

Below is an excerpt from an upcoming article on former Penicuik resident and scientist James Cossar Ewart, the full article and others will be available on the Project website www.penicuikheritage.org.uk in the coming weeks.

“Between the years 1895-1905, Professor Ewart lived at The Bungalow, the building which is now the Navaar Hotel. Just down the street from The Bungalow is Craigiebiel House which Ewart himself commissioned acting as his own laboratory of experiments. It was within these grounds of 50 Bog Road that Ewart performed his most notable study, breeding hybrid zebras to assess the genetic make up of foals. Ewart wanted to properly analyse the extent of which prominent genes from a sire can infiltrate into future offspring from a dam. At Craigiebiel House, Ewart bred a male Burchell zebra with a female pony to create a horse-zebra hybrid. Later Ewart bred the mare which had produced the zebra-horse hybrid with a pony only to find no zebra-like markings had been carried through by the previous sire. This experiment successfully proved the theory from the Greeks of telegony, that the offspring of a female species may carry genetics from previous mates, was completely false. These results on the hybridisation of species and the complexities of various hereditary traits were published in The Penicuik Experiments (1899).”

Comments and Feedback received from the Survey sent out with the last Newsletter

We were asking for feedback on the project in order to increase awareness and to encourage a higher uptake in the building grants and participation in training. A number of people filled in the Newsletter questionnaire and we had 32 responses to the online survey monkey.

Summarising the most frequent comments:

- The grant intervention rate needs to be increased to improve take up and making the grant process more understandable
- More publicity and social media presence is needed to raise awareness
- The town centre should be promoted more and a heritage trail should be developed
- The structures in St Mungo's church yard should be restored and the Hearse House used as a small exhibition space
- Engage more with young people and stimulate interest in construction skills training



Caption: The Story Tellers, Ron and Fergus at Mac A Story

The Project Archivist

Sean Watson the project archivist has continued during the Covid restrictions to work remotely with the Penicuik Historical Society on the digitisation of their collection of images and documents.

Due to the inability to carry out physical archive work, attention of the archivist project has turned to the creation of online content, a substantial amount of which shall be made available throughout April. Working with volunteers, archive material, researchers and storytellers, a mixed form of media shall be made accessible for free for both those with a passionate and passing interest in local history. Material will include videos, cartoons, articles and kid's worksheets which can be used both at home or in a classroom setting.

The first article that was produced was on the French prisoners of war who were imprisoned in Penicuik Paper Mills in 1811. The story is illustrated with cartoons about the sea battles , the forced march from Edinburgh to Penicuik and escaping from the mills .



The second article is about the “Penicuik Handy Guide” published in 1900 by John P Thompson a Penicuik Chemist . The guide promoted the health benefits of the town , located in an attractive setting below the Pentland hills with easy transport links (it had a railway at the time).It praises the town , branding it as a health resort. The story is illustrated with cartoons, the journey on the railway, healthy countryside walks and rides out and the opportunity to relax and play games.

Traditional Construction Skills Training



The training plan was published last spring, 2020. The first phase was delivered last March but then with the first and subsequent lockdowns the plan has been put on hold. We are now discussing with our training provider's, Edinburgh College and Craig Frew Conservation Ltd to resurrect the plan once the schools are back in action .Hopefully this will take place later in the year and we can then update and republish the plan .



Penicuik Townscape Heritage (TH) and Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS)



NEWSLETTER #4

This newsletter gives a brief update and highlights some of the issues that are affecting the scheme due to the Covid-19 crisis. The results of the survey that was carried out last summer are reported and the subsequent action taken as a result of suggestions made. Some of the community and education work is also featured.

Grant approved for the Pen-y-coe Press building 1-7 Bridge Street



The grant award is for roof repairs and restoration, including chimneys and rainwater goods, taking off the cement render on the front to expose natural stone beneath and restore and repoint the stonework. Window repairs and replacement with traditional sash and case timber windows, repairs to dormer windows and shop front improvements on the ground floor will also be carried out.

This is a high priority project within the scheme.

The grant work to **4/6 Bridge Street** (replacement windows) and **No 10 The Square** (roof and stonework together with boundary wall and railings) is complete.



The repair and restoration of the Pilkington Buildings (22-30 Bridge Street and 1-7 Park End) and the Town Hall restoration are continuing on site.



The Penicuik Heritage Regeneration Project is now coming to the end of the third year and this summer will begin the fourth year of the five year project. Due to Covid-19 the take up of the building grants has been slow but hopefully this will pick up over this year.

KEY

TH/CARS Boundary

Projects Underway

Public Realm Phase 1 (Complete)

Public Realm Phase 2 (High Priority)

Public Realm Phase 3 (Medium Priority)

High Priority Buildings

Medium Priority Buildings

Reserve Projects

Completed Projects

The Project Area

High Street

Public Realm Work

Before

After

10 The Square

Front Before

Front After

Rear Roof Before

Rear Roof After

4-6 Bridge Street

Before

After

Shop Front Improvement

The first shop front application has been approved, the repair and restoration of the Pen-y-coe Press ground floor. There is now more interest being shown in the scheme as the grant percentage can be increased to encourage take up.

It is hoped that grant applications will be coming in for 20, 25-27 The Square and 28-30 High Street, 22 and 26 high Street and 4-6 John Street.

The Penicuik Shop Front Design Guide is available as a download on the website: www.penicuikheritage.org.uk

Community Engagement Programme

An important part of the Penicuik Heritage Regeneration Project is education and awareness raising of the history and heritage of the town. This like everything else has been affected by the current restrictions.

the process with all members of the community being able to contribute.

Discussions are underway to restart the community heritage play which would be inter-generational and would potentially be performed as a promenade performance around key heritage locations in Penicuik. A programme of community events are planned for the summer including heritage hero summer holiday workshops and evening heritage talks and walks in and around Penicuik.

With the Scottish Government guidelines related to Covid-19 remaining in place a focus has continued on reaching audiences via digital media and producing education materials.

Planning has been on-going in resuming face to face training and engagement events and are ready to go as soon as permitted. This includes a school education programme linked in to the Storytelling project, a summer programme of family heritage events and community workshops and education posters. The aim is to have a weekly heritage crafts group resume after Easter. A community arts project will commence in the summer to create a heritage tapestry/quilt to represent the unique stories of Penicuik which on completion will be displayed permanently in the Town Hall. The town has a number of skilled arts groups and the project team will facilitate

A note of interest to be part of the Green Market zone at the COP26 has been made to the Scottish Climate Action Network (SCAN) to have an entry representing heritage building restoration and climate action initiatives relating to the Penicuik project. If restrictions to attending this event are lifted this would be a collaboration with the Penicuik Carbon Challenge project (Penicuik Community Development Trust) with young people creating short films to showcase.

The project team are keen to explore additional funding sources to further enhance the heritage of Penicuik such as supporting the development of the Museum at the Penicuik Press and a detailed Heritage Interpretation Trail. This is seen as important for expanding training opportunities for young people and also in supporting the economic recovery of the Town Centre.