The Romans and Cramond

One of the most memorable events for me, during my past three years on the Committee, was when we hosted a Roman Day in the grounds beside the Roman fort, next to the Church Halls, in May 2018. We welcomed the historic re-enactment group, the Antonine Guard, a squad of twelve Roman soldiers and one Roman civilian lady. Over the course of that day, they pitched camp and demonstrated ancient Roman skills of weaving, cooking, art and weapon handling, and of course there was much marching about. (Remember “Carry On Cleo” - “sin, dex, sin, dex ...” “left, right, left, right...”?)

These photos capture the flavour of that day, blessed with glorious sunshine, for those of you who missed it. (Maybe you were at home watching the Duke and Duchess of Sussex getting married instead!)
There are plenty of websites and excellent books about the Romans in Cramond, if you want to find out more information, but here are five pieces of Roman Cramond trivia (another Latin word!):

- According to Tripadvisor, the “Roman ruins” are the number one reason why visitors come to Cramond, which one reviewer describes as “an interesting little backwater”.

- The Romans occupied their fort at Cramond twice, with a gap of about 40 years. It would be like waving goodbye to the neighbours from hell… and then years later, they move back!

- The Cramond Lioness, a Roman sandstone sculpture found in the River Almond in 1997, is now, with hindsight, reckoned to be the most important Roman find in Britain in the last 50 years. It is now on display in “Early People: Level 1” of the National Museum of Scotland in Chambers Street, here in Edinburgh.

- A stone altar, also found locally, is dedicated in Latin to the “Mother Goddesses of the Parade Ground” ("matres campestres"), proving that the Romans really did have a god for every situation.

- Wikipedia’s article about the Romans in Cramond states that “since 2000 there are plans to turn the Roman remains at Cramond into a tourist attraction with a visitor centre and museum” and also features an article from the “Scotsman” newspaper of 29th August 2008: “Roman fort will be centrepiece of new tourist attraction”…. and guess what, we’re still waiting….!

Jennifer Shearer