

CRAMOND ASSOCIATION WOODLANDS GROUP **MANAGEMENT PLAN**

In August 2014, the Cramond Association formed a Woodlands Group of volunteers to tackle the neglected state of the old Cramond woodlands to the east and north of Cramond Kirk. The woodlands lie within the scheduled ancient monument area of Cramond and cover ca 16 acres in two sections: the larger immediately east and south-east of Cramond Kirk Hall; the other in the escarpment running from the driveway to the Hall and Cramond House down to the Cramond Inn and the foreshore carpark. The area contains the remains of an Antonine Roman fort (AD 140) and its bathhouse, other historic buildings, and archaeological evidence of one of the oldest, if not *the* oldest, Mesolithic settlements in Scotland (8500 BC).

The woodlands were once a Victorian designed landscape and arboretum and today would probably have justified being listed in *The Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes*. However, they have been almost totally neglected since Edwardian times: trees damaged or hugely overgrown with ivy; paths deteriorated, muddy and impassable in places; shrubs choked in vegetation; and the area populated by self-seeded sycamore and other poor-quality scrub and by invasive rhododendron ponticum, laurel, ivy, salmon berry and Saracen's consound.

The Woodlands Group has been working to reverse this decline and the following summarises the work to date in approximate chronological order.

Activities to date

1. Considerable tidying-up, including removing some of the poor quality scrub and excessive rhododendron ponticum and laurel, pruning trees and bushes, clearing some dead timber and collecting refuse. Much of all this was burned on site in an open location which was turned into a campfire site for the local cubs and scouts.
2. Ivy cleared from trees, seeking a balance between clearing and leaving for wildlife.
3. Some snowdrop and natural bluebell bulbs planted
4. The extremely muddy cross path from the Kirk Hall east to the fence to the parkland was tackled (see location plan, Appendix 1). Mud was removed, heavy-duty ground-cover weed fabric laid and thickly dressed with road scalpings obtained from two long-standing dumps of them in the foreshore carpark (with permission from CEC's West Edinburgh Parks Team). Less than spade-deep ditches were dug on either side and French drains laid in, a few shallow plastic cross drains laid, and a secondary ditch dug, all to help drain-off water-run from the adjacent elevated area.
5. This work was repeated on the very muddy continuation of the path as it turns south along by the fence to access the gate into the parkland. The ditching and drains were placed to drain-off into the parkland. For cosmetic reasons this path was edged with natural timber.

6. A reverse direction path was established, turning north at the fence, to double-back between the giant Sequoia and Weymouth pine to join the beginning of the cross path. This was to create a gentle round-trip walk for the Almond Mains elderly group that meets at the Kirk Hall twice a week.

7. A very badly overgrown section immediately north of this reverse path was then explored and several young trees found, two almost encased in vegetation and unlikely to survive: a monkey-puzzle tree and a dawn redwood. The others were another dawn redwood, a young *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, a Brewer's weeping spruce and a eucalyptus. It was discovered that these had been planted in 2005. The ground around these trees was opened up, considerable nettle cleared, and woodchips laid.

8. The long path from the Kirk Hall driveway down the escarpment to the foreshore carpark, past the Mesolithic site, was then dealt with. It, too, was very muddy in places, especially where a raised section allowed water to collect, which had to be levelled off. The Parks Team helped to clear the up to 8-foot high Saracens consound which had all but obliterated the lower section of the path.

9. At the bottom of this "Mesolithic path", a dog-leg access path to the foreshore carpark was constructed. It was found there had previously been a path here but it had become completely overgrown and overhung by trees. Some repairs were also made to the adjacent fencing.

10. A series of paths was created: (a) to access two attractive young cedars close to the Mesolithic path (also planted in 2005); (b) to access from different directions and interconnect the little "arboretum" referred to in activity 7; and (c) to access two vintage sycamores, some 360 years old, south of the cross path.

11. The old "Viewpoint" over the Firth was re-established, though work remains to be done here.

12. A few trees have had to be felled since 2014 and one severely pollarded, mainly because of disease, including two with Dutch elm disease. CEC's Forestry Division carried this out except in one case for which a commercial firm had to be used.

13. The campfire site had to be cleared this year as it had become a very unsightly focus for irresponsible youth behaviour. The ground was rotavated and seeded with meadow-mix and a hedge of hawthorn and beech, 2:1, planted between it and the cross path.

14. Path maintenance work is ongoing, redressing parts with aggregate, leaf-blowing in Autumn, brush-cutting to control adjacent vegetation, weeding (including with glyphosate) and litter control.

Present and future management plans

1. Regular maintenance work on paths - *Continual*.

2. Trees, shrubs and flowers to be planted, initially in locations 1, 2 & 3 (see Appendices 1 & 2) – *To complete early 2019*.

3. Apple trees (various), gooseberry and blackcurrant bushes to be planted along a portion of the long wall in the northern walled garden (see Appendix 1). This was an initiative by one of CEC's Park Rangers but it will be linked to the work of the Woodlands Group which will help to oversee the resulting mini-orchard. It's planned to involve the local cubs and scouts, and possibly primary school, in the planting, and to encourage community participation in the annual National Apple Day (every 21 October). Advice has been taken from John Hancox, Scotland's "Apple Man" – *To complete early 2019*.
4. Attach tree-identification plaques to notable specimens as an educational resource (see Appendix 3) – *To complete early 2019*.
5. Establish a programme of work to keep salmon berry and Saracen's consound under control - *Continual*.
6. In the medium-term: (a) further tree and shrub planting; (b) improve the Roman Bathhouse area; (c) improve the escarpment section; (d) improve the "viewpoint" elevated area which is an ugly mass of self-seeded trees and detritus from the original university campus site; (e) erect an orientation board at the entrance to the upper section of the woodlands by the Kirk Hall; (f) consider what might be done with the Kennels, possibly turned into a walled-garden; and (g) re-explore with AMA whether anything can be done with the overgrown southern walled-garden they own – *2019-2022*.

Funding

The Group is very grateful to the following:

1. Cramond Association for the initial sum of £1000 in 2014
2. Edinburgh Airport Community Grants Board for the award of £3000 in 2016
3. Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust (ELGT) for negotiating a grant of £1750 from the Mushroom Trust, a Scottish Charity established in 1983 whose main focus is on protecting and enhancing green spaces. This grant will be managed by ELGT and is specifically for the purpose of tree, shrub and flower planting and associated materials, as detailed in plan 2 above. It may also be used to contribute to the cost of tree identification plaques.
4. CEC Park Rangers are separately exploring funding to secure and manage a grant for the mini-orchard, detailed in plan 3 above.

Details of expenses to date are provided in Appendix 4. The sum of £2373.95 has so far been spent out of the total of £4000 given directly to the Group, leaving a balance to date of £1626.05 left out of the airport grant and held for the Group in Cramond Association funds.

Photograph record

See Appendix 5.

Acknowledgements

Help from the following is acknowledged:

CEC West Edinburgh Parks Team (Douglas Cruickshank)
CEC Parks & Greenspace Service, Forestry Division (Steven Webley & Ruthe Davies)
CEC Natural Heritage Officer (David Kyles)
CEC Park Rangers (Fiona Underhill)
Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust (Ross Woodside)
Edinburgh Airport Community Grants Board
Friends of the River Almond Walkway (FRAW) and Cramond & Barnton Community Council for the participation of some of their members in this work; and FRAW also for the very generous offer to use their equipment and to share the cost of equipment.
John Dods of Cramond Heritage Trust for his advice.
Historic Environment Scotland for its permission to undertake certain aspects of the work which required scheduled monument consent.

Further reading

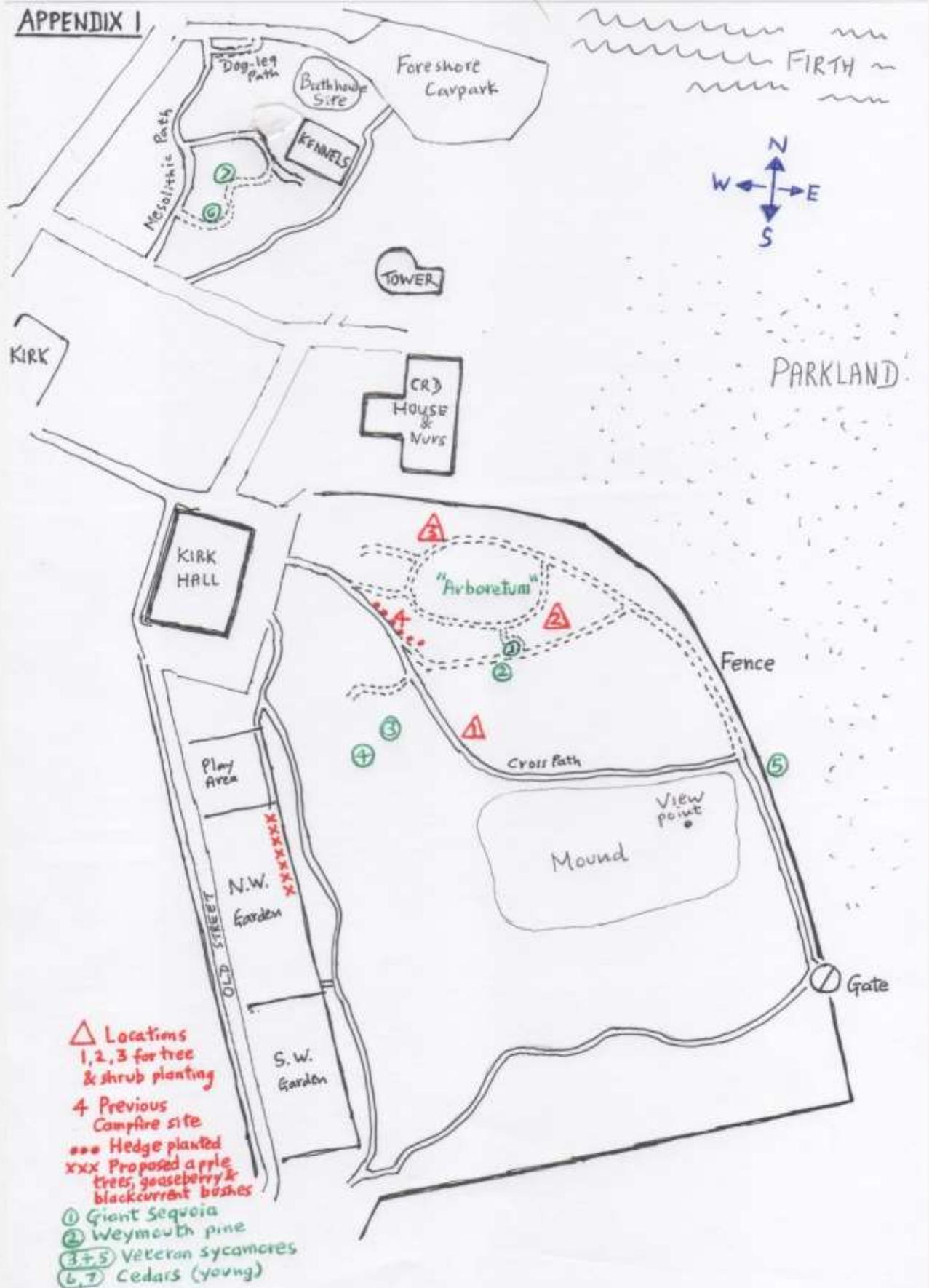
Marta McGlynn Associates. *Historic Cramond conservation, management and interpretation plan*. July 2003 (Commissioned by the City of Edinburgh Council).

Lewis Charles Watt. *A management plan for the historic grounds of Cramond House*. April 2016 (4th year undergraduate dissertation for BSc (Hons) in Horticulture and Plantsmanship).

Dr Stefan Slater
Chairman
Woodlands Group
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22 October 2018.

APPENDIX I



- △ Locations 1, 2, 3 for tree & shrub planting
- ⊕ Previous Campfire site
- Hedge planted
- xxx Proposed a pple trees, gooseberry & blackcurrent bushes
- ① Giant Sequoia
- ② Weymouth pine
- ③ & ⑤ Veteran sycamores
- ⑥, ⑦ Cedars (young)

APPENDIX 2

POSSIBLE PLANTINGS

Trees

Magnolia
Lilac
Laburnum
Tulip
Rowan
Aspen
Pink Hawthorn
Pink Chestnut
Ginkgo biloba
Yellow buckeye
Walnut
Cherry
Plum
Damson
Apple

Shrubs & Flowers

Honeysuckle
Jasmine
Clematis
Forsythia
Viburnum
Hydrangia
Phlox erector
Meadow-mix

APPENDIX 3

TREES PREVIOUSLY SURVEYED from which notable specimens will be labelled by plaques bearing their common and Latin names and approximate year of planting

	<u>Numbers</u>
Sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatinus</i>) (several 18 th C & three 17 th C)	93
Holly - Common (<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>)	19
Lime - Common (<i>Tilia x europaea</i>)	13
Yew (<i>Taxus baccata</i>)	8
Holly – Variegated (<i>Ilex aquifolium</i> “Golden Queen”)	5
Beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>)	5
Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>)	5
Cedar – Deodar (<i>Cedrus deodara</i>)	4
Pine – Corsican (<i>Pinus nigra</i>)	4
Pine – Western White (<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>)	3
Maple – Norway (<i>Acer platanoides</i>)	3
Hemlock - Western (<i>Tsuga heterophylla</i>)	3
Chestnut – Horse (<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>)	2
Chestnut – Red Horse (<i>Aesculus x camea</i>)	2
Whitebeam (<i>Sorbus aria</i>)	2
Pine – Scots (<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>)	2
Redwood – Giant Sequoia (<i>Sequoiadendron giganteum</i>) (late 19thC)	2
Redwood – Coast (<i>Sequoia sempervirens</i>)	1
Pine – Weymouth (<i>Pinus strobus</i>)	1
Larch (<i>Larix decidua</i>)	1
Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>)	1
Birch – Downy (<i>Betula pubescens</i>)	1
Whitebeam – Swedish (<i>Sorbus x intermedia</i>)	1
Maple – Cappadocicum (<i>Acer cappadocicum</i>)	1
Cherry – Kanzan (<i>Prunus</i> “Kanzan”)	1
Plum – Myrobalan (<i>Prunus cerasifera</i>)	1
Gean (<i>Prunus avium</i>)	1

Altogether 208 trees were surveyed in 2003, of which 23 were dead or extensively decayed, some of which were to be felled or had already fallen. They are not included in the above list of 185 trees. In addition to them, there are nine young trees planted in 2005 as replacements for the felled trees: a monkey-puzzle, a giant sequoia, two dawn redwoods, a Brewer’s weeping spruce, three cedars (including an Atlantic cedar) and a eucalyptus.

APPENDIX 4

CRAMOND ASSOCIATION WOODLANDS GROUP RECORD OF EXPENSES

	£	Accumulating Totals £	Stefan Reimb- ursed £
Oct, 2015: John Crutchfield* - strimmer wires	17.00		
Oct, 2015: Stefan Slater – wheelbarrowing planks	<u>6.38</u>		
	23.38	23.38	23.38
26-11-15: John Crutchfield* – 50% of brush cutter	35.00		
John Crutchfield* - other related items	<u>26.18</u>		
	61.18	84.56	
02-02-16: Duncan Fraser* – weed fabric (3 rolls)	72.00		
Duncan Fraser* - timber & stakes	<u>16.42</u>		
	88.42	172.98	
17-03-16: Stefan Slater - weed fabric (3 rolls)	47.97	220.95	
18-03-16: Stefan Slater - NWH Group transfer 2 loads (c 30 tons) road scalpings @£65/hr +VAT (2.5 hrs) + £1.20 debit card charge	196.20	417.15	393.77
07-04-16: Stefan Slater – ground cover fabric (2 rolls)	31.98	449.13	
21-04-16: Stefan Slater – ground cover fabric (3 rolls)	47.97	497.10	79.95
02-08-16: Stefan Slater – ground cover fabric (4 rolls)	63.96	561.06	
18-10-16: Stefan Slater – ground cover fabric (3 rolls)	47.97	609.03	111.93
22-12-16: Stefan Slater – NWH Group transfer & grab- -unload road scalpings @£65/hr (3 hrs) + £5	200.00	809.03	
27-12-16: John Crutchfield* - 50% of a Stihl Handheld Blower (2-Stroke)	105.40	914.43	
[* Each reimbursed by SDS]			
05-01-17: Stefan Slater – ground cover fabric (6 rolls)	95.94	1010.37	401.34

	£	Accumulating Totals £	Stefan Reimb- ursed £
06-04-17: Stefan Slater – weed fabric (6 rolls)	95.94	1106.31	95.94
10-05-17: Stefan Slater – 18 tonnes aggregate	407.59	1513.90	407.59
16-05-17: Stefan Slater – quantity of screws to fit timber edging of path	11.09		
16-05-17: Stefan Slater – sandpaper & sealant, same	<u>13.99</u> 25.08	1538.98	25.08
12-09-17: Stefan Slater – weed fabric (4 rolls)	49.99	1588.97	
22-09-17: Stefan Slater – weed fabric (4 rolls) + wood varnish for way-post sign	56.98	1645.95	106.97
23-01-18: KR Landscaping** – clearance of campfire site, ground rotavated & hawthorn / beech hedge planted	480.00	2125.95	
15-02-18: Stefan Slater – weed fabric (2 rolls)	20.00	2145.95	20.00
23-02-18: Capital Tree Service** - tree-felling	228.00	2373.95	

[** Each paid directly by Cramond Association cheque]



Mud, mud, glorious mud: photos 1 → 3 on 15/12/15, 03/02/16, 18/02/16



Stefan cutting-out a drainage channel, 18/02/16; David wheelbarrowing road scalpings, 20/05/16; then aggregate, 03/08/16



John C & David at dog-leg, 19/10/16; Alison, Margery, Anthony & David loading scalplings, 25/10/16; Duncan & Margery at the Mesolithic site path, 25/01/17



Saved from certain death, it's growing ! 04/04/15 → 11/07/16, its rescuer, Stefan



Campfire, 05/10/16; Snowdrops, 27/02/15; and the Brewer's weeping spruce, 05/10/16



Eucalyptus, 17/04/15; Giant Sequoia, 05/10/16; and ca 350 year-old sycamore, 01/11/14



Happy days: at bonfire - Robin, John B, Tom & Anthony; then tea's up - Robin, Anthony, John C, John B, Tom, Peter & Alison, 17/04/15