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Historic Cramond

Cramond's Heritage

The Cramond Fish

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"The Cramond Association is a thriving local community association dedicated to looking after the special nature of Cramond, Barnton and Cammo. We encourage people to take an interest in the local area and to ensure the preservation, sound development and improvement of its features."

Visit our website

www.cramondassociation.org.uk

or e-mail us on

info@cramondassociation.org.uk

The Maltings, Heritage Trust and Information Centre

This is open throughout the summer months, from April to October, 14.00— 16.00hrs (Sat & Sun) and daily during the Edinburgh Festival. Here you will find a good range of information about the village, and its environs, since the date of the Roman occupation (next to the café).



Cramond Village at the riverside.

How to Get to Old Cramond Brig

By Bus:

Take the Lothian Region Bus, number 41, from Edinburgh to Cramond. Get off at The Whitehouse on Whitehouse Road. Go back to the junction at Braepark Road then walk down that road to the riverside—Cramond Brig. Alternatively, take the South Queensferry, number 40, bus to the Cramond Bridge Inn & Restaurant on Queensferry Road, cross the road (carefully if coming from Edinburgh), walk through the car park and turn right down the hill to Old Cramond Brig.

By Car:

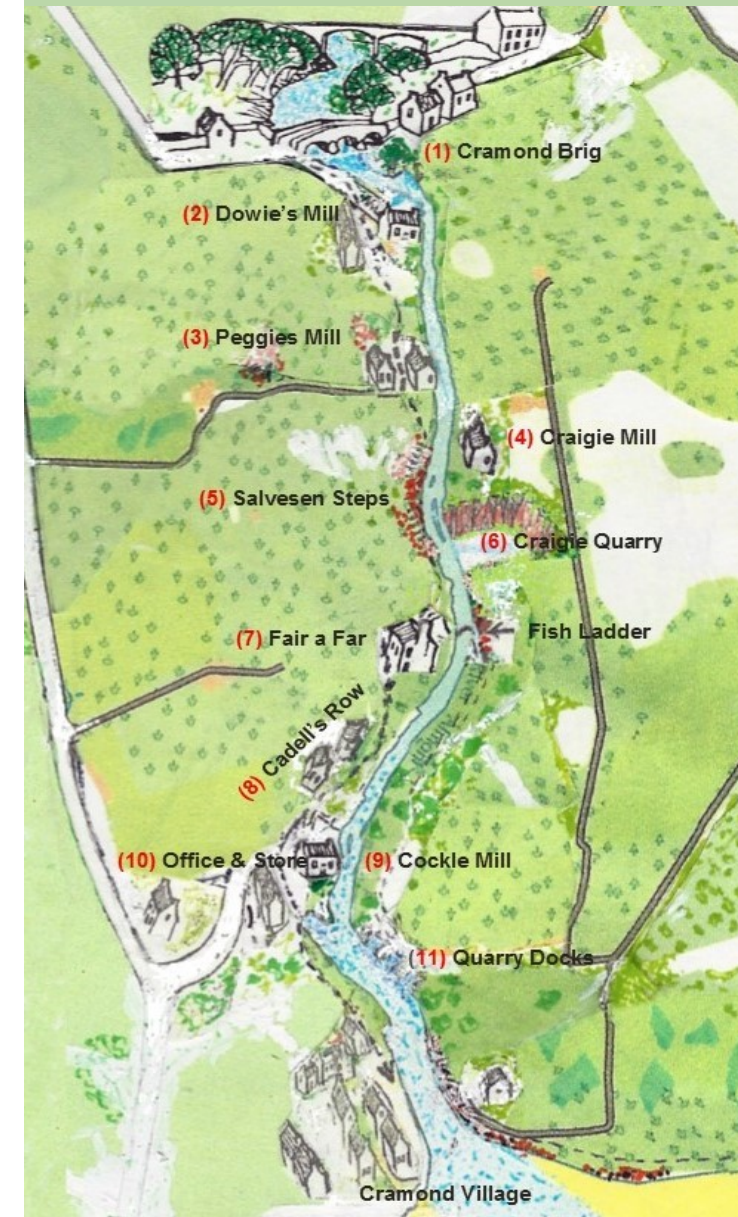
Follow the A90 to Barnton then take the B9085, signposted to Cramond, to Braepark Road on your left, at the bottom of this road there is a car park near the children's play area. Alternatively, drive to Cramond Village, there is a good public car park on the right near the bottom of Cramond Glebe Road, just before Cramond Inn, and you can undertake the walk in reverse.

The Cramond Association

Promoting the amenity of the community of Cramond, Barnton and Cammo and safeguarding its heritage



Walk the Cramond Old Mill Trail



N.B. This diagram is for guidance only.

Introduction: The diagram on the front page will help you to explore the Old Mill Trail along the riverside. The location numbers on the map are referenced () in the following commentary. The distance is 1 mile and, should you take a little time to look around the various sites, the walk will take approx 1 hour.

Old Cramond Brig (1)

This marked the boundary between Edinburghshire and Linlithgowshire. The actual date of origin of the old 'Brig' is not known, although thought to be late 1400s. However, in 1587 the bridge was in such poor condition that passage was said to be near impossible. An Act of Parliament was required to instruct the landowners, on both sides of the boundary, to have repairs undertaken "to enable travellers to make the crossing of the River Almond to the Queens Ferry".

The bridge was rebuilt in 1619 and repaired again in 1687; 1761; 1776; and 1854 - the dates have been inscribed on the wall above the central arch of the bridge.

Old Cramond Brig >>>



This medieval bridge was the site of the rescue of King James V by Jock Houison. This legendary tale of rescue was immortalised by Sir Walter Scott when he had the story 'of providing the King with a basin of water and napkin' re-enacted during the visit of King George IV to Edinburgh in 1822.

Cramond Brig in 2012 >>>>



A new bridge (Rennie's 8 Arched Bridge) and road were built close by in 1823. Then, in 1963, Rennie's Bridge was replaced to ensure that the roadway out of Edinburgh would

be capable of taking the traffic going to and from the Forth Road Bridge.

Dowie's Mill (2)

The name is said to date from when David ("Dowie") Strachan was the owner of The Whitehouse and its lands in 1750. He was a partner in the Smith and Wright Co which bought the lower mills at Cramond (Cockle and Fair a Far Mills) in 1752. However, it was when Dowie's and Peggies Mills were bought by Wm Cadell in 1781/82 that they were converted to assist with his Iron Works venture.



Watercolour of Dowie's mill cottages c1896

Spade making became one of the Cramond Iron Company's great specialities during the 18th century and it was during this time that Dowie's employed a colony of nail makers. At a later date the mill was operated as a saw mill and timber production unit for Cadell.



Dowie's Mill Cottages and the riverside ruins (2013)

Some of the worker's cottages remain together with Primrose Cottage, the mill dam and fish ladder. Other remains of the old mill are still visible at the river side, i.e.

sections of the sluice and sluice gate socket ruins lie close to the mill dam.

At the riverside this site (see photo) is now an approved location for Hindus and Sikhs to scatter the ashes of their loved ones into the flowing waters of the River Almond - under conditions approved by Edinburgh City Council.



Peggies Mill (3)

This mill, and Dowie's, belonged to the Whitehouse Estate. They were known in the 16th and 17th centuries as the upper mills and were feud (leased) to the mill operators until sold in 1750.

When the mill was bought by William Cadell in 1782 it became part of his spade making operations. In 1807, following a downturn of trade, it was converted to paper making and became part of Cadell's Auchendinny paper making operation. However, the water of the Almond was found to have too many impurities and was only suited to the production of course cartridge paper.

Peggies Mill before demolition, in 1966.



Note — Peggies Mill continued below.

<Peggies Mill Continued>

The Cadell family closed their operations in 1865 and the mills were taken over by the Cramond Estate but an attempt to save the operation was not successful. The upper mills were then purchased by John MacKay in 1877. He used the premises as a manufacturing chemist's production unit. Following his death, his son George continued the business before changing to the production of gelatine. The mill was leased, then later sold to Miss Didcock of Primrose Cottage (1923), who undertook furniture production here until moving to Gorgie in 1934.

The buildings were demolished in the late 1960s when the area was sold for housing development.

There are few remains of the mill but you can find sections of the stone foundations and remnants of the mill lade, sluice gates and floor slab.



Craigie Mill (4)

This was located on the opposite bank of the river and was an old grain and waulk (*washing, stretching and beating of woven yarn*) mill which belonged to the Craigie Estate in the 1400s. In the early 1700s the mill was operated by Mr Archibald Lunn, who also leased Peggies and Dowie's mills. An old estate map dated 1736 shows that there was a bridlebridge (a horse bridge) over the river to support his operations. When he died, in 1740, his wife and daughter continued the operation for many years but the mill went into decline.

The area was later purchased by Lord Rosebery, about 1772. He did not operate the mill for long but did raise court actions in 1778 against the mill owners on the east bank of the river, claiming that their operations were "polluting his improved estate developments". He then made another claim that they were "taking the waters

from his mill operations". His claims were not upheld by the Court and his interests in the mill gave way to quarrying nearby (see section (6) below).



Remains of Craigie Mill (2013).

Salvesen Steps (5)

Go up the stairway ahead, "the Salvesen Steps" – named after Captain Keith Salvesen of Inveralmond. He gifted a strip of land to Edinburgh Council and heavily subscribed to the construction of the stairway in the 1960s. It was following this act of generosity that it became possible to walk from Cramond Brig to Cramond Village. When you reach the top of the steps look across the river to see the remains of Craigie Quarry - most easily seen during the winter months when there are no leaves on the trees. This quarry was opened by Dalmeny Estates following Lord Rosebery purchasing the land.

Craigie Quarry (6)

The Dalmeny Estate operated this quarry and the stone was transported down river, out around the rock face, via a carriageway. The track was cantilevered over the river to the land-based track which started above the fish ladder.

Craigie Quarry remains >>



When you reach Fair a Far mill look closely at the cliff face opposite and you will see the sockets holes where the cantilevered track was mounted. You can follow this line of holes right up to the edge of the quarry.

Fish Ladder 2013 >>>



The carriages were then horse drawn down to the loading bays at **Craigie Quarry Docks** (see section (11) below). The land carriage route can best be seen during the winter months when the trees are bare.

Fair a Far Mill (7)

This was a former corn mill operated by the Cramond Estate as part of their Fair a Far Farm operations. It was purchased at the same time as Cockle Mill (1752) but was not converted to iron working until 1759. The shell of the main building still survives along with traces of the adjoining buildings. The millhouse has scrape marks on the south wall (said to be from the mill wheel). The mill wheel was water driven and geared to a smaller wheel, the axle then entered through the wall to drive the tilt hammer and grindstones.



Ruin of Fair a Far Mill 2013.

Note << Fair a Far continued overleaf>>

Inside the ruin there are the remains of the corbels that were used to support machinery drive shafts for the hammer, bellows, grindstones, etc. The lintel above the southwest door (i.e. nearest the weir) carries the date 1737, and a marriage lintel inscribed BW: IL 1759, from one of the adjacent buildings, has been mounted above the north archway of the mill. The current weir was built in 1839 and the City Valuation Records show that the mill was still operational in 1873.

The floods along the Almond Valley in 1935 destroyed many of the buildings. The ruins of the mill remains, plus the weir and fish ladder, are now grade B listed structures. Some remains of the other buildings can still be found in the area, particularly during the winter months (see photo).



Cadell's Row (8)

As you walk further along the track you will see Cadell's Row (photo below). These homes were built for the iron mill workers, as were some of those on Whitehouse Road. The homes are still occupied, albeit much upgraded with



modern conveniences. The manager's house "Almondbank" also stands at the crest of the hill, on Whitehouse Road.

Cockle Mill (9)

This is thought to be the site of the oldest mill in the area and was in the possession of the Bishops of Dunkeld, who owned Cramond Tower and had their Abbey at Inchcolm, in 1179.



1896 Water Colour of Cockle Mill

The old grain mill was then owned by the Cramond Estate prior to purchase by Smith and Wright Co, Leith, in 1752. They converted it to become an iron rolling and slitting mill, producing iron hoops for barrels, carts and barrows, etc. The main wheel of this mill collapsed in 1853, following which the mill was converted to steam power. However, a lack of funding and the competitive pressure, principally from the Carron Iron works in Stirlingshire, meant that the decline of the mills continued.

Downstream from the ruins of the mill dam (below the island) you can see the remains of a pile of slag (iron waste) that was dumped in the river. The mill stood in the grassy area between the office and the river (see 1896 Painting above) and the main surviving building has now been converted to a B&B and Riverside Café.

Stores and Office Block (10)

This building was the Cramond Iron Co offices. Opposite the café you can find the remains of the small dock and sluice outlet (now heavily silted). The river is tidal up to



this mill and sea-going sloops (wind driven boats) were hauled (by horse) to this dock at high tide.

Craigie Quarry Docks (11)

As you walk further downstream, on the opposite bank of the river, close to Cramond Boat Club (boat park), you can see three stone structured bays set into the riverside.

Craigie Quarry Loading Bays 2013 >>>



These bays were constructed to enable stone from the Craigie Quarry to be loaded on to barges for shipping to Leith Docks where it was then transferred to other transport. Much of the stone was bound for the Edinburgh 'New Town' developments, with the balance being shipped to other destinations.

Cramond Village (12)

Cramond Village and the site where the Roman Lioness sculpture was found, in 1997, lies ahead of the Boat Club (there is a good information board at the site). The Lioness sculpture can be seen in the National Museum of Scotland.

Below, a typical summer scene at Cramond.

