

Chairman's Introduction



Welcome to the Spring issue of the Newsletter!

First, we would like to thank those who responded to our questionnaire about the aspirations and activities of the Trust in the next decade. You will see in another item by John Oldham

how we are focussing our priorities on completing and promoting the Esk Ways, enhancing awareness of the valleys to local communities, linking with other local groups, and caring for Hewan Wood for the benefit of all. At all times we welcome new ideas (and members!) via the website or email to Victoria Bullock at: enquiries@eskvalleytrust.org

We are learning that one of the real values of the website is that it helps build an archive of letters, maps and initiatives that is available to all. Such a record is significant because it overcomes the Achilles heel of many voluntary organisations with constantly changing officers, namely that it is difficult to maintain continuity in making or following up a case. For this reason we are including significant letters and background papers on the website, either under News and Views or by location. Then of course we can use the website for fun and read about the history and natural history of the valleys!

Last October we wrote to the Duke of Buccleuch about restrictive signs barring pedestrian and cycle access to several walks and the problem of access in and out of Dalkeith Country Park towards the north and the sea. The Duke has written (15/12/14) to say that the signs will be replaced with others "which aim to educate rather than restrict" access. But there is no solution yet to the second issue that arose after the estate blocked an informal hole in the wall. We believe that there is a sensible local solution that will allow the pedestrian Esk

Way to continue to the sea from the estate and we will keep exploring a solution.

Alison Chisholm (Lothians and Fyfe Green Network Partnership) is completing the next walking leaflet of the North Esk Way between Lasswade and Eskbank, also including the location of bus stops and other linking roads and paths. These maps are designed to be downloaded or accessed in the field. There are links to points of interest developed in full on the EVT website. In this particular leaflet we show a diversion to avoid the disputed Melville High Drive section of the North Esk Way. The diversion has the merit of including access to the café of the Kingsacre Golf Club.

We are indebted to Roger Kelly for his talk on 11th November, 2014 entitled The Lost Garden of Penicuik. I know that a lot of people, inspired by the talk, have since visited the garden. On Friday, 6th March Professor Jean Manson wowed us with a fantastic sequence of photographs of wild life ranging from Africa and Alaska to our own Esk Valley. Again a wonderful evening.

We have had several enquiries from school teachers and students seeking permission to work on projects in Hewan Wood. The answer is YES and we have written to all Midlothian schools, pointing out that we bought the land for the public good and are delighted to see it used for education. There is no need to seek special permission. We simply ask visitors take their rubbish back with them.

Our next meeting is the AGM at 7.00 pm on Tuesday, 5th May. We are delighted to welcome Dr Hermione Cockburn, new Science Director at Our Dynamic Earth and BBC Science Presenter, who will give an illustrated talk with the intriguing title: *Exploding beaches, giant trilobites and Edinburgh's geological hero: stories from a dynamic planet.*

David Sugden (Chair)



ESK VALLEY TRUST AGM

Following a usually brief AGM we look forward to the illustrated talk:



Exploding beaches, giant trilobites and Edinburgh's geological hero: stories from a dynamic planet

by **Dr Hermione Cockburn,**

Scientific Director at Our Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh

in **St David's Church Hall, Dalkeith**

on **Tuesday, 5th May, 2015 at 7.00pm**

We are excited to have Dr Cockburn coming along so do bring friends and family to hear her. Here is her background - Dr Hermione Cockburn, who gained her PhD at the University of Edinburgh, has worked in Australia, Africa and Antarctica researching how landscapes evolve. She has presented programmes for the BBC including Coast, Rough Science, The Nature of Britain and written a book, Fossil Detectives: Discovering Prehistoric Britain to accompany the BBC2 palaeontology series she presented. On Radio 4 she's covered subjects ranging from lead pollution and lasers to reservoirs and greenhouses, and presented an award winning series on bacteria. She is passionate about inspiring anyone who will listen with stories about the Earth.

What next for The Esk Valley Trust? – how YOU might help.

Many thanks to those who responded to the questionnaire in the last Newsletter asking 'What next for the Esk Valley Trust?'. Although the number of responses was quite small all agreed with our original objectives and the changes to the priorities.

It is really helpful to have the views of members as we plan to progress the intentions of the Trust. It is also reassuring to feel that the original aspirations of the Trust are standing the test of time.

The plans for the future emphasise three things:

- **(Continuing to) make the Esk Ways complete, well known and well used**
- **Being part of the means to enhance local community awareness of the natural amenities of the Esk valleys (and their natural and social histories)**
- **Ongoing care and 'development' of the Hewan Wood for the benefit of current and future generations**

Each of these activities implies an awareness and enjoyment of the resources of the Esk Valley amongst the people who live, work and/or visit here. A good measure of the success of the Trust's activities would simply be the number of people who value and enjoy the many aspects of the Esk Valley's physical, social and cultural environments. Measuring such things may not be feasible but the more people who are aware of the various features of our area, and are linked to it through the membership of this Trust, the more likely it is that we are making progress with our main aims.

So, getting more people interested in and involved in the Trust's activities is important.

To move in this direction we see the need:

- **To increase awareness of the Trust in local communities and increase its membership**
- **To link the actions of the Trust beneficially to other organisations to accelerate achievement of our goals**

Easy to say, but perhaps less easy to achieve.

This is where all current members of the Trust can help – particularly when it comes to expanding our membership. If every member were to encourage a few friends, neighbours or work colleagues to join the Trust – and to be more aware of the delights of the Esk Valley (that might be helped by knowing about our web site (www.eskvalleytrust.org – always a good source of information) – progress would accelerate. It would be particularly good to increase the number of younger people and families who can gain and share interests in the Esk Valley through the EVT.

The more members that we have the more ideas are likely to come forward to progress the goals of the EVT.

Please help if you can by 'spreading the word' – or by letting us have your ideas about how to give the activities of the EVT, and enjoyment of the Esk Valley, a boost.

We would be delighted to hear from you at:
enquiries@eskvalleytrust.org

Borders Railway and access to Ironmills Park

This is an update on an issue that we raised in the Spring Newsletter of 2014, namely how best can the North Esk Way cross the Borders railway and gain access to Ironmills Park, Eskbank. In 2014 we linked up with the cycling and local community to see if we could resurrect an idea suggested 13 years ago and go for a riverside route slung beneath the railway viaduct. The 2014 letter and the positive response from Midlothian Council are on the EVT website under News & Events (www.eskvalleytrust.org). The proposal would solve two issues of both local and regional importance: (a) the North Esk Way and cycle ways become linked to Ironmills Park and (b) we restore the access to Ironmills Park lost to the railway.

As a report on progress, we reproduce part of a draft map of the project, which is supported by Bill Kerr-Smith of the Eskbank and Newbattle Community Council with voluntary professional work by Chris Matson. The route links to the Melville Castle section of the North Esk Way via Gilmerton Road (B6392). It then runs across land owned by RBS past the old Roman baths at Elginhaugh before swinging beneath Eskbank Viaduct to Ironmills Park. Neil Douglas (RBS, 2014) felt the bank would see the granting of rights to cross their field as welcome PR. So this seems a good time for the local community and Esk Valley Trust to back this initiative.



Photo Courtesy of Dave Henniker

Geocaching – Treasure Hunting in the Esk Valley and beyond!

If you are looking for a way of getting the family out and about now that the weather is getting better, what about trying Geocaching?

It is real life treasure hunting and all you need is a smart phone or a GPS device. It involves looking for small 'treasures' or 'caches' in an area. A cache is a container of any size containing a log book for you to fill in that you have found the cache, and a treasure or trinket which you either leave in place or can take or swap, according to the instructions given with the cache.

There are over 70,000 caches in the UK and you will be amazed at how many there are in the Esk Valley area: Roslin Glen and Newbattle have lots!

To set out on your treasure hunt you need to look online at one of the web sites on geocaching. [www. Geocaching.com](http://www.Geocaching.com) is free and helpful. It gives you a list of caches in your area. You can then look up or download the details of one you wish to hunt for and set off. The coordinates will take you to the general area and then you have to hunt. There may be clues

as to where to look and what you are looking for.

This is a great adventure for all the family and when you find the lovely caches and read about their origins, then you will be charmed and appreciative of others who participate in such a lovely activity. Happy hunting.



Esk Valley Trust Executive Committee

Chairman

David Sugden

Loanhead

Company Secretary and Treasurer

Rennie Frazer

Fairmilehead

Pat Frankland

Newbattle

Shelagh Jenkins

Polton

John Oldham

Loanhead

Peter Raine

Carlops

Jan Jerome

Lasswade

Administrator:

Victoria Bullock

Roslin

Contact us at:

The Esk Valley Trust, Victoria Bullock, c/o Edinburgh and Lothians' Green Space Trust,
108/11 Swanston Road, Edinburgh, EH10 7DS

Email - enquiries@eskvalleytrust.org
www.eskvalleytrust.org

Esk Valley Trust Registered Scottish Charity SCO31951

Printed by Graphic Impressions, Eskbank 0131 654 0521