



# Newsletter

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## Cammo Canal Cleaning



*BEFORE: Overgrown, silted-up, debris-strewn canal*



*AFTER: Trees thinned, canal cleaned and refilled*

By far, one of the most noticeable events of the past six months was the cleaning of the canal and the thinning of trees on the canal banks. The canal was last cleaned out in the 1980's, and over the years since then, it had become a lifeless, overgrown, silted-

up, debris-strewn, unsightly body of water, devoid of any form of aquatic life. In the latter part of 2016, the Forest & Natural Heritage department of the City Council opened up the canal banks by cutting down any poorly-formed and encroaching trees within about 5m. of the canal edges. At the same time, the canal was drained by the Friends of Cammo in preparation for the bottom of the canal to be cleared of almost 40 years of silt and debris accumulation. A grant of £9,006 was obtained from the People's Postcode Lottery for this work, and also for tree and wildflower purchase.

Work commenced on 10th January, and the first task was to divert the continuously running inflow at the west end, which was achieved by laying a diversionary pipeline all the way along the north bank of the canal, which terminated at



*North half-breadth of canal cleaned.  
Note diversionary pipeline*

the canal outflow at the east end. The contractor then used a tracked mechanical digger to level the sloping and uneven north bank of the canal to provide a stable working platform from which the digger was able to traverse the whole length of the canal, and reach out over the north half-breadth. The digger then began to scoop out about 60cms. of silt and debris from the length of the canal bottom on the north side, and this was deposited in the lower part of Low Meadow via two large wheeled dump trucks, which ran a shuttle service between the digger and the deposit area. Eventually the dump trucks sank up to their axles in the soft muddy ground and could no longer



be used, so a smaller tracked dump-truck was brought in, and this proved to be very successful. When the northern half-breadth of the canal was eventually cleaned out, the digger then entered into the canal, via temporary gangplanks, and began to remove silt and debris from the southern half-breadth of the canal. During silt removal operations, a bottom drain pipe, sealed by a 15 cm. wooden plug was located close to the sluice arrangement at the eastern end of the canal and, about 15 metres from the western end, a previously unknown concrete boom stretched across the canal from side to side, which was assumed to be a form of silt barrier. At the western end of the canal, the digger removed soil from the collapsed canal bank and exposed the stonework of the apsidal end.

*(Continued overleaf)*



*Digger in canal. Note silt barrier and pipeline*

**Cammo Canal Clearance** (*continuation*) When the canal had been completely cleaned out, the digger then replaced the soil along the north bank forming it into a natural slope, filled in the deeply rutted track to Low Meadow, and finally the diversionary pipeline was removed from the western inflow.



Deposited silt in Low Meadow

The whole operation occupied about ten working days, and the City Council specified that an archaeological watching brief was carried out throughout, which added £1,250 onto the cost of the project. This amount was paid for out of F.o.C. general funds. The final invoice exceeded the initial estimate by £2,499 due to extra work involved, and this amount was generously contributed by the Forest and



The west end of the canal showing the apsidal end

|Natural Heritage department of the City Council.. The deposited silt and debris has left a blight on the lower part of Low Meadow , which is completely covered by a layer of thick, black sludge, but hopefully, it will not be too long before new vegetation grows through this layer, and the meadow is restored to its former self. On 2nd February, sluice boards were put in place, and the canal was allowed to fill naturally from the inflow at the western end.

On the 26th February, a band of volunteers from Edinburgh University Dirty Week-enders club re-seeded the complete north bank of the canal with wildflower seed, and tidied up path edges etc.

## Local Nature Reserve Status

Designation of Cammo Estate as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) had been supported by the Transport & Environment Committee in November 2016, and officially came into force on 28th December 2016.

This is now the 7th LNR in Edinburgh, and the 73rd LNR in Scotland.

## Stables Vegetation Cut Back

It is nice to see that notice was taken of the report in the last issue of Newsletter about the overgrown state of the Stables building at Cammo. All trees growing inside, and in close proximity to this building, were cut down on 30th January 2017. This has opened up the Stables and, hopefully, will prevent any further damage to the structure of the building.

## Pinetum Sculptures Re-attached to Wall

The stone sculptures of two pineapples and a vase, which were wrenched from their anchor points on the sloping wall at the Pinetum last summer by vandals, were eventually replaced on the 16th December 2016. The sculptures, which were damaged and discoloured by being placed in a fire, were taken to the Hermitage of Braid, where they were cleaned up and restored. The sculptures were secured with stronger anchor points.



## New Tree Plantation at West Field

A major planting exercise was held on the 22nd of January, when 200 trees and shrubs were planted in the dip at West Field by about 18 volunteers. Some of the volunteers were from our neighbouring conservation group Friends of the River Almond, some were from our own volunteers group, and some were just casual volunteers, but all were extremely welcome and much appreciated. Nick Benge had previously marked out where the various trees were to be planted, so it was only a matter of doing the actual planting, and then fitting guards against moles and deer, before finally staking each individual tree against the prevailing wind. All this work occupied a good deal of time, but thanks to the large number of volunteers, the project was completed before lunch.

## Farewell from your Editor

As this is the last Newsletter edited by Harry Taylor, who has now retired from the Committee, he bids all members good health and happiness in the future, and wishes your new editor every success.

## Dates for your Diary

**Litter Pick:** Help tidy up Cammo for Summer (equipment supplied)

**Ordinary General Meeting:** Come along - put forward your views

**Ordinary General Meeting:** Reports of activities & comments

**Litter Pick:** Help tidy up Cammo for Winter (equipment supplied)

### Meet at:

Cammo Lodge

Cammo Lodge

Cammo Lodge

Cammo Lodge

### Date:

Apr. 09th

1000/1200

Jun. 07th

1930/2100

Sept. 06th

1930/2100

Nov. 12th

1000/1200

**N.B.** It is difficult to predict when work-days will be required. However, such work-days will be promulgated by email, giving as much notice as possible...

## Cammo Home Farm Demolished



Cammo Home Farm under demolition



Cammo Farm demolished and site levelled

On 2nd November 2016, demolition work commenced at Cammo Home Farm and adjacent buildings. Work continued until 23 November, when the farm buildings were completely raised to the ground, and the site levelled. Construction of the new dwelling house has not yet started, but it is expected that it will commence soon.

## 19th Annual General Meeting

This event was held on 1st March 2017 in Cammo Lodge. Chairperson Angela Geddes summarised the events of the past year, which included the production of a Vision for Cammo statement; another successful Barbeque with about 300 attendees; the successful application for a Postcode Lottery grant; cleaning of the canal and tree thinning on its banks; major tree plantings and painting and decoration of the Lodge.

During the year we said goodbye to Harry Taylor, who retired at the AGM after 19 years service; and we welcomed Shay Dean onto the committee.

The accounts showed we ended the year with £2,849 general funds and £8,399 restricted funds (grant money still to be spent). Since the year end, most of this grant money has been spent on the Canal and surrounding areas.

Group membership had reached a total of 173 households during the year, but 2 members had died, 2 members had moved away from the area, and 3 members had decided not to continue their membership. Unfortunately, 19 members had not renewed their membership by March 2017, and so were removed from the membership list.

Since there were no nominations for committee members put forward, the existing members were all re-elected and agreed to continue in their present roles.

A third edition of the booklet 'A Short History of Cammo Estate' has been produced to include recent changes including the demolition of Cammo Home Farm; cleaning of the Canal and various tree works.

Cammo Estate has now been officially recognised as a Local Nature Reserve.

## Damage to Copper Beech

The large copper beech situated between the Pinetum and the Low Meadow has been damaged by the strong winds of recent days. The top section of the main trunk was snapped off and fell, partly blocking the path into the Pinetum. This was a very beautiful tree, especially in the late Spring, when all the fresh new copper-coloured leaves were highlighted by the sun. It will be interesting to see how well this tree recovers from the damage.



## S.W. Field Cut

On 3rd November last year, both the Larch Tree Meadow and S.W. Meadow were cut by the Forest & natural Heritage department of the city council. The new path across S.W. Meadow replaces what used to be just a very muddy track.

**Obituary** It is with deep sadness that we record the deaths of three long serving members during the last six months.

Ray Heyworth was one of the founder members of the Friends, and a staunch supporter of many work parties. He also acted as the Accounts Scrutineer for 15 years.

Morris Thompson was group Treasurer for just over a year, before having to relinquish membership because of ill-health. Margaret Rae was a long-standing member, and a well known figure in Cammo estate with her dog Seamus..

## Work Party 23rd October

The City Council had West, North, Home and South fields all cut on 14th October, so a work party was organised about a week later, to make use of the grass cuttings by raking them up and using them as a mulch around the young trees in the long hedgerow across South Field. On a rather overcast and threatening day 6 brave volunteers turned out, and the job was completed by 1 pm. when heavy rain commenced.

**Log Seats** On 13th October 2016, The Forest & Natural Heritage department installed two new log seats, one at Cammo House ruin, and the other at the east end of the canal. These seats replace the two, which were vandalised, and each consists of a large tree trunk of Swedish Whitebeam, cut with a flat surface on top, and staked to prevent movement.



14/01/2017

## Year at a Glance –1st March 2016 to 28th February 2017

**March:** (1) Friends of Cammo held their 18th AGM. (2) Clean-up of Cammo Lodge by Lynn Whitehead. **April:** (1) Carried out Litter Pick within estate. 8 bags of litter collected. (2) Grant of £9,006 awarded by Postcode Lottery Trust for canal cleaning and tree & wildflower purchase. **June:** Single bee-hive installed in special enclosure near North Gate. **July:** Cammo Canal was drained ready for silt & debris cleaning operations. **August:** Summer Barbeque attracted about 300 people despite cloudy weather. **September:** (1) Vision for Cammo finally drawn up by Committee after many re-drafts. (2) Key Safe installed at Cammo Lodge to hold Visitor Centre keys. **October:** Volunteers used cut field grass to mulch trees in hedgerow across South Field. **November:** (1) Carried out Litter Pick within estate. 9 bags of litter collected. (2) Painting & decoration of Cammo Lodge by Lynn Whitehead. **January:** (1) Planted 200 mixed species trees and shrubs in dip at West Field. (2) Commenced silt & debris removal from Cammo Canal. **February:** (1) Canal cleaned, drain sealed, and commenced to re-fill. (2) Sluice boards at canal put in position to control depth of water.

## New Steps at Cammo House

The photo shows the new steps leading up to Cammo House ruin, which were renewed on 9th December 2016. The previous steps were very uneven, worn and not very safe..



07/03/2017

## Beech Tree felled

The Beech tree about half-way between the Walled Garden and the Canal was felled on the 8th December 2016 because of poor structural integrity.



14/01/2017

## Lodge Snippets

Cammo Lodge was given a really good clean-out by Lynn Whitehead in March 2016, and in November last year the Lodge was closed for a week while Lynn painted and decorated the complete interior. She also had an electrician fix the defective ceiling lighting. In early 2017, because of a bad accident in the darkness outside the Lodge approaches, a time-controlled floodlight was installed on the corner of the building,

## Annual Payment Reminder

Once again, it is time to make your annual payment to Friends of Cammo. We very much appreciate the support of our members, and would be grateful if you could complete the attached annual payment form, using one of the specified payment methods, and return it to the Treasurer, Lynn Whitehead, 20 Cammo Crescent, Edinburgh, EH4 8DZ. Prompt payment is much appreciated.