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Website: <http://www.pentlandfriends.plus.com>

Conserving, Protecting & Enhancing



PENTLAND POST

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PENTLAND WAY

Following the very successful publication of our Pan-Pentland map and Pentland place names booklet we are beginning to think about developing a 'Pentland Way', probably from Dunsyre to Swanston. So far it is no more than idea but we envisage using existing paths and combining that work on the ground with an informative booklet.



Walking the Way in Winter?

WALKS

Despite a rather miserable summer our programme of walks has been successful. We led two walks in August as part of the Midlothian Walking Festival. One was from the Penicuik estate to Roslin while the other was a strenuous 8.5 mile circuit from Silverburn ending with Teas & Cakes in Silverburn Village Hall.

We returned to Silverburn in October, it must be the pull of the 'goodies' in the Village Hall! It was a lovely autumn day and the vigorous enjoyed a strenuous circuit while the more sedate enjoyed a short stroll along the Silver Burn.

We hope the moderate 5 mile circuit from Swanston will go ahead on 3 December. It was cancelled twice last winter due to foul weather.

WORK FORCE REPORT

As always the 'workers' have been busy. Path improvements have continued in the Phantom's Cleugh and on the Boghall to Castlelaw path. Branch clearance has been undertaken on the approach to the Bonaly car park, trail posts have been installed at Harlaw and the Bavelaw wildflower meadow has been cut and raked.



Workers in Phantom's Cleugh

In September a bench was installed at the Fraser Tytler Memorial above Woodhouselee. The inscription on the bench reads: "In memory of Mae and Will Hogan who loved these hills". We are most grateful to Margaret McTavish, the daughter of Mae and Will, who donated £300 for the purchase of the bench.



Installing the Bench at the Memorial

We have drafted a leaflet about the Memorial and the former mansion of Woodhouselee and hope to have it published early next year.

We have inspected all those structures that we are responsible for to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and made repairs where necessary. Paths at Crosswood have been strimmed and waymarking posts installed.

During November three stiles were installed in the south west Pentlands and we helped with the annual clean of the Harlaw pond.



Installing a stile in November sunshine

During the year we have devoted around 20 mornings to both litter

picking and working in the Harlaw wildlife garden.

PLANNING MATTERS

The developer has appealed against the decision by South Lanarkshire Council to refuse an application for a 17 turbine wind farm in the south west Pentlands.

The application for a six turbine wind farm near Leadburn remains under consideration by Scottish Borders Council.

We have lodged an objection with Scottish Borders Council to a planning application for a single 86.5 metre high turbine, almost twice the height of the Scott Monument, on the edge of Carlops.



Plans to develop large wind farms near Harperrig Reservoir and at Harburnhead continue but planning applications have not yet been lodged.

Midlothian Council has lodged an application to upgrade the Hillend Snow Sports Centre, a move that has our support.

Midlothian Council is also considering development between the entrance to the Hillend Country Park and the Snow Sports Centre as a means of improving

the financial viability of the centre. We are keeping abreast of that development.

Scottish Borders Council recently commissioned consultants to review local landscape designations throughout the Borders. The consultants concluded that the part of the Pentlands that lies within Scottish Borders should lose its designation as an Area of Great Landscape Value. That matter has been the subject of public consultation and we have lodged a very strong objection to that proposal. Our views are shared by the local community and adjacent Local Authorities. We await a decision by Scottish Borders Council.



A Landscape worth protecting!

BATS!

Enhancing biodiversity takes time – but it's worth persevering. In 2007 we provided 17 bat boxes to the Lothian Bat Group for use in Flotterstone Glen and, now they are well established, they are producing encouraging results. (See the accompanying bar chart.) More recently we have provided nine boxes for Erraid Wood by Hillend, five boxes for the Carlops area and six boxes at Baddingsill near West Linton. It's too soon for them to be evaluated but there is every chance that, in the not too distant future, they will do just as well as those at Flotterstone. In view of that success we are considering the

provision of additional boxes for use at sites identified by the Lothian Bat Group.



MARKETING AND PUBLICITY

Thanks largely to the enthusiasm and industry of Executive Council member Jayne Gordon we have taken a much more proactive approach to publicity and marketing over the last year. We have had a presence at several events and the sale of calendars and other publications has provided a welcome boost to our project fund. Jayne wants to reinforce success – this is her message.

Do you know of any local events which we could attend in order to have a stand to promote the Friends of the Pentlands? We have recently had a stall at the Gracemount Leisure Centre which was a fantastic success. We handed out lots of membership forms and raised £340 for the Society. If you have any ideas of where to go please call 0131 622 0339 or email: jaynebennett34@hotmail.com

Would you be interested in volunteering some of your time to join a small team to look at future publicity and fund raising? If you would please contact me.



Clubbiedean Reservoir

STOP PRESS!

On 21 November 300 trees were planted above Swanston. We are grateful to The Woodland Trust for providing the trees, to the landowner, Alistair McClung, for allowing us to carry out the planting and to Leisel Metz and several members of the Tiphereth Community for help with the planting.



Tree planters above Swanston

EMERGENCY TEXT SERVICE

The Mountain Rescue Service is encouraging walkers to register their mobile phones so that they can use the Emergency Text Service. If the signal is too weak for a phone call, or the caller is unable to speak or hear, a text is the ideal way to call the emergency services. To register your phone text 'REGISTER' to the number '999' on your mobile phone. When the response comes back reply by texting 'YES' to complete your registration. For further information visit: <http://www.emergencysms.org.uk>



SCOTLAND'S RURAL PAST

The SRP Project ended on 30 September. It included work in the Pentlands and fellow member Jill Strowbridge has been very active in that work. To find out what has been achieved visit: <http://www.scotlandsruralpast.org.uk> Go to 'Projects' and select 'Pentland Hills Survey'.



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WALK OF THE SEASON

A brisk traverse of Capelaw Hill makes a great winter walk on a good day. Park at Bonaly and head north to Bonaly Reservoir. At the end of the landrover track turn right and take the path to the head of Phantom's Cleugh. Turn left and traverse the summit of Capelaw Hill enjoying panoramic views. Having completed the traverse turn left again and head down to White Hill and back to the car park. A bit under 6 km.

A LOOK FORWARD

It's been a good year, despite the weather. Much has been achieved and there is much to look forward to in 2012. Amongst several other issues we will be working, with Midlothian Rangers, Midlothian Paths Group and local residents, to establish a new, short, circular path just outside Silverburn.

**Enjoy a Merry Christmas and
a Happy New Year!**