Brigade, Scouts, Brownies and Guides.

There were other activities in the school grounds. Mark Crolla was selling burgers as was Craig Leithead from his fish office in the square. The Leith Motor Boat Club ran a Bingo and the Big Pram Race was a very popular event. This involved participants pushing a pram from the Prom Bar in the east to The Bow-Tow, Peacock Hotel, Scott's pub, Starbank Inn, Old Chain Pier finishing up at the Harbour Inn, having consumed a half pint at every pub (free, having negotiated this with the owners).

I had the honour of crowning the first Queen (designated the Newhaven Sea Queen) who was Kirsty Downie, her consort was James Rendle, flowergirl Danielle Russell and page David Herbert (see picture below).

Sadly as the years passed, the committee got smaller putting a heavy load on the shoulders of those still trying to keep this community event alive. It's a fact of life that community commitment and keeping the Gala Day alive



can only be as good as those prepared to give up their time to make things happen, plus the essential support needed from the local population and businesses."

NEWHAVEN GALA DAY 2015

The Newhaven Children's Gala is on Saturday 30th May this year. The boat should be landing into Newhaven Harbour at 12.30 approximately. Our VIP this year is Mark Crolla who used to have the shop right next door to the school. The Crollas were a long established family business in Newhaven. The Queen and Fisher King will be selected about late April or early May and an announcement will be made through the website and Facebook page.

THE LISTON LEGACY



NEWHAVEN HERITAGE received a wonderful early birthday present in the shape of 1300 slides that belonged to George Liston who had diligently recorded on film, mostly 35mm transparencies but occasionally cine film too, the life and the streetscapes of Newhaven. He witnessed with his camera the old streets of the village, both prior to and during demolition, as well as its renewal. He recorded many events that will be an asset to the tales we will have to tell our succeeding generations. And he copied a number of important vintage postcards of Old Newhaven that we can now safely store for future use.

His elder children remember, “My father gave many talks on Newhaven and its history, using the wealth of images and film that he had accumulated during some 50 years as an amateur photographer, and though he left us that visual archive as a legacy, there are few alive today that can provide the words and stories that he used to link them together for his audiences.”

We will have much work to do digitising, cataloguing and referencing them as well as tidying up the older images and, in general, getting the best out of these precious images. It is hoped to have an exhibition — probably more than one, in fact, such is the wealth of material — in the near future.

Newhaven Heritage is deeply indebted to Mae Liston and the Liston family, George, Jane Ann and Jeff.

MEET THE STEERING GROUP

Jeff Liston



IT MAY SEEM odd to have a vertebrate palaeontologist as a Newhaven Heritage Group committee member, but in my work I have had plenty of opportunity to cut giant Jurassic fish down to size, much as my grandmother, Esther Liston, the last

working Newhaven fishwife, often did. Similarly, I was one of the very last Free Fishermen of Newhaven to be registered before the organisation was wound up due to some poorly thought-through Westminster legislation. I've been a member of the movement to

restore Newhaven's Museum since the public meeting at which the non-return was discussed by council representatives, which led directly to the formation of the Newhaven Action Group. My father, George, was a longstanding advocate of Newhaven's heritage, giving many public talks, as well as helping Peter Carnie with information for decorating the former Peacock Inn, and bringing the original museum into being (the meeting that decided to establish the original Newhaven Museum was held in our family front room, many years ago...). My role on the committee is to bring something of my twenty years museum experience to bear in this campaign, and hopefully see the sculpture of my grandmother, a centerpiece of the old museum, restored to a similar place in the new incarnation.

NEXT ISSUE — Published late June 2015

ISSUE SIX of *The Bow-Tow* will include articles on *Childhood Days in Newhaven*. If you have any memories you wish to share of school holidays, uniform organisations, or sports activities or, better yet, photographs taken at the time, do please get in touch with us at Newhaven Heritage at archivist@newhavenonforth.org.uk. The deadline for this next issue is Saturday 14th June, 2015. Thank you.