



Lasswade District Civic Society

Newsletter

SPRING 2018



First known watercolour of Mavisbank House

Chairman's Report

It is a great honour to have been elected as Chair of the Society. My wife, Val, and I moved from Edinburgh to Lasswade 4 years ago and have loved every minute of those 4 years, our only regret, perhaps, being that we didn't make the move sooner! As a retired solicitor and now a Tribunal judge, I hope to be able to use all my experience to benefit the Society and the community as a whole, and am greatly looking forward to my term in office.

I am delighted to be able to lead such a dedicated and enthusiastic team. That team comprises not just the tireless Committee members, but also the representatives who go round collecting your subscriptions and delivering the Newsletter and, of course, the army of volunteers who help to keep our community looking so good by helping with litter picks and other initiatives.

This year, our focus will be on keeping a watching brief on planning applications, in what will be challenging times as we strive to preserve the "village feel" of Lasswade. House building threatens to engulf the remaining rural areas of Midlothian, with little sign of the additional infrastructure provision which will be necessary to support the anticipated population expansion. I promise to do all I can to ensure the views of our members are heeded so that any new housing in Lasswade respects the traditional style that is such an important feature of our village and to preserve the precious balance between the built environment and green space.

We are also looking to develop a strategy to tackle the increasing problems of litter dumping and fly-tipping in the area and will be making representations to the Council about the worsening issue of speeding traffic and the danger that presents to pedestrians and cyclists. Please let us know of any particular problems you have encountered or matters you would like us to take up on

your behalf. We are your Society!

George Clark

Secretary's Report

Welcome to the Spring 2018 edition of the Civic Society Newsletter. We are focussing on the diverse areas of the World visited by our current Members, whilst considering the rich Social and Architectural History of Lasswade. I hope this will be reflected in the entries to our newly launched Photographic Competition.

A number of Members have expressed an interest in ensuring that the Grounds of Mavisbank remain accessible to the Public, regardless of any planned development of the site. As the central aim of the Society is to 'work towards stimulating public interest in, and caring for, the beauty, history and character of Lasswade and its surroundings', it is incumbent on us, to ensure that we take an interest in any proposals which affect the Valley in which Mavisbank House sits. It appears that the Mavisbank Trust are in the process of making a funding application, in order to build on the site. If you have a particular interest in the future of Mavisbank, please contact us.

Lasswade has a rich cultural history and we plan to explore this further through collaboration with the Lasswade and Bonnyrigg Historical Society. Again if anyone has a particular interest in Local History, please contact us. Details on the final page of this Newsletter.

*Rosemary Mackay,
Secretary*

A different way to experience Africa

If you are looking to volunteer with, or support a Cause with a difference! I suggest you consider the Leith based **VINE TRUST**.

The Vine Trust has projects in Peru and Tanzania which are both land and water based. These projects involve supporting the local community with hands-on building work and providing health care to more isolated communities.

The Trust was established 30 years ago and for the first 15 years, worked on community based building projects. It then began to provide medical care and to facilitate this, they acquired and re fitted a ship and used it to reach remote communities. They initially operated in the Amazon and in 2014 acquired another ship called the Jubilee Hope.

You may have seen the documentary on the Jubilee Hope's journey from Edinburgh to Mombasa in Kenya, via the Indian Ocean and the subsequent road journey when it was taken by lorry inland to Kisumu on Lake Victoria. It was then sailed to its



Environmental matters

As you will see elsewhere in this Newsletter, one of the LDCS's New Years' resolutions is to devise and implement new and effective ways to reduce the amount of litter and fly-tipping in the Lasswade area. We would welcome suggestions from members as to how this could be achieved.

As much of the litter originates from fast-food outlets, we plan to work with local fast-food retailers to devise means to reduce inappropriate discarding of fast-food packaging and containers. For example, anti-litter promotions within the outlets and on packaging. The introduction of re-usable

hot beverage cups whereby the customer would pay less for their drinks if they returned cups to be re-filled has also been discussed. This would only be a small step, but hopefully one in the right direction.

Other suggestions are always welcome.

I also wanted to ask if any-one knew who the major culprits are in terms of fly-tipping, but perhaps that is not appropriate for the newsletter. Is it worth mentioning the idea of putting up signs in the worst areas to remind perpetrators of the fines for fly-tipping?

Mavisbank

We had an interesting Talk from Pete McDougall, Project Development Officer, for the multi million pound, redevelopment of Saughton Hall Park Edinburgh and Historian Joe McGuigan.



Saughton Hall Asylum, moved to Mavisbank House in 1877. It proved to be an exclusive and innovative Institution. It's early Physicians were Members of the Aesculapian Club, they believed that 'healing was an Art as well as a Science'.

An example of how these principles were applied, was in the development of Horticultural Therapy. Indeed records show

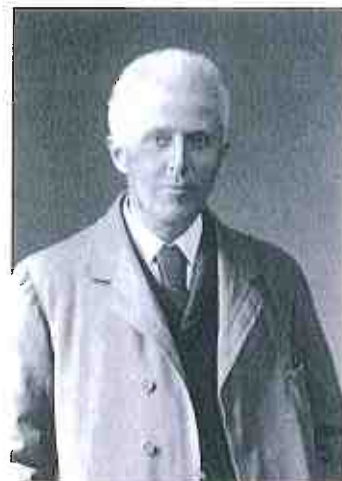
that Saughton Hall was credited with developing Occupational Therapy as a therapeutic discipline.

Many people have spoken of the tranquility and restorative nature of the Mavisbank Grounds. These feelings are reflected in Literature by none other than Charles Dickens.

The Aesculapians and Dickens were in agreement as Sue Stuart-Smith posits, 'In Great Expectations, Miss Haversham's Garden is 'desolate and neglected', but by the end of the novel, Pip realises how 'in seclusion, she had secluded herself from a thousand natural and healing influences'. (Telegraph 31.5.14)

The Head Gardener shown in the photo worked at Mavisbank, as Horticulturist and Therapist for more than 40 years.

Dr Joseph Bell (photographed) who was a Medical Superintendent at Mavisbank, was used as the basis for the character of Sherlock Holmes. Dr Bell taught Conan-Doyle at Edinburgh Medical School.



land or lake based, and they are there to also provide support to the volunteers.

On my African experience, there were a crew who turned their hands to a number of roles and tasks, including ship maintenance, providing safe passage, and daily tasks such as setting up the make-shift clinics, acting as interpreters and transporting locals from the island to the boat. The different health care services provided were Community Health, Dentist and Optometrist.

We also had a doctor, triage nurse and HIV project coordinator, lab technician and pharmacist to support these services.

The work also included health promotion such as, health and hygiene, infection control, disease prevention and HIV testing.

For me, it was a case of going 'back to my roots' after 40 years in Scotland, as I was born in Tanzania and brought up in Kenya so it allowed me to brush up on my Kiswahili, make new friends and immerse myself in the 'old Africa'. It was wonderful to be a part of local communities as they went about their daily routine working as shop keepers in their dukas (shops), tending to their arable 'shambas', dua kalis (mechanics tending to the engines for the ferries and fishermen's boats) with their conversations and continually singing as they went about their daily business or in church.

The sights and smells of our new found temporary home: soaking in the sunshine and tropical rainstorms, the beautiful African sunrises and sunsets, the galaxy of stars that showered the sky every night to the water, were a piece of heaven.

The Tanzanians are some of the friendliest people that you will ever encounter, always greeting you with a lovely open smile despite their concerns, challenges or medical issues. They are



also the most patient of patients, always polite and willing to wait their turn on the island for their clinic appointment. The joy, even on the faces of the adults, as they experience bubbles being blown and colouring books being given out to the children as they waited for their appointment on board the boat, was delightful.

On average, the time from consultation to investigations and leaving with their prescription took 2 hours which is something even the NHS could learn from!

I'm sure, like me, your first reaction is to consider this well beyond your comfort -zone or a non-starter in terms of cost, however I can reassure you that being part of a team which brings such valuable services to the local people is one you will look back on with many fond memories and will cherish for the rest of your life.



Updates

The Midlothian Local Development Plan was adopted, following a long period of debate with Scottish Government, on 17th November 2017. The Plan provides the development strategy and policy framework for the next 10 years and is the basis for determining Planning Applications for Midlothian.

Find the MLDP @ [http://midlothianconsultobjective.co.uk/portal/midlothian local development plan 2017](http://midlothianconsultobjective.co.uk/portal/midlothian%20local%20development%20plan%202017)

Pollution Survey in Lasswade:

Results from the year-long Survey, implemented in January 2017, are expected within the next few months. We will advise you of the outcome.

Traffic Issues in Lasswade:

Speeding traffic and dangerous driving continue to be persistent problems, throughout Lasswade. Members are advised to log any incidents they become aware of, noting the date and time and a description of what took place. We would be grateful if you would forward a note of incidents to Rosemary @ dequinceyrose@aol.com by 20th February 2018. We will collate these findings and forward them to Midlothian Council, with whom we are in discussion over persistent traffic problems.

Photography Competition

Images of Lasswade

This competition is open to everyone living in Lasswade or Bonnyrigg. There will be a First Prize of £100 and £10 each for 2nd and 3rd place. The purpose of the Competition is to build a portfolio of high quality images of Lasswade. If you wish to enter, please contact Rosemary through the Enquiries section of our website www.lasswadedistrictcivicsociety.com

Entrants would give LDCS the right to use and store submitted images. The closing date is 31st October 2018

Dates for the Diary

- Reps party Sunday 18th February 2018 from 2 - 4 pm
- Annual Party Friday 2nd March 2018 from 7.30pm at St Leonard's Church Hall
- Clean - up Sunday 8th April 2018 from 2.30 - 4pm meeting Community Garden Lasswade
- AGM Wednesday 25th April 2018 from 7.30pm at St Leonard's Church Hall

Make a date with Madagascar



We are delighted that Prof David Sugden and Pete Cain have agreed to Speak at our AGM on Wednesday 25th April. They are going to share their experiences of visiting Madagascar in 2017. This will be an opportunity to hear more about the wildlife and bio-diversity of a very intriguing destination.

The Annual Party

will be held on Friday 2nd of March 2018
in St Leonard's Church Hall from 7.30pm

Drinks and Nibbles will be served

Tickets £5 each

And Finally...



We need YOU as our next Treasurer!

We are looking to recruit a new Treasurer. Our current treasurer Adam Lansdown is returning to Edinburgh but will be available for a comprehensive handover. It is not an arduous task but you will perform a vital role in running the Society.

Please contact Rosemary at dequinceyrose@aol.com for more details.

Contact details:

Through the contact section of our Website www.lasswadedistrictcivicsociety.com
Or to Rosemary Mackay (Secretary LDCS) @ dequinceyrose@aol.com