

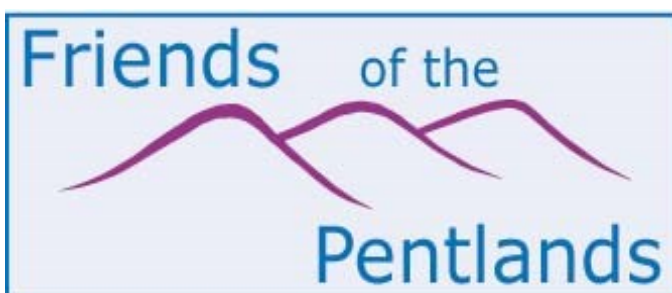
Pentland Post

May 2022



Draining work on Buckie Brae

Which is more drained, the brae or the volunteers?



Friends of the Pentlands

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In the last Pentland Post readers were invited to offer ideas for features, and I am very pleased to include in this edition a fantastic insight into rambling on the Pentlands from 87 years ago. Members Ann Gilmour and Wilma Anderson have offered logbooks of weekly wanderings of their parents (Jack & Betty Prentice (nee Brown) and Bill Anderson). Although times have moved on, many constants remain, and I am sure readers will identify with the adventures contained within the extract presented. Many thanks to Ann and Wilma for sharing these precious memories. They are convinced their parents would be delighted and highly amused that their exploits are being brought to life after so many years. The “Nomad’s Logbook”, written under pen names “Klinker” and “Bergan” is on pages 5 & 6.

With the theme for next year’s calendar “At Work and Play in the Pentlands” in mind, Donald Sandeman in the “View From Scald Law” describes running in the Pentlands. As well as being a regular volunteer and work team leader, Donald has quite a back-story of adventurous runs. Read more on Page 3.

We have news of developments within the organisation and management of the Friends, of ongoing projects on the hills, and of Friends’ activities.

At the time of writing we are still not fully back into all our usual activities, although we may permit ourselves some slight optimism. I am looking forward to tea and cake at Harlaw asap!

Where am I?

Answer at the foot of
Page 9.

Have you a photo of a spot in the Pentlands for this feature? Do send it to the Editor.



Photo: Ian Combe

THE VIEW FROM SCALD LAW

Donald Sandeman

Donald is an ageing runner (*Donald's words, ed*) who has completed over 100 ultra marathons including 250 km self supported, multi stage races in the Sahara (Marathon Des Sables), Chile (Atacama desert), Namibia (Namib desert) and China (Gobi desert). He has also completed mountain races in the Alps, the Atlas mountains and over volcanoes in the Canaries.



Most of his training has been carried out in the Pentland Hills where he is also a work day team leader with Friends of the Pentlands. He is the race director of the 7 Reservoirs multi terrain half marathon which takes place annually in the Pentlands in December. Donald is a member of Harmer Athletic Club.

Running In The Pentlands

I have lived all my life in the south of Edinburgh and the Pentlands are my playground. I enjoy disappearing into the hills for the day and it never fails to astound me how you can spend hours in remote areas there without seeing a soul, yet you are only a few miles from a busy city centre.



I love the varying views but am particularly fond of the more southern parts and have some great routes from West Linton or Crosswood reservoir areas. I enjoy taking my club

colleagues on Sunday runs exploring various parts of the hills where they may not have been before. My days of running fast are gone and I'm happy to now walk the steeper parts. (*Continues on P4*)

If training for an event such as the 95 mile West Highland Way race, a perfect route would be the Pentland Way from Dunsyre to Swanston. The first half is fast and flat but the hills get steeper and harder the closer you get to Swanston.

My main advice to anyone running the hills is to make sure you carry warm clothing, a phone and at least a foil blanket or better still, a bivvy bag. Even a minor accident could leave you stranded for a long time as it can take a while for help to arrive. Hypothermia can set in very quickly when you stop moving.



The 7 Reservoirs Race was originally devised by fellow Harmer and FoP member Iain Morrice. It is an incredibly popular event and in my first year as Director in 2019 it sold out within 4 minutes of opening. There is now a ballot for entrants. It has a great atmosphere, starting and finishing at the Youth Vision stading at Threipmuir farm. They assist in providing a camp fire and a great selection of food for the finishers. Unfortunately numbers for the race are restricted with car parking the main difficulty. All proceeds from the race are shared with Pentlands based charities including the Regional Park and Friends of the Pentlands.

Running in the hills is certainly becoming more popular and is suitable for all ages. We have club members from primary school age into their eighties. Carnethy Hill Running Club also arrange runs in the Pentlands and organise great events such as the Skyline Race, the winter Carnethy 5 and the Caerketton races. Other Pentlands events include the Red Moss kips race and the "Baddinsgill Round". Endless opportunities abound.

Calendar 2023

The theme of the Friends of the Pentlands calendar for 2023 is "At Work and Play in the Pentlands".

Please submit your pictures to the editor by the end of July. Pictures should be in **landscape** format. It helps greatly if pictures are tagged with your name and title/location.

NOMADS' LOGBOOK 4th-5th August 1934

Met Klinker at 3.15, got car to Colinton.

Our original intentions were to climb Carnethy in order to recover my blanket which I left in the cairn before I went to Arran, but owing to us having to meet Scree in Malleny at 7 o'clock we would not be able to do this. We went round the reservoirs via Fernielaw and arrived at the woods at six o'clock. We were ready for our tea and it was not long before we had a fire going and the drums on. We had to hold our drums over the fire as some person or persons unknown had stolen our tripod. After tea, Klinker and I sat reading and at 8.00pm Scree arrived. While Klinker tended the fire, Scree and I went for wood. I found an iron spike which we drove into the ground to hold the drums. Scree drummed up and after his tea he unpacked his provisions.



Nomads "drumming up" at Malleny

He had kippers, fish-cakes, eggs etc. Ridgehopper arrived at 8.30pm and at 9.30 we prepared our supper, and what a supper! Our usual supper is composed of chits and tea, but tonight we would have a real supper. We cooked the fish-cakes and a kipper. The meal was truly a hikers' banquet. After supper we had a sing-song round the fire till twelve o'clock when we turned in. At 4.30am Klinker and I awoke. It was very cold. Scree and Ridgehopper were still sleeping. They had a blanket over them and therefore didn't feel the cold so much. Klinker and I went on a wood parade and we had a fire going before five o'clock. It was a glorious morning, the sunlight was streaming thro' the trees. There was not a cloud in the sky. Klinker and I cooked our breakfast and when we were finished, Scree and Ridgehopper turned out to cook theirs.



Scree, Bergan & Klinker 1932

At 7am Klinker retired to the tent, rolled the blanket round himself and went to sleep. By 7.30 we had all followed his example. It was 11 before the least sign of life in the camp. We turned out, washed and struck camp before 12 o'clock. Digger arrived at 12,

so we took the road at 12:15.

We arrived at the hut just before a heavy downpour started. It soon cleared and we made for Turnhouse Hill. The sky was cloudless when we started to climb, but about half way up, the sky became overcast. We reached the shelter-stones and waited. We had not long to wait, the sky opened and sent "it" down. Like its predecessor it soon cleared and we reached the top without any more ado. We carried on across the ridge and on to Carnethy. We recovered the blanket and rested awhile. Two kids who were on top told us all the places where the biggest blaeberreries grew so after a spot of berry-picking we made for Scald Law. Digger had trouble with his feet so he intended to give

in. Scree who had given us some trouble with his shoes at the foot of Turnhouse also intended to give in, so Ridgehopper, Klinker and I carried on to the top of Scald Law. We came down the face of the hill, we found a scree but it was sticky. We reached the road and met Digger and Scree. Ridgehopper and I left them resting while we did a bit of scrambling around the



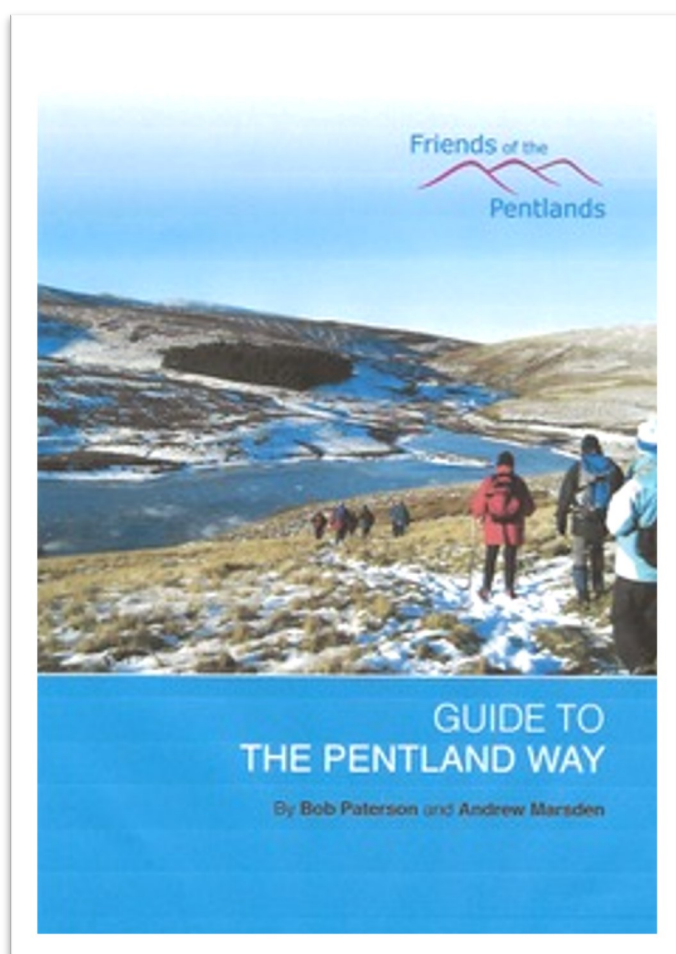
waterfall at Peggy's Pool. We rejoined the rest of our party at the foot of the waterfall. Ridgehopper and Scree left Digger, Klinker and I talking to three girls. We remained with the girls about an hour, leaving them at the foot of the Black Hill at 8.20. We cut across the hill and arrived in Malleny at 9 o'clock. Scree and Ridgehopper arrived only 10 minutes in front of us, they went round by Bavelaw. BB and Cathie Dow were at the fire when we arrived. They had been over the Slap from Balerno to Carlops via Stoneypath, thence to Malleny via Eastside and Bavelaw. Truly a wonderful performance. We drummed up and when the "char" was ready we were begging from each other both food and cigarettes. Each one is an expert pig-beggar but it would have taken a miracle-man to have begged sufficient grub to appease our hunger. After a somewhat scanty meal we made for home arriving back in town at 11.20pm.

It was one of the most happy-go-lucky weekends we had so far spent on the hills this year.

Bergan

Further Progress along the Way Andrew Marsden provides an update on the Pentland Way Consolidation Group achievements

We hope by now the second edition of Bob Paterson's book on the Pentland Way has been printed and you are pleased with the results. Re-titled "Friends of the Pentlands Guide to The Pentland Way" and to aim for a wider appeal, the guide has been comprehensively revised with new sections on the Pentlands' geology and natural history and new circular excursions added to the walk. Accordingly, though Bob's historical narrative has been left unaltered, the subtitle "a walk with history" has been omitted, reflecting that there are other aspects to walking the Way in addition to historical discovery.



Accompanying this publication seven interpretation panels are being created at various sites along The Way. Each will have a "You are Here" map board and photographs and location descriptions linked by QR codes to further descriptive material on a Pentland Way web page on the main Friends of the Pentlands web site. The boards within the Pentland Hills Regional Park have been designed with the assistance of the Park's Natural Heritage Officers.

At the turn of the year, the waymarking was completed – a major task thanks largely to John Surtees who, in his garage, created metal plates and bands to attach the roundels to existing

Scotways finger posts. The "alternative" routes to and from The Way have, similarly been completed.

A book launch is being planned for late Spring to which all key interested parties will be invited. Not only will the work of the "consolidation group" be described and recognised but we will lead discussions about the importance of The Way, its benefits (and drawbacks) as a public resource and our endeavours, over future years, to maintain it and the ecosystems through which it passes.

Compared with the verging-on-suburban east, the south-west end of the Pentland hills can seem bleak and remote. You can walk for hours and encounter only the occasional grouse or curlew, without seeing a single human being.

Its iconic monument is the Covenanter's grave. Most Pentlands people will know the tale of the wounded rebel fleeing homewards after the battle of Rullion Green in 1666. He only got as far as Blackhill where the tenant Adam Sanderson respected his dying wish by carrying his body uphill to bury him so that he lay in sight of his Ayrshire homeland. Many people know the story without making the pilgrimage to his grave; some search without finding it.



Less than three miles to the south-west lies another, very different monument – the sculpture garden of Little Sparta at Stonypath, probably the crowning achievement of the artist-poet Ian Hamilton Finlay. Though it has a worldwide reputation Little Sparta is not easy to access. Many people admire it from afar, some without knowing its Pentlands location.

Not long ago Ian Combe, a noted stravaiger in remote parts, drew my attention to yet another monument in this area, the memorial to Simon Foster Macdonald Lockhart (1916-1991) which lies just off the main ridge of Darlees Rig. In reply I happened to mention a connection between this memorial and Little Sparta. In its early years the garden at Stonypath was a joint project between Ian Hamilton Finlay, who planned the artworks, and his wife Sue, who was responsible for the garden; and Sue was the daughter of Simon Macdonald Lockhart.

We speculated vaguely whether this story could be taken further – and the answer turns out to be yes. The Lockhart connection extends further, particularly through the undeservedly forgotten figure of George Lockhart (ca.1630-1689). His ancestors had appeared in the area as feudal landowners in the 13th century; Sir Stephen Lockhart, who died around 1320, became the

first baron of Lee near Lanark.

Our hero George was the fourth son of Sir James Lockhart, 9th of Lee, and followed in his father's footsteps as an advocate with great success, being elevated to the bench as Lord Carnwath and ending his career as Lord President of the Court of Session. He also made enough money to purchase the lands of Carnwath which have remained in the family ever since.

Lord Carnwath seems to have been a man of integrity as well as ability: he was a famed courtroom pleader and not afraid to support unpopular causes. In particular, he acted as defence counsel for Covenanters who faced prosecution after the 1666 rebellion. Despite his achievements, his story does not end well. As he was leaving Easter service in 1689 Lord Carnwath was shot in the back and killed by a litigant disgruntled that Carnwath had awarded alimony to his estranged wife – shades of the wild west.

So this triangle of monuments shares real historical and family links. Could there be something more, a shared cast of mind perhaps? Our anonymous Covenanter died for his religious beliefs. Lord Carnwath was a man of strong principles, as was his son and heir, an MP who opposed the 1707 Treaty of Union and later became a persistent (but ineffective) Jacobite plotter. Ian Hamilton Finlay was a spiky character and noted controversialist. Maybe there is something in these austere moorlands that encourages a thrawn independence of mind?



Did you know this? By David Syme

In November I took a group of walkers over a field of stubble – the harvest long since gathered in. I was politely shown by one of the group that the farmer had sown rows of seeds between the clumps of stubble. Apparently the modern way is not to plough the stubble field before sowing. I won't make the mistake of walking over a growing crop again!

(Fans of BBC Countryfile will have viewed a feature on Regenerative Farming in a recent episode, explaining the benefits to soil structure. Ed)

Where am I? From Page 2: You are at "Whitehill". The clue was on the brick placed in the cairn.....!

“There is nothing permanent except change.” Heraclitus

I was honoured when the Friends of the Pentlands Board confirmed my position as Chairman to succeed Hamish Clark. Though I will take the lead at the Board straightaway the formal handover of the baton will be marked at our AGM in June.

It is an exciting time to be taking over the organisation’s lead. The pandemic has left a legacy of problems in the hills mainly associated with increased visitor use. Paths have degraded, facilities have closed or been stretched, and the Pentlands are by no means the same as they were just three years ago. Yet the increased attraction to “the hills of home” has resulted in awakened interest and our membership and volunteer numbers have increased significantly. We are starting to see, dare I say, younger and fitter Friends working on the hills – a move to be encouraged. Our outward facing communications including website and social media have substantially improved – our reputation has been boosted.

With the retirement of several Board members and key postholders there will be an opportunity to strengthen our leadership team even further. Have you any skills or attributes which you would be able to share with us? There is a role, large or small, for anyone – and you don’t have to be a member of the Board of Trustees to contribute to the society’s development. Several organisational posts are currently occupied by non-Board members. Here are the gaps which I hope some of you can help me fill.

- ♦ Assistant Secretary (membership) to share Dennis Smith’s secretarial tasks
- ♦ Paths Inspection Co-ordinator who can manage our countryside “assets register” so capably established by John Surtees
- ♦ Further IT expertise to support the work which Bob Douglas has initiated
- ♦ People with an interest in the environment and wildlife and who can lead on our work on ecology and biodiversity
- ♦ Person or persons to continue Judy Cantley’s role in running our events (“walks and talks”) programme.
- ♦ An outward facing person to address merchandising, promoting and publicising the organisation.
- ♦ Someone with archive or librarianship experience as we try to recreate “an organisation with a memory” following the passing of John Stirling, one of our founders and whose knowledge of the Pentlands and what has occurred in them over the last number of years is almost impossible to replicate. There is a wealth of knowledge – documentary and pictorial – out there, all waiting to be captured and utilised.
- ♦ People to take on, in time, some of our other important, voluntary activities such as litter picking and gardening.

Drawing on the experience and expertise of the wider members and Friends beyond Board members and team leaders will help our organisation to flourish and enhance our contribution to the beauty and enjoyment of the Pentland Hills.

Willing to help? Get in touch with me on andrew.marsden@pentlandfriends.org.uk

EVENT REPORT— PENTLANDS THROUGH ARTISTS' EYES

This talk by Dr Joanne Soden, specialist in Scottish Art and previously Collections Curator at the RSA, was planned pre-pandemic but was well worth the wait. Introducing the hills as “silent sentinels”, Dr Soden took us on an historical and artistic tour of the Pentlands illustrating her talk with examples of various landscape artists’ works and styles, whilst also referencing sculptors, poets and writers who found inspiration in the hills. While there were too many examples to name individually, the virtual walk started with a view from Holyrood by Thomas Shepherd painted in 1829, and took in Robert Hope’s 1913 “Swanston Farm”, this village being a favourite with artists, as was Carlops. Victoria Crowe was also captivated by the Midlothian countryside. The tour ended with a view of the Pentlands from Kingsknowe painted in 1947 by Edwin George Lucas. This first “in-person” talk was attended to venue capacity, and well-received. A fitting summary would be that artists capture the appeal of the Pentlands and replicate the emotions they evoke in those who live under or on the hills and of those who visit.



Andrew Marsden thanks Dr Soden for her insights

Photos of all paintings in public collections can be found at <https://artuk.org> (search “Pentlands”).

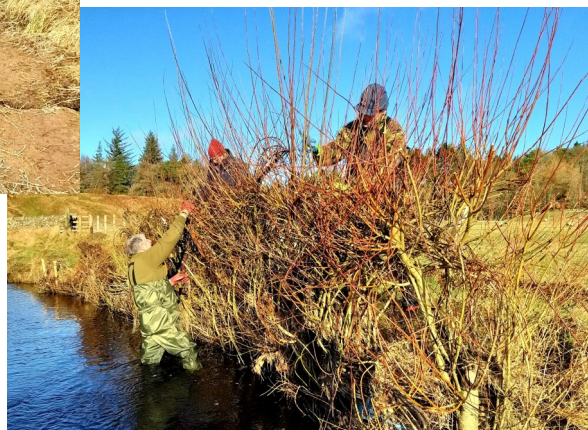


WORK DAYS AT BADDINGSGILL

Bank reinforcement

Bridge Repairs Willow Spiling

Photos by Donald Sandeman



Obviously the big news of recent months is the slow retreat of Covid-19. We have been able to restart many (but not yet all) of our traditional activities. Despite the hovering threat of the Omicron variant, we were able to hold two winter walks in January. And our first live talk for two years took place in March when Dr Joanna Soden spoke on 'The Pentlands through artists' eyes'. (see separate report on Page 11)

Constitutionally, the most important news is that the Friends have now joined the Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee as a full voting member, charged with representing the interests of recreational users. At the same time the Pentland Land Managers Association and Edinburgh and Lothian Greenspace Trust also joined as voting members.

Following recent concerns about unexploded ordnance, the Ministry of Defence have tightened the rules about working on their estate. A number of FoP leaders and volunteers have received appropriate safety training.



WORK DAY AT BOGHALL

Our team repairs a very unstable fence

Photos by Donald Sandeman



Editor seeks information: Do you know when the first edition of the Pentland Post was published? How many issues have there been? Please get in touch (peter.moore@pentlandfriends.org.uk) if you can assist with the history of the Post.