

# CRAIL PRESERVATION SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2010

## **Doors Open Days - the Doocot**

Doors Open Days are weekends during September when buildings from all over Scotland are open to the public, usually those which are not normally open or parts are not open, and to which free admission is given. As part of this programme the Doocot at Roome Bay was opened on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September, 11am – 4pm. It was visited by 59 people, including 5 children. The inside has all the 575 stone nesting boxes well preserved from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. A bit of its history was explained to the visitors by Hugh Dykes and Jonathan Armitage. Numbers were a bit down on previous years, probably due to the rather damp start to the day. Many people pass the Doocot and wonder what the building is – a beacon is the most common description I have heard, even if they know, few know what it is like inside. The Doocot can be visited during the Sunday guided walks from the Museum in July and August and for the Doors Open Days. If you have not visited then make a note to see inside next year.



## **The Tree at Denburn**

In late April, we were advised that a contract had been placed to fell the mature chestnut tree at the entrance to Denburn House.

We had not received any notification of this, despite the tree being within the conservation area.

After a somewhat public demonstration, the instruction was rescinded pending further investigation.

A second opinion was obtained, funded by CPS and Manuela Calchini-Smith the owner of Westmost Cottage. Sadly, it was confirmed that the roots of the tree had been badly damaged by contractors carrying out drainage investigation work. Accordingly, the tree will be coming down during the winter.

We did make representations about the whole consultative process and have had assurances as to the future. We have also obtained an undertaking that a suitable semi-mature tree will be planted in place of the felled tree.

An elm tree in the Churchyard dropped three large branches during the hot dry spell of weather and subsequently. Fife Council has been informed by the Kirk Property Convener and action requested.

If you know of any other significant tree that is in poor condition or endangered then please let us know.

## **Tree Protection in Crail**

There are various reasons why some trees are protected by law. They can be protected because of their quality, their rarity, their historic value, because they are a habitat for wildlife or because they form part of a grouping deemed important to the local landscape or townscape. Whatever the reason it is important that people, and property owners in particular, know which trees are protected.

The Local Authority is responsible for designating which trees are to be protected. This may be through a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), a Planning Condition or because a tree or group of trees is located within a Conservation Area.

Trees within the Crail Conservation Area are protected by the Conservation Area status and the Fife Council Planning Authority is responsible for enforcing this tree protection.

It is an offence to cut down, uproot, top, lop or wilfully damage or destroy a protected tree without permission from the Planning Authority. Offenders could be subject to a fine of up to £20,000.

If you own property within the Conservation area and you are planning to carry out tree removal, lopping or topping you should consult Fife Council Tree Protection prior to carrying out any work. The Council will advise you what information they will require. If you wish to remove a tree completely they will expect you to provide a reason for this. It may be that the tree is diseased and unstable and providing a risk to health and safety or it may be that the tree has outgrown the size of the garden and is no longer appropriate in scale or it may be in the way of an extension to property.

As a general guide you will be expected to:

- formally notify the Council of your intention to remove, lop or top a tree, forms are available on line on Fife Direct or contact by the Council by phone and a copy will be posted to you.
- provide a report from a tree surgeon especially if the tree is diseased or presenting a risk to health and safety.

The Council will have 6 weeks to respond to your request and will either approve your proposal (usually with some conditions) or refuse your proposal and may even pass a TPO.

If your tree is protected by a Tree Preservation Order, and you intend to carry out work, again you should apply for consent, you will have to apply on line where forms available for you to complete or can be sent if no access to the internet is available. In processing TPO applications, Fife Council has 2 months in which to make a decision. If major work or tree felling is intended, it is advisable to employ a qualified tree surgeon to provide a report on the tree and this should be included with any application.

If you do wish to remove a mature tree it is very worthwhile to replace the tree with a new one and to advise the Council that it is your intention so to do; one of the Council's aims is to perpetuate tree cover, and an offer to replace the tree can only help your application for approval in both the Conservation Area and TPOs.

If you want to carry out major work on a tree or trees make sure you obtain quotes from two or three contractors well qualified in arboriculture and who can provide references and if appropriate certificates of competence and are insured.

If time is not of the essence then work on trees is best carried out in late Autumn or Winter when birds have stopped nesting.

On line – [www.fifedirect.org.uk](http://www.fifedirect.org.uk) – planning application forms – tree works – tree work form & guidance notes.

Phone – 08451 551122 ext 473746

## **Floral Success**

The Society has made a major effort over the last couple of years to contribute to the attractiveness of our Royal Burgh by financing the hanging baskets along the main streets and contributing to the replanting in the Victoria Gardens (see below). This has been rewarded by a **silver-gilt** award in Beautiful Fife – Best Kept Towns and Villages 2010. We wish to congratulate all those who planted and look after the hanging baskets, the tubs and the Victoria Gardens.

You will be aware of the super effort that Tom Hutchon has put into revitalizing the rockery and borders in Victoria Gardens. More improvements are planned to take place during the Autumn and

will hopefully make the Gardens an even more attractive place to visit and enjoy. Paths are to be re-laid with tarr. The borders overlooking the burn will be planted with hedging in November. New borders will be dug adjacent to the wall along the St. Andrews Road and will be planted with 2000 daffodils in September and should be in bloom next spring - these bulbs are being funded by a gift from the Crail Preservation Society. To improve the environment in the Gardens we hope that Fife Council will crown more of the Sycamore trees this winter and improve the level of light at ground level and thus encourage grass growth beneath the trees.

## **A Crail Scrapbook – book launch**

On 20<sup>th</sup> July, the launch of the publication of "A Crail Scrapbook" by John Murray, took place at the Jerdan Gallery. This is a fascinating book of the main developments in the history of Crail, and descriptions of its buildings, from earliest times to the 1960s. The book was produced by the recently formed Crail History Group, with some financial support from the Crail Preservation Society. To quote Prof Paul Wilkinson who wrote the introduction, "All who wish to know more about the beautiful and historic Royal Burgh of Crail through the ages will learn much from Jock Murray's *Scrapbook*". On sale from the Jerdan Gallery and Crail Museum at about £10.

Another book has just been published by Crail Museum Trust, "Looking Back – Crail in the 1920's and 30's", a compilation of memories of Gordon Douglas, Tommy Richardson, George Downie and Ian Murray who grew up in Crail in this period. It is anecdotes of people, places and the things they got up. On sale at the Museum for £9.50. Both these books are ideal Christmas presents.

## **Membership**

It would be very helpful if some members were willing to receive Newsletters, notices about the AGM or other information by email. This would be particularly true of members who live outwith Crail and for whom the Society has to stand the cost of postage. If you are willing to be contacted by email please send your address to [armitage@talk21.com](mailto:armitage@talk21.com). Your email address will not be passed to any other body. You may email or write at any time in the future cancelling this permission. NB Membership Secretary may change from time to time and a contact address will be given in any email communication.

The Society has 282 paid up members, this is slightly down on 2009 when we had a membership drive, unfortunately some have not renewed their subscriptions, but is still up on 2008. For anyone who finds remembering to renew their subscriptions a problem then why not become a Life Member when your subscription becomes due at the AGM next year. Completing a Gift Aid form can increase the benefit to the Society if you pay UK income tax.

## **Fund Raising**

Two events were held during the summer, the Auction of Collectables on 4<sup>th</sup> June and the Jazz Evening at Wormiston on 26<sup>th</sup> June. David Jerdan took the podium for the auction of donated items. He conducted the auction with a very professional and entertaining manner, raising a net £950. It is intended to repeat this venture next June.

The Jazz Evening was again a very enjoyable evening with many members and friends enjoying a picnic on the lawn in front of Wormiston House while listening to some excellent jazz provided by The Major Groove, and raising a further £240. Just having a single band and the picnics on the same side of the house seemed to be an excellent format. Next year there may be more ambitious developments with alternatives to taking your own picnic – watch this space!

## **Wine and Cheese**

Please note in your diaries the imminent must-attend event,

- Wine and Cheese in the Town Hall on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 7.30pm.
- Tickets £5, from the Jerdan Gallery, the Honeypt, committee members, or at the door.
- There will be a grand raffle.
- Donations of cheese and other nibbles are always most welcome.