

Landmarks and stories of Lochend, Restalrig and Craigentenny

A background resource-sheet



Lochend, Restalrig and Craigentenny have been home to generations of people, through good times and bad. Inspired by two local comments - ***“the ground you’re walking on, it’s memory, it’s history”*** and ***“the way to get through tough times is being part of your community”*** – these background notes have been created to encourage you to explore the heritage of the local area and connect with others. We hope you enjoy discovering the landmarks and stories that make this area of Edinburgh special as much as we enjoyed getting to know the community.

A LONG, LONG TIME AGO

Several hundred years ago, Lochend, Restalrig and Craigentenny were part of one of the huge baronial estates that used to surround Edinburgh. Although they were far away from Edinburgh's bustling Old Town with its Castle, Palace, Law Courts and markets, this area wasn't as quiet as you might think. For hundreds of years, it saw processions of pilgrims visit St Triduana's Healing Spring, while the 16th-18th centuries brought tales of witchcraft, marauding armies and deadly plagues! In 1784 locals would have been astonished to witness the first-ever hot-air balloon flight as James Tytler crash-landed near Restalrig. Just a few years later, tongues would have been wagging as Captain Macrae of Marionville House had to flee the country after a deadly duel.

NOT SO LONG AGO

When our great-grannies and grandads were little girls and boys, this area had begun to change. Steam-trains arrived in Edinburgh in the 1840s, and from the 1870s the city, for so long just the Old Town and the New Town, began to expand outwards. New industries such as tallow works, roperies and woollen mills began to pop up, adding their noises and smells to those of Hawkhill Quarry, Lochend Farm and the Craigentenny Meadows, irrigated with sewage! In the 1930s the farmland began to disappear as council housing and bungalows were built, along with schools, churches, and recreational facilities such as sports-grounds, football pitches, bowling greens and tennis courts, not forgetting Craigentenny Golf Course. By the 1960s the fields had gone, delivery horses were being replaced by vans, and trains were getting diesel engines.

TODAY

In the 21st century, the area has continued to change. The factories and mills are closed, demolished or redeveloped as housing, and the area is now a largely residential suburb. The railway lines are no longer noisy with trains - now they ring with the sound of chatting walkers, barking dogs, bicycle bells and birdsong. The neighbourhoods' communities have also changed; new generations have been born, families have moved away, while others have arrived from near and far. Many residents will be unaware of the huge amount of history and heritage in the areas of Lochend, Restalrig and Craigentenny contain. It is hoped that our resources will help you explore the neighbourhood, connect with the community and enjoy a greater sense of belonging.

For a map of the area, see our walking map leaflet. You can download a digital copy from our online resources. Web address given at the end of this document.



LOCHEND LOCH was once the main source of water for Leith. Over the centuries it's been used for hunting, fishing, boating and even ice-skating. Now it is a tranquil home to many water-birds – see if you can spot a shy heron next time you're there!

The **DOOCOT** (dovecote) in Lochend Park is over 400 years old. This type of doocot is known as a beehive doocot because of its shape, but local school kids used to call it 'Wullie's Pail' after *Oor Wullie*, a popular Scottish cartoon character who used to sit on an upside-down bucket or pail.



LOCHEND HOUSE was originally the 'big house' of the Logans of Restalrig, but from the 1960s until recently it was home to a variety of social services support groups. One group planted a silver-birch tree in the garden to be a 'wishing tree'. If you could have one wish, what would it be?



Built on the fields of Lochend Farm, between World War One and World War Two, the **LOCHEND HOUSING ESTATE** was one of Edinburgh's first council housing schemes.



DID YOU KNOW? This area used to have many industries including rope works, print works, sawmills, brewery maltings and many more, their raw materials and finished goods being transported in and out by train. Now, the once busy railway lines have become quiet leafy **WALKWAYS** connecting the area to Seafield and Leith.

Take a moment to stop and listen and sniff the air. How do you think the sounds and smells have changed?

One of the few factory buildings to remain in the area is **JAMES DUNBAR'S AERATED-WATER FACTORY** – you can still see his name painted on the brick wall on Lochend Butterfly Way. The factory bottled fizzy water as well as flavoured sodas such as cola and ginger-beer.



Home to the Hibernian Football Club, the green and white **EASTER ROAD STADIUM** is a distinctive landmark. Founded by Irish immigrants in 1875, the chants and cheers of the Hibs supporters, and their opponents, have been echoing across the area since 1893!

HAWKHILL was once a much bigger hill, but over the centuries its stone has been quarried away. It is said to get its name from the fact that in the 15th century King James III of Scotland used to hunt his hawks here. It has seen a lot of change since then – from quarries and brickworks to bakeries and sports grounds.

DID YOU KNOW? Hawkhill was home to one of Edinburgh's earliest observatories. It was built by Lord Alemoor, a Scottish judge, next to his fashionable villa, known as Hawkhill House. Local astronomers watched the transit of Venus across the sun and a lunar eclipse from here in 1769, meaning the **Hawkhill Observatory** existed before the Calton Hill Observatory.



With their distinctive russet red top floors, the tower-blocks of **NISBET COURT AND HAWKHILL COURT** can be seen for miles, but before they were built there was an equally tall, red brick chimney here! It belonged to a factory which produced tallow, one of the main ingredients used in making soap and candles.

DID YOU KNOW? The word Bethlehem means 'house of bread' in Hebrew. The name **Bethlehem Way** was chosen to commemorate the Smith's and Sunblest Bakeries that once stood on this spot. Imagine the smell of freshly baked bread. What does it remind you of? What can you smell at Bethlehem Way today?

THE RIPPLE replaced the old YWCA 'hut' that used to stand on the same spot, each supporting the local community by providing a social hub. Older residents might remember attending the YWCA's discos, youth clubs and baby-groups. Open to all, The Ripple assists a variety of users, with a friendly community café and a wide range of activities, services and support groups. Staffed by a small team and aided by a dedicated squad of volunteers, at its heart The Ripple strives to empower local people to help themselves and the wider community.

Built in the 1920s, as part of the Government-sponsored post-war building programme, the **FINDLAY ESTATE** houses were originally made from pre-fabricated steel so they could be constructed quickly and easily. The estate is named after the Chairman of the Housing Trust that oversaw the work, Sir John R. Findlay, perhaps better known as the owner of *The Scotsman* newspaper.

Between 1930 and 2007, Fleming Place and Seafield Street was the location of the **EASTERN GENERAL HOSPITAL**, where generations of Leithers, and those living on the east side of Edinburgh, were born. Now new housing, many of the street names reflect the area's medical history, including Latta Place, which is named for Dr Thomas Latta, son of a Leith merchant, who pioneered the use of the 'saline drip' in 1832.

DID YOU KNOW? This was also the location of the last Poorhouse to be built in Scotland. **Leith Poorhouse** opened here in 1908 and the original memorial plaque, featuring the Leith Coat of Arms, can still be seen on the site. Why not see if you can find it!



Known by many older residents simply as ‘the hut’, this building was used by the local Boy Scouts as their club house for many years. Still supporting the community today, since 2007 the hut has been the home to the **LOCHEND BOXING CLUB** which is open and welcoming to all.

DID YOU KNOW? The Lochend Boxing Club was the base of **Josh ‘The Tartan Tornado’ Taylor**, who represented Scotland at the Commonwealth Games 3 times, bringing home 2 silver medals and a gold.



Like much of Edinburgh, this area is blessed with many **GREENSPACES**. The largest and oldest of these is **LOCHEND PARK**, while one of the smallest and newest is the **CRAIGENTINNY COMMUNITY GARDEN**. Slightly more established is the **LOCHEND SECRET GARDEN**,

created in 2011/2012. A thriving and sociable community garden, it has raised beds, fruit bushes, a forest garden and more! The area also has two council allotments, **RESTALRIG ALLOTMENTS** alongside the old railway line and **CRAIGENTINNY ALLOTMENTS** beside the golf course. These greenspaces are much-loved and valuable community resources, especially during the Covid lockdowns when they provided places where people could enjoy the outdoors, take a bit of exercise and meet others safely. If you can't get out of the house to visit, it can still be fun to follow these places online! Look at our list of resources for useful websites or search for the highlighted names on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



For many years **MARIONVILLE HOUSE** was the Presbytery for St Ninian's and St Triduana's Catholic church next door. It was both home to the priests and an important social space throughout the 20th century, and used for everything from christenings to youth clubs.

DID YOU KNOW? Marionville House, was originally built in the 1780s for two sisters, **Katherine and Ann Ramsay**, who had made a small fortune making lace 'lappets' for ladies' hats. They named their new house Viewfrith but cheeky locals nicknamed it Lappet Ha'. Maybe that's why the sisters only stayed a few years.

The tower-blocks of **RESTALRIG HOUSE AND LOCHEND HOUSE** were built in the 1960s and 70s. They sit in the grounds of the former Restalrig House, a large villa with a walled garden containing a sundial. The neat little gardens and bright spring-bulbs you see today are the result of residents taking the initiative to improve their surroundings.

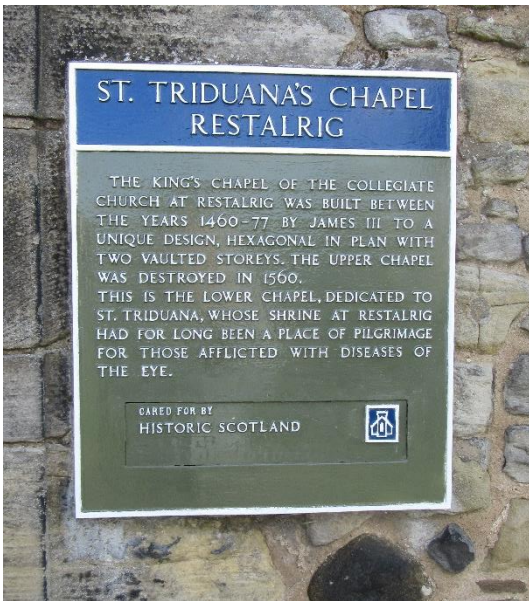
You won't find it in any Edinburgh A-to-Z, but anyone who grew up in the area knows exactly where **KEMP'S CORNER** is. Named for Charles Kemp and his family, who ran a shop here from 1908-1982, there's still a shop at Kemp's Corner today - imagine all the people who have bought their messages here since it first opened over 100 years ago!

Pronounced *Ressalrig*, as the T is silent, the ancient **VILLAGE OF RESTALRIG** was first recorded in the 12th century and remained surrounded by farmland until the 1930s. Today the village is one of Edinburgh's smallest Conservation Areas, a designation awarded in 2017 in recognition of its important place in local and Scottish history.



Painting by an unknown artist of Restalrig Village showing the road layout.

Quote by local participant of the project noted: *“One thing that is very significant for me is how special it is that the shape of the original old Restalrig village, seen in old paintings and etchings, still remains from the bottom of Smokey Brae, round past St Margaret's church and St Triduana's well with the yellow old schoolhouse embedded in the graveyard wall. When I'm coming home, I always try to come back that way and imagine how it was in the 12th century or so.”*



DID YOU KNOW? St Triduana is one of Scotland's oldest saints! She is said to have travelled from Constantinople to Scotland and died in Restalrig, where her healing spring can still be found. This was a very important medieval pilgrimage site, with many travelling here in hopes of a cure for their eye complaints. Can you discover more about her story? What

other Scottish saints' names can you find in the area?

Next to St Triduana's Chapel, **ST MARGARET'S PARISH CHURCH** has been established since at least the 12th century. Under Royal patronage it became an important Catholic Church, causing it to be destroyed during the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. Rebuilt as a Church of Scotland in the 1830s, today the church, along with the associated McLaren Halls, forms a supportive, welcoming social and spiritual hub for the community, hosting everything from fetes to food banks.



SMOKEY BRAE got its name from the smoke produced by all the steam-trains.

Between the mid-19th and mid-20th centuries the area to the north and west of Jock's Lodge used to be the busy St Margaret's Railway Depot and Engineering Works.



Opening in the 1890s and employing many local women, the red-brick **MUNROSPUN FACTORY** produced fine woollen goods for almost 100 years – from twin-sets and ties to tartan and tweed. Now redeveloped as residential flats, its tall water-tower would once have dominated the local skyline.

Built around 1604 as a laird's house for the Nisbets of Dean, the **CRAIGENTINNY CASTLE** (or House) we see today is the result of a complete Victorian remodelling in 1849. In the 1930s it was saved from demolition by the city council, becoming Craigentenny's Community Centre, a role it still has today. The sheltered housing opposite Craigentenny Castle is in what was once an enclosed private park. Have you seen the old stone walls?



DID YOU KNOW? When it opened in 1937 **Craigentenny Community Centre** was Scotland's first community centre. With its mix of services and activities for all ages, accommodating a wide variety of local social welfare groups, Craigentenny Community Centre set the pattern for all of Scotland's future community centres.



The mausoleum and resting place of William H. Miller (1789-1848), occupier of Craightinny Castle, are commonly known as the **CRAIGHTINNY MARBLES**. As they were owners of the Craightinny Estate, many of the area's streets are named after members of the Miller family.

USEFUL RESOURCES

HISTORY AND HERITAGE

The *Old Edinburgh Club*, for links to local history societies, libraries, museums and more.
www.ouldedinburghclub.org.uk/find-out-more/

City of Edinburgh Council, Restalrig Village Conservation Area
www.edinburgh.gov.uk/directory-record/1099441/restalrig-conservation-area

Edinburgh Bookshelf, free, searchable online books about Edinburgh History
www.edinburghbookshelf.org.uk

Wikipedia also contains a lot of commonly known history. Simply do a search using the names highlighted in this leaflet.

OUTDOOR SPACES

Edinburgh Outdoors, all about Edinburgh's parks, allotments, play areas and more.
www.edinburghoutdoors.org.uk

Lochend Secret Garden www.lochendsecretgarden.wixsite.com/lcgp/about
6 Lochend Quadrant, EH7 6DL

Craightinny Community Garden www.craightinnygarden.co.uk
6 Loganlea Drive, EH7 6LG

COMMUNITY

The Ripple www.rippleproject.co.uk

Open Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm

198 Restalrig Road South, EH7 6DZ

0131-554-0422

Craigentenny Community Centre www.joininedinburgh.org/organisation/12/

9 Loaning Road, EH7 6JE

0131-661-8188

St Margaret's Parish Church www.stmargarets-restalrig.co.uk

27 Restalrig Road South, EH7 6LF

0131-554-7400

Hibernian Community Outreach provide a variety of support for all ages

www.hiberniancommunityfoundation.org.uk/who-we-help

The area covered in this project is part of the *Craigentenny/Meadowbank Community Council*

www.craigentennymeadowbankcc.wordpress.com

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Download our free Resource Pack with additional local heritage resource materials at

www.peoplesparish.scot/culture-collective/restalrig - this includes our **Walking Map leaflet** and **PowerPoint slideshow** for use by learning groups, to use along with this background material.

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The People's Parish Project Team 2023