

Chairman's Introduction



Welcome to the Spring issue of the Newsletter!

We have been making steady progress since last Autumn. The website (www.eskvalleytrust.org) is up and running and we are most grateful to SNH for supporting this initiative

We have joined with local Geology groups to help publish a new pamphlet on the Geology of the Esk valleys and the electronic version is on our website. The North Esk Way has been waymarked between Penicuik and Lasswade. We have now secured the funding to create and erect an information board in the Carlops car park and waymark the North Esk Way between the source and Newhills. And at long last there is now excellent access to Mavisbank House and its grounds from the North Esk Way! The latter improvements, carried out with funding fronted by Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust, follows years of encouragement (!) by both the Esk Valley Trust and the Lasswade and District Civic Society. We are most grateful to ELGT for their initiative.



New path under construction at Polton along the Esk

The progress above illustrates effective ways in which the Esk Valley Trust can work with local communities and organisations. Clearly, local groups know best what needs to be achieved in their area. The make up of the Esk Valley Trust, representing all communities and people in the Esk valleys, can bring a wider context and thus add clout to the local arguments. Further, the constitution of the Trust opens up additional sources of funds to make things happen on the ground. At present we are

considering how best we can develop this form of joint approach to particular projects.

An example might be the problems of opening up the North Esk Way at Eskbank. The Borders railway has closed an important pedestrian access route to Ironmills Park and cuts across our preferred route of the North Esk Way. (The route can be seen on the website showing the map of the North Esk Way). Perhaps we and local groups could explore an idea, first suggested 12 years ago, and erect a suspended walkway beneath the railway viaduct, thus gaining access to Ironmills Park and continuity to the North Esk Way. A focussed project such as this lends itself to outside funding. And there are many other such projects along the South and North Esk valleys.



Glenesk Viaduct above Ironmills Park at Dalkeith showing work due to the Borders Rail project – photo courtesy of railbrit.co.uk Ewan Crawford

Photo Competition

We encourage people to submit photographs of the Esk Valley for the competition with a closing date of October 1st, 2014. The prizes have been generously donated by Kate Duthie. With the spring, summer and autumn to come, we look forward to a large gallery of seasonal photos. Details are on the web site.

We welcome new members (and renewals from existing members!). The more members we have the stronger we are. It is £10 for a family membership and £5 for individual membership. You can download a membership form on the website, send a cheque, or pay by Paypal. You can also join using cash at the AGM on 13th May.

This meeting is our chance to welcome Professor Roger Crofts who has moved to the Esk Valley and will talk about our heritage and its future.

We are indebted to two Directors who are retiring after serving on the Executive Committee for many years. Kate Duthie is a founding Director of the Trust and has been a staunch and wise source of inspiration for 12 years. Jane Eckersall has played a further invaluable role in helping us modernise our activities, particularly in relation to the website and the North Esk Way. Happily, both will continue to take an active interest in the Trust. We are delighted to welcome Jan Jerome, formerly Chair of the Lasswade and District Civic Society, to be a new member of the Executive Committee. If you would like to join us, please approach us! We would particularly welcome help with membership matters.

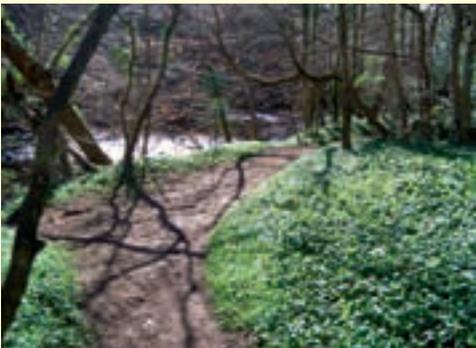
David Sugden (Chair)

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Esk Valley Trust will be held on Tuesday 13th May at 7.00pm

We will deal with the 'business' of the AGM as succinctly as possible then enjoy our **Guest Speaker - Professor Roger Crofts** giving a talk entitled -

'The Esk Valley: our heritage and its future'



We are delighted to welcome Professor Roger Crofts, who has worked in government and was Chief Executive of Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) for many years. Now that he has moved to the valley, it gives us a chance to hear his expert views.

The evening will include light refreshments and the opportunity to chat with friends old and new.

All are welcome. Please invite friends and family who may be interested.

South Esk Walk

Below is a description of a walk for anyone who likes to explore along the Esk.

Millwood to Roseberry circuit 2 ½ hrs mud and steep trackless woodland.

	Waypoint	Reference
1	Park car	NT 31842 57442
2	Stile	NT 31593 28332
3	Old beech tree	NT 31390 57222
4	Quarry	NT 31172 57141
5	Plantation	NT 31320 57215
6	Climb out of gorge	NT 31471 57944
7	Beech marks path to river	NT 31531 58043
8	Pipe across river	NT 31560 58277
9	Stile	NT 31593 28332

This is a short but strenuous afternoon walk along an unfrequented part of the South Esk. Starting at a gate by the road (first right turn south of Temple – waypoint 1) head along the edge of a field to a stile (waypoint 2). Cross the stile into the steep river gorge following a faint path, barely distinguishable from animal tracks. At the old beech tree (waypoint 3) the steep bank becomes impassable, so cross the fence and follow the field boundary until you can cross back into the gorge.

The Roseberry dam and spillway comes into sight. Cross the dam on the road. On the north side a well-defined track leads to a disused quarry (waypoint 4). A steep muddy path leads out of the quarry by the river and continues for another 200 meters until the gorge opens out at a dense plantation with numerous plastic tree protectors (waypoint 5).

An indistinct path leads through the plantation until the gorge narrows. A track on the field boundary above river can be followed to an old beech tree (waypoint 7) and a track down to the river. Nimble walkers can easily cross the river at a pipe bridging the river (waypoint 8).

A steep muddy path leads to the top of the gorge, Temple in view across the fields. Follow the field boundaries south back to your starting point. Or if you have more time and energy, stay by the river after crossing the pipe and enjoy the solitude of a wild river walk into Temple before returning to your starting point.

Midlothian Access Forum

Shelagh Jenkins is the EVT representative on the Access Forum in Midlothian.

The Access Forum has a key role in managing the outdoor access. There are various foundations laid down in The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, which establishes a general, right of access to virtually all land and inland water. At the same time, the Act imposes the obligation of responsible behavior on those who take access to land or water and on those who own or occupy the land or water.

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code approved by Parliament, establishes the three key principles of respect, care and responsibility, and gives guidance on what constitutes responsible behavior.

The Forum primarily advises the access authority, and any other person or body consulting the Forum on matters relating to the:

- (a) Exercise of access rights
- (b) Existence and delineation of Rights of Way (R.O.W's)

- (c) The drawing up and adoption of a plan for a system of core paths.

Also to offer, where accepted, to give assistance to parties who are in dispute about

- (a) The exercise of access rights
- (b) The existence or delineation of Rights of Ways
- (c) Drawing up, adoption of a plan for a system of core paths
- (d) The use of core paths.

Forum meets once a quarter. The Core Group consists of members from Midlothian Council, Pentland Ranger Services, Scottish Land and Estates, National Farmers Union, Scottish Natural Heritage, British Horse Society, Cycling, Disabled Access, Ramblers Association, Scotways (Scottish Rights of Way and Access), EVT, and the Midlothian Federation of Community Councils.

CORE PATHS:



Footpath sign at entrance to Hewan Wood showing the Esk Valley Way symbol as part of the core path network.

What is a Core Path? The definition – ‘Paths, waterways or any other means of crossing land to facilitate the exercise of rights under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 which are sufficient for the purpose of getting the public reasonable access throughout their area’.

The Core Paths Plan, which is now 5 years old is presented as a culmination of all the consultation carried out and is now to be reviewed to coincide with the review of the Midlothian Local Plan.

Core Paths will:-

- Be anything from a tarmac path to a grassy field margin
- Link into and support the wider network of paths that already exist in the area
- Tend to be the most popular paths and/or busy routes that link communities or provide access to local sites.
- Help to manage public access in environmentally sensitive areas or help farmers and land managers to manage access on their land.

Core Paths will also be:

- Signposted
- Free from obstructions
- Publicised in a variety of ways, eg Council Website
- Subject to protection and amended only in exceptional circumstances.

A full list and maps of the Core Paths in Midlothian can be found on the Midlothian Council website:

www.midlothiandownloads/495/parks_gardens_and_open_spaces

Car Park at Newbattle Abbey/ Lord Ancrum's Woods

Walkers at Newbattle will be aware of problems parking along the Main drive which have resulted in damage to the grass and cars getting stuck due to the wet weather. Midlothian Council has approved a plan by the Forestry Commission for a car park and path which will be situated down the road to the left of the main drive.



Drive at Newbattle showing verges under repair

EVT Members needed

We want to increase the membership of the Esk Valley Trust as we need people to achieve our aims.

The aims of the Trust are to -

- Stimulate public interest in the Esk Valleys
- Care for the beauty, history and character of the river Valleys
- Encourage sustainable public amenities for the benefit of its local communities and others
- Support and augment the activities of local groups and national and local authorities
- Promote a long-distance path route to be known as the 'Esk Way'

Please mention the Esk Valley Trust to any friends, family and colleagues you think may be interested. They can contact us by email and join through the new website.



EVT Website

www.eskvalleytrust.org

Remember to use our website and please give us feedback or ideas for material on it.

Esk Valley Trust Executive Committee

Director and Chairman	David Sugden	Loanhead
Company Secretary and Treasurer	Rennie Frazer	Fairmilehead
Directors	Shelagh Jenkins	Polton/ Loanhead
	Jan Jerome	Lasswade
	John Oldham	Polton/ Loanhead
	Peter Raine	Carlops
Secretary	Pat Frankland	Newbattle

Contact us at:

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www.eskvalleytrust.org enquiries@eskvalleytrust.org

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A company limited by guarantee (SC 18056) and a registered Scottish Charity (SC031951)