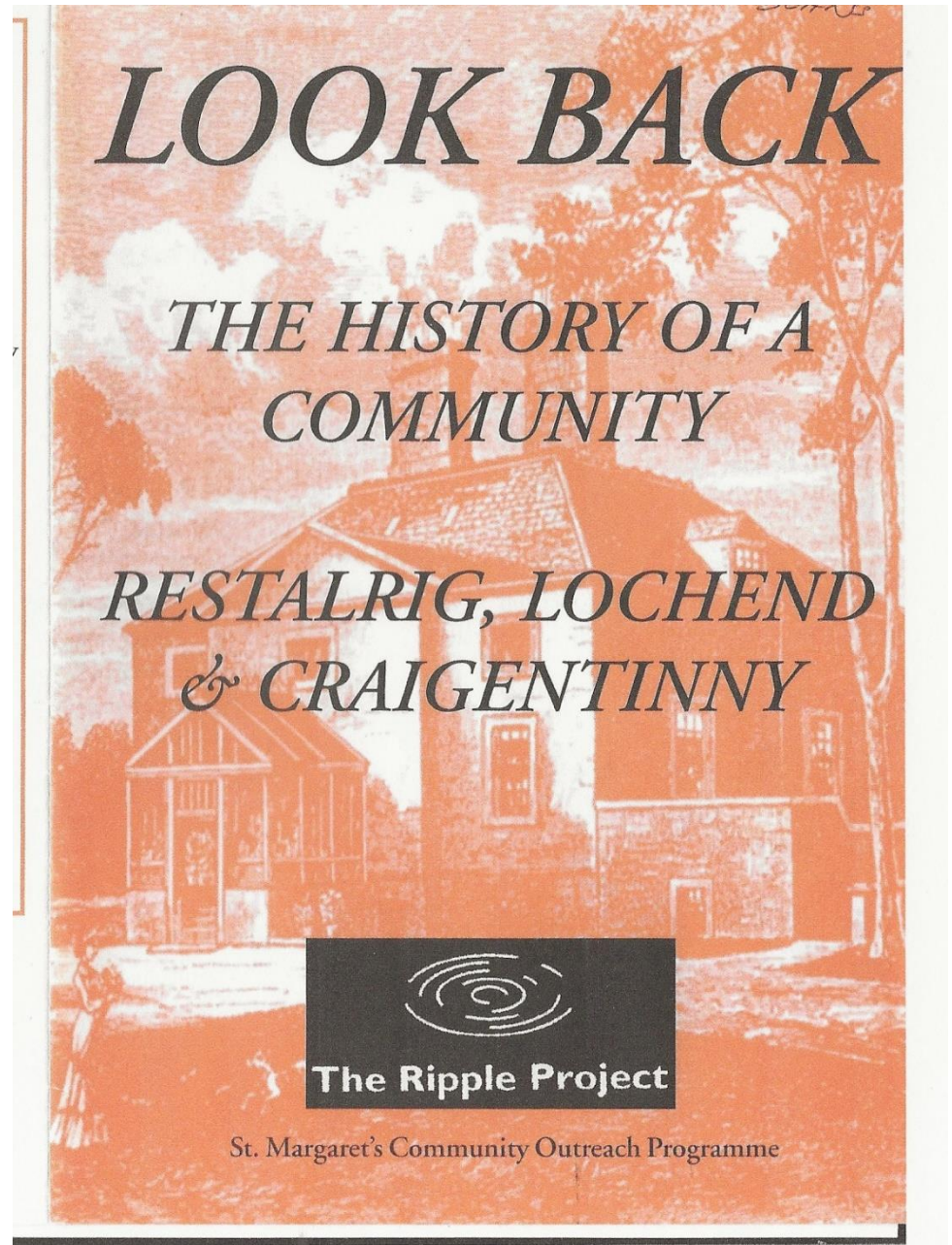


Created in the late-1990s by The Ripple Project, this *'Look Back'* leaflet was the inspiration behind a new heritage leaflet created as part of the 2022 Restalrig, Lochend and Craigentenny People's Parish Project.

Made when information wasn't readily available online, the *'Look Back'* leaflet provided an introduction to the history and heritage of the neighbourhood. Now, in 2022, there are many places on the web to help people discover local history so, rather than simply re-produce the contents of the *'Look Back'* leaflet, our project has created a new leaflet that complements it.

Included in the project resource pack, we hope our new leaflet will be as successful as this one was in helping generations of 'new and old' local residents explore the community and its rich social history.



“HISTORY? What history ?!?!”

If that's what you're thinking, then prepare to be surprised, because in fact a whole load of the stuff has happened right here in present day Restalrig, Lochend and Craigentenny. Though now largely an area of modern development and housing, a few historical landmarks nevertheless remain here, and these give us the basis from which we can build up a picture of the place in days gone by.

So we've been rummaging around a bit in the history books and have put together this little guide, where we ask you to have a think about the places on your doorstep and consider the past that lies behind them.

Can you imagine, for example, that centuries ago, when Restalrig was a fashionable little village famed for its strawberry gardens and tea parties, fine ladies and gents on day outings from

Edinburgh would stop by Marionville Road, eating fruit, sipping their tea, and resting their feet after the long walk from town?

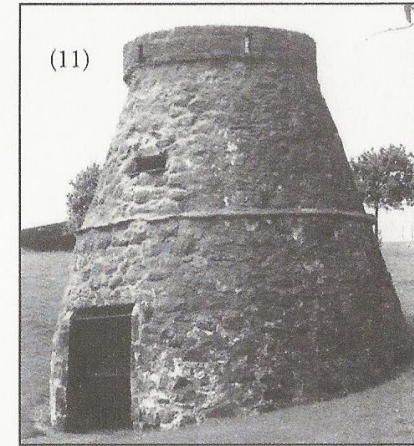
Or, that the area became an encampment for soldiers when Cromwell's armies marched on Leith in 1650, stopping at Jock's Lodge and, using Lochend House and Leith Grammar School as storage halls, camping out in the Restalrig area until their eventual defeat and withdrawal?

We have not tried to give a comprehensive account of local history - we just didn't have that much space. Rather, we can only give a rough introduction to certain aspects of our history. We hope we will at least arouse your interest and perhaps tell you something you didn't know about your community - past or present - giving you a glimpse of some local places as you may never have thought of them before...

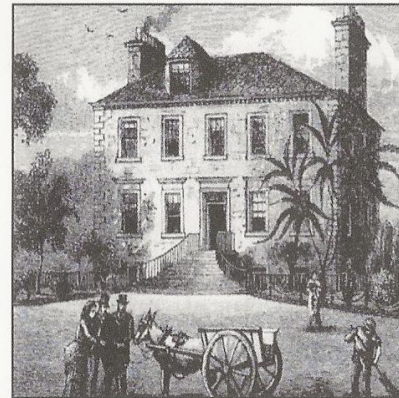


RESTALRIG VILLAGE IN ANCIENT TIMES - WHEN PILGRIMS CAME TO ST. TRIDUANA'S WELL TO HAVE THEIR EYES HEALED

You are standing in Lochend Park - it is 1645. Despite the dark night the skyline flickers, the place alive with noise and activity. You splutter, caught by the drift of smoke reeking from the kiln before you. Edinburgh and Leith are awash with the PLAGUE, and the kiln contains the clothes and belongings of several affected families - their things must be smoked to disinfect them. It is chilly and you stamp your feet for warmth, waiting for the smoking to end while the carts trundle past you, bringing the dead to the sea.



(11)



It is 1790. You are approaching Marionville House - home of Captain and Lady Macrae and host to some of the most fashionable parties in Edinburgh. There will be a theatre performance tonight, as is often their want, and Macrae and his wife are to play the leading parts. You lean back contentedly in the carriage, seeing the fine evening of entertainment and dancing drawing out before you, pleased to be part of this most desirable social scene...

This leaflet has been researched, written and designed by a small group of local Ripple Project volunteers.

If you are interested in joining this kind of project, look out for news of *The Ripple Project's Community Newspaper*. We'll need all kinds of volunteers and contributors.

Meantime, if you have any stories about local history or would be interested in further reminiscence or oral history projects, contact Ann Stewart, via the Ripple Project office on 0131 554 0422.

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Cover Illustration - Hawkhill House (12)

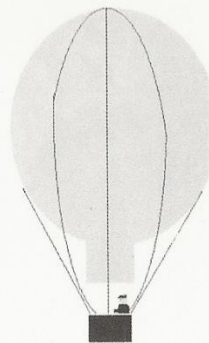
Hawkhill House was designed in 1757 by John Adam, and originally sat in a vast, tree-lined estate. It was later to be found sandwiched between the bakery and playing fields and for a time used as storage space for the sports grounds. Later, after much debate and despite the protestations of the Georgian Society who argued for its preservation, the house was demolished to make way for extended playing fields. Some of the present day terraces bear street names (Thornville, Ashville) which remind us of the variety of trees of the old estate which occupied the ground before them.

In 1559 Hawkhill was the scene of a battle when Elizabeth 1st of England sent troops at the request of John Knox to retain presbyterianism in Scotland. The queen regent of Scotland Mary of Guise, lay dying in Edinburgh Castle at this time. French troops landed at Leith to support the Catholic cause. English and French troops clashed at Hawkhill and a bloody battle ensued... The name *Hawkhill* means literally 'hill noted for hawks,' since King James III regularly went hawk hunting there.

Of *Restalrig House* (4), previously sited off Restalrig Road South and behind St. Ninian's School, there is also little trace: it was pulled down to make way for new high rise blocks in the 1960s. Restalrig House was built between 1815-17 for the lawyer Alexander Duncan and stood in a park of around 15 acres, surrounded by trees. When no longer a family residence it had a variety of uses. In July 1913 it was opened as St. Mary's Home orphanage. It was also used intermittently as extra accommodation for St. Ninian's Primary School, and for a while was acquired by the 'Community of Daughters of Charity' as a convent. During the 2nd World War it was even converted temporarily into a fire station!

Did you know?..

Few people would immediately think of Restalrig Village (9) in connection with Hot Air Ballooning - but believe it or not it was right here that the first flight ever made in Britain landed (albeit in a crash, after a somewhat thwarted attempt.) On August 27th 1784, James Tytler - a local ingenious eccentric and ballooning obsessive - set out to fly in his own air balloon, made of a simple packing crate and an old stove! In his desperate and somewhat rash attempt, he amazingly managed to get his makeshift craft off the ground at Comely Bank - where it rose to 200 feet, travelled half a mile and then crashed down in Restalrig Road! He emerged unhurt, - a laughing stock, thus referred to as 'Balloon Tytler' - yet nonetheless the first man in Britain to travel any distance in the air.



Correction: Comely Bank should read Comely Gardens. This was near Holyrood Park and is now called Spring Gardens. (People's Parish Project, 2022)



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The Barony of 'Lestralric'

The earliest records of this area date back to 1198. It was then all part of the ancient and powerful barony which stretched from Calton south to the Firth of Forth and east to the Figgate Whins. This barony included and ruled over the far less significant village of Leith! Records show it was then owned by a Norman adventurer's family, who had taken the name of their new lands - the Dunfermline Abbey Charter of 1198, mentions the names Thomas de Lestralric, and his father Edward. This family built the castle above Lochend Loch as their ancestral home, and lived there until the 1300s, a strong and influential family of their day.

The Barony was one big tract of farmland, divided into large rigs. Workers lived on the land and tended the fields for the Barons under a feudal system, whereby they often paid their rents in work or kind.

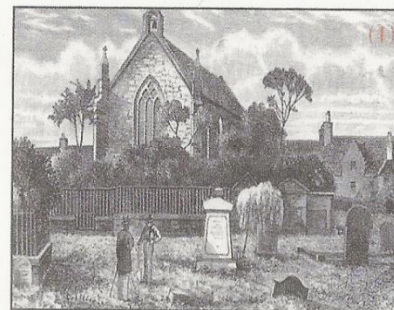
From The Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland 1882-85:

"Craigentenny ('Gaelic creag - an - teine' probably meaning 'rock of fire')

An estate with a mansion, in South Leith Parish, Midlothian. The property of Samuel Christie Miller Esquire, it extends over only 652 acres, yet is valued at £5,739 per annum. This high rental is due to the fact that here are the most extensive meadows in Scotland, all of which have been under regular sewage irrigation for upwards of 35 years. The produce is sold to cowkeepers £16 - £28 (in one year £44) per acre, and the grass per acre is estimated at 50 - 70 tonnes. It is cut five times a year and two men suffice to keep the ditches in order."

St Triduana (1)

No matter when the historical records may begin, legend tells us of an even longer history, as those familiar with the story surrounding the well at St. Margaret's Church will know. St. Triduana is a legendary figure who reputedly travelled to Scotland with St. Rule, carrying the relics of St. Andrew. She settled in Angus, but came to attract the attention of the Pictish Prince, Nectanavus. This horrified the pious girl. When she demanded what exactly he desired of her, he sent this reply: "The most excellent beauty of thine eyes, which if he obtain not, he will surely die". "What he seeketh he shall surely have" she replied. And with that, she plucked out her very eyes from their sockets and, sticking them on a thorn, presented them to Nectan's servant with the words "Take that which your Prince desireth". Thereafter she retired to St. Margaret's in 'Lestalyrk', where she lived until her death in the year 510. The special spring waters then became renowned for their healing powers and attracted pilgrims with eye complaints for centuries to come.



St Margaret's Church (1)

Records of the Parish Church of 'Lestralric' date from the 12th Century. In 1435, ownership of the Church was transferred to Thomas Logan of Restalrig. In 1487 the parish was granted the status of a Collegiate Church - one of four in Edinburgh. This meant it gained a good deal of independence from the Diocese and soon it had assumed a position of great importance as a Royal Chapel known and befriended by the King and host to the holy shrine of Saint Triduana.

In 1560 this era came to an end with the Reformation. The first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland decided that 'the kirk of Restalrig, as a monument of idolatry, be rased and utterly casten downe and destroyed', an instruction which was carried out to the full. The wish, however, that it be 'suppressed and extinct from henceforth and for ever', was not upheld. Though the site stood empty and desolate for around 300 years, the church in total ruins, it was finally restored in 1837. This was due much to the efforts of the Restalrig Friendly Society - a group of local people and officials who worked to take care of churchyard, arranged proper burials, and saw to the education of the young people and the needs of local poor.

Next to the Church are the restored remains of St. Triduana's Well. Originally built by Sir Robert Logan around 1438, the upper storey was a chapel, the lower a vaulted area which contained the well. The upper storey was demolished during the Reformation in 1560, but the lower was used as a burial chamber for the Logan Family. For some obscure reason the lower chamber was covered with an earthen mound until the twentieth century - removed only in 1907 on the orders of the Earl of Moray to reveal the lower chamber, which was then restored. The well still produces a fairly constant supply of water, which is kept at a fixed level by a concealed electric pump.

St. Ninian's Roman Catholic Church (2)

Building on this long standing Christian tradition, 1906 saw the beginnings of a new parish church. It opened on the 6th January and took its wider congregation from the ever increasing Catholic population of Leith, Portobello, Piershill Barracks, Easter Road, Meadowbank and Dalgety. Originally the Church was built on what had been farmland on Kemp's Corner, and first moved to its present day site on Marionville Road in 1933, when again growth in population, particularly due to expanding housing estates and new flats at Piershill, had rendered the old church accommodation too small.

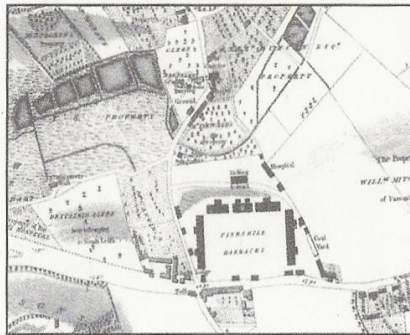


Piershill Barracks(7)

By the mid-1800s Restalrig was home to all sorts of people, including scholars, the clergy, farmers and soldiers. In fact, military life was to play a major role in the area for a long time thanks to the proximity of the barracks at Piershill.

These were first planned in 1793 and on their completion were principally used as quarters for cavalry regiments. Piershill was erroneously believed to be named after a Colonel Piers said to be stationed there, but it is now accepted that the name is a corruption of the nearby Parishall Lands. In 1909 the barracks were deemed to be unfit for further use by cavalry. The Royal Scots Greys were the regiment occupying the barracks at that time, and were posted elsewhere, which caused a public furore and the hasty erection of Redford Barracks to maintain a cavalry regiment in the city. The barracks were maintained for field regiments until their closure in 1934.

Although Piershill Barracks were demolished in 1936 anyone in search of their site would have no difficulty in finding them. The new housing that was built in their place used the original foundations, so the layout of the buildings is almost exact and most of



the facing stone was re-used. The new housing kept the parade grounds as open spaces, one had a bowling green installed but it was removed a long time ago. A paddling pool was planned for the second square but this did not come to fruition, and today both squares are playgrounds for the children of the residents.

St. Margaret's Works (8)

Another factor influencing the flavour of local life and work was the railway works, which again brought a great many people to the area...

This occupied the site of what is now Meadowbank House and part of the stadium but was demolished in the mid-sixties. The North British Railway Company built them in 1846, primarily for the manufacture of locomotives for use on the East Coast line.

A total of 33 engines were constructed before the building of engines was moved to Cowlairs near Glasgow, following the company's amalgamation with the Edinburgh & Glasgow Railway in 1865.

St. Margaret's remained an important centre for servicing and repair. In its heyday it was responsible for 221 locomotives, employed over 1,500 men, and had sub-sheds as far away as Galashiels and Dunbar.

By 1927 over 300 tons of coal per day was being shovelled by hand into four wheeled tubs for delivery to tenders and bunkers. St. Margaret's never had mechanical coal loading equipment installed.

After the Second World War, the works were in steady decline until the late fifties, when the combination of line closures and the advent of diesel engines reduced its usefulness.

By the early sixties all the mainline diesels had been relocated to Haymarket, and most suburban lines had been closed. This, and the public protests about dirt, noise and pollution - an ongoing problem since the late thirties - finally led to its closure in 1967.

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Did you know?..

...the story of the St. Margaret's railwaymen who gave one Restalrig Village pub its name? When slipping off during working hours to have a cooling drink in the bar, the workmen had to be careful not to get caught out by their bosses - who would often do just the same thing! Luckily the sympathetic landlord developed a system of warning whereby flowers in the window meant their foremen were already in there and not to enter...and that's how 'The Bunch O' Roses' came to be so called.

Eastern General Hospital

Sited on the edge of Craightenny Golf Course by Findlay Gardens, this was originally built in 1907, as 'Seafield Poorhouse and Hospital for the Sick Poor'. It was a much needed addition to Leith's two existing poorhouses, which were badly overcrowded. It was the last poorhouse to be built in Scotland, and was fairly quickly converted to a hospital after a Royal Commission report harshly criticised the Scottish poorhouse system.

It opened in October 1907, offering accommodation at a cost of £14 6s 4d per person per year. The building itself boasts a highly decorative baroque style interior in the main administration block, with archway, elegant cornices and columns, wrought iron stair railings and stained glass window. This style was of course a stark contrast with the conditions endured by poorhouse inmates in the main part of the building.

The present day Eastern offers outpatient care and residential care for the elderly as well as housing Leith Community Treatment Centre.



Did you know?...

that an anti-aircraft battery was stationed on Craigentinny Golf Course during the Second World War?

During the war Restalrig and Craigentinny were no strangers to air raids. On the 6th July 1942, in the 14th raid which was made in Scotland, a number of houses in Loaning Crescent, as well as Craigentinny House were the accidental target of German bombs. The intended target had been Portobello power station. Had the mission been successful, power would have been lost as far north as Aberdeen and as far south as Newcastle.

One plane was brought down on Craigentinny Golf Course. The pilot had been killed and was buried at Piershill Cemetery where, some recall, the local women attended his funeral.

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Albion Road, EDINBURGH

Albion Road - just by Easter Road stadium - was once part of the main east coast road between Scotland and England in Roman times. England was known then as Albion, and Scotland as Alba.

Founded in 1875 by Irish immigrants, local football team *Hibernian F.C.* moved to Easter Road on the South Side of Bothwell Street in 1880. In 1887 Hibs played Preston North End here, and won to become the first world champs. Admission prices were: Grandstand 1/-, Gents 2 1/2d, children and ladies free. The total gate money was £120!

Craigentinny Castle (5)

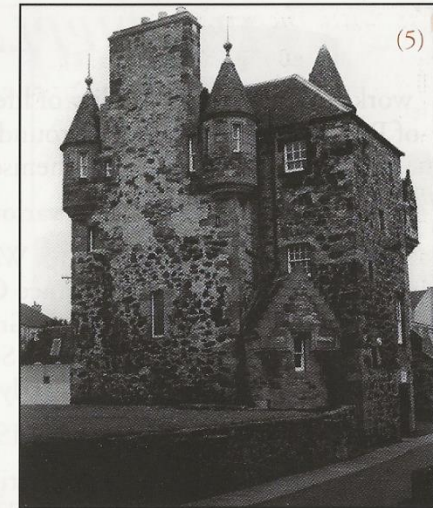
After its days as a family residence were over, this house took on a different importance in the area, when in 1937 it was purchased by Edinburgh Corporation (price £1000!) and refurbished as Craigentinny-Lochend Social Centre.

This centre was the first of its kind in Scotland and provided much needed local facilities for the growing housing estates.

The centre was much acclaimed, and its development as an exemplary model was followed closely by local press. It had a gymnasium and billiard room and as written in *The Scotsman* in 1938, had been given "5 pianos, but as yet no wireless or gramophone". 700 members had joined up within its first 6 months. In 1940 *The Evening News* deemed it "a remarkable development".

During the war the members of the centre formed a Work Party, knitting for the forces and gathering and sending Christmas parcels and letters to the front. Sadly, the eastern wing of the building was destroyed by bombs in 1942, and the caretaker of the time, a Mr Wright, was killed.

This pioneering centre continues to develop and runs a wide range of adult education, children's, elderly and other groups in its now extended premises.



Leith Academy (18) is another remarkable centre for community activity, situated off Lochend Road.

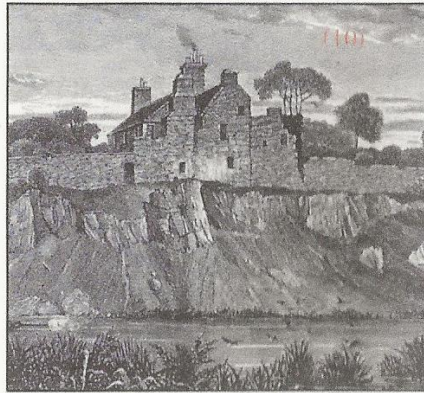
It has provided secondary schooling in the area since the mid-16th century, and probably originated in the schooling provisions of the Perceptory of St. Anthony - founded by Robert Logan before 1418. The first mention of the *Grammar School of Leith* can be found in the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh for 1521. The school was rehoused several times before the present building opened in 1991. This school has been highly acclaimed for its unique architecture and excellent facilities with which, as an official Community High School and internationally acclaimed centre for learning, the school offers a wide range of opportunities for all ages.

The Logan Family take up at Lochend

When the last of the male line of de Lestralrics died in 1382, his daughter Katherine's marriage to a Sir Robert Logan meant ownership of the estate passed into new hands. The Logans' baronetcy lasted until the beginning of the 17th Century and for many years they were a wealthy and powerful force, respected and known to the King's Council. Yet by the end of the 16th Century their success was waning and the family were in increasing debt. Around this time the last Logan to be Laird of Restalrig was described "ane drunken and deboshit man". This Sir Robert Logan died in bankruptcy after most of his lands had been sold, and curiously was the subject of a great scandal which unfolded shortly after his death in 1600.

In this year John 3rd Earl of Gowrie and his brother Alexander, Master of Ruthven, had plotted to assassinate James VI, but the plot failed and they were both slain at Gowrie House near Perth. Due to the enormity of the offence and the outrage felt by the public, the bodies of the two men were brought to Edinburgh where they were publicly 'hanged, quartered and beheaded'.

Sir Robert Logan died peacefully in 1606, but the rumours of his involvement persisted, and in 1608 a notary from Eyemouth called George Sprott who had business links with Sir Robert was arrested and charged with concealing treason. He was subsequently found guilty and hanged on the 12th August 1608. Even after his death his dubious evidence was re-examined several times until five



LOCHEND CASTLE (10)

letters were found supposedly penned by Sir Robert that implicated him in the conspiracy. The following year Sir Robert was 'summonsed' to appear in court. His body was disinterred, brought before the court and on being found guilty, a sentence of forfeiture was passed on his title, lands and property.

The Restalrig estates thereafter passed into the hands of Lord Balmerino who held them until dispossessed for being on the side of Bonnie Prince Charlie during the '45 Rebellion.

Lochend is thought to be so-called as the Loch is situated at the end of a chain of Edinburgh lochs - connected underground - preceded by Dunsappie and Duddingston Lochs.

The origins of the name Restalrig is uncertain. Some explanations attribute to the early 'Lestalyrk' the meaning 'fold of the slope of the hill' perhaps indicating the village's position in the shallow valley at the foot of today's Smokey Brae. Another interpretation is 'lestal' meaning mire or ditch and 'ryk' for rig, a narrow strip of land.

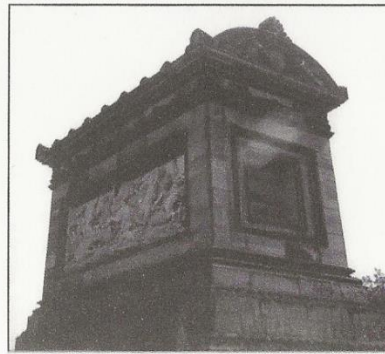
Craightinny Estate

This was part of Restalrig until 1604, when it was sold to the Nisbet family of Dean - ancestors of the Henry Nisbet who became Lord Provost of Edinburgh and an MP in the last Scottish parliament. The Nisbets then built and resided in Craightinny House - an impressive building which still stands on Loaning Road. Some additions and alterations were made to the building when it was renovated in the 18th Century.

After the Nisbet family died out in 1764, the estate was purchased by the seed merchant William Miller, whose eccentric son was behind the construction of the Craightinny Marbles monument which looms surprisingly over the houses in Craightinny Crescent.

Known as "Measure Miller" due to his habit of measuring the size of each book before placing in his extensive collection, William Miller Junior became an M.P for Newcastle-Under-Lyme in 1830. Unmarried and something of a recluse he was "notable for his spare figure, thin treble voice and total absence of beard" leading the villagers to the suspicion he might be a woman!

CRAIGHTINNY MARBLES (6)



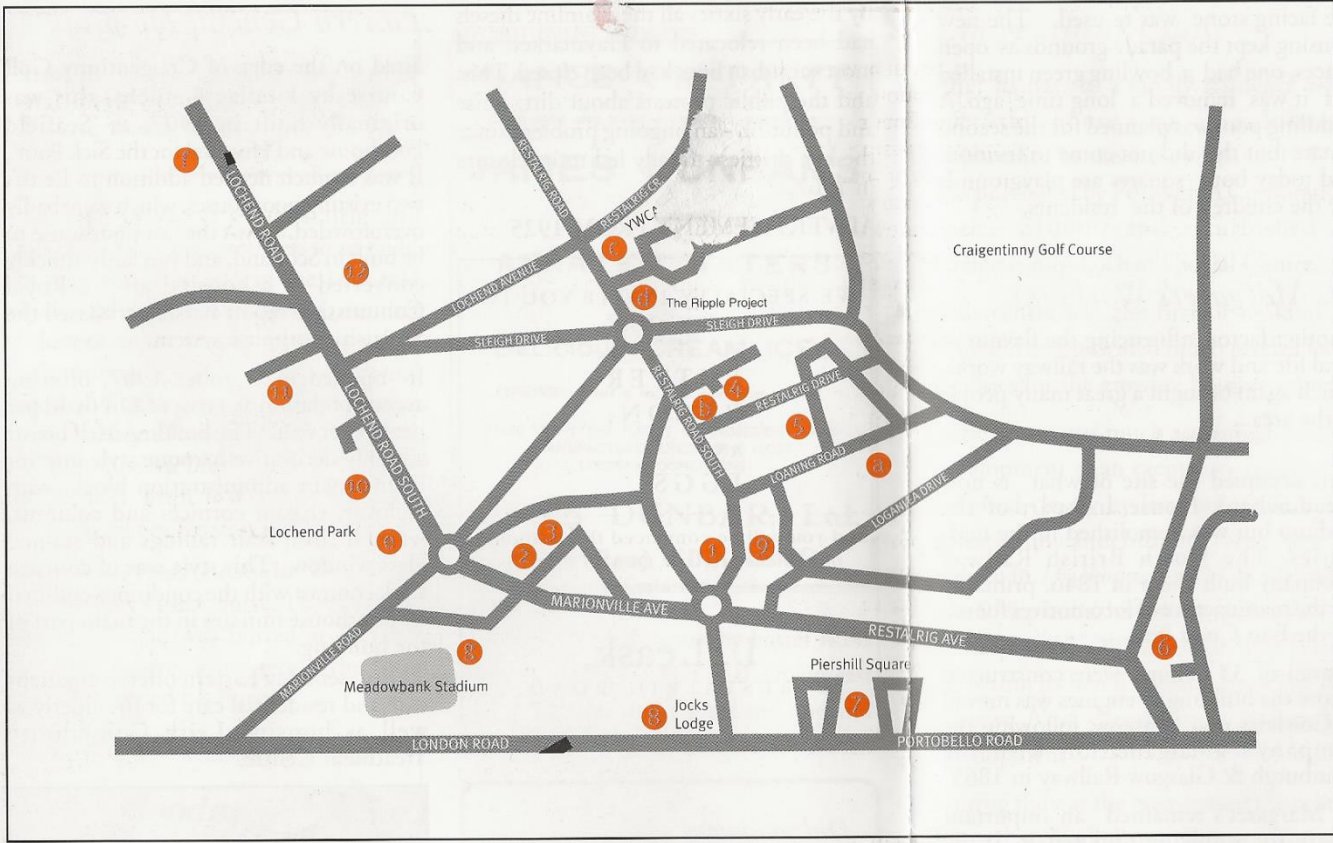
After Miller's death in 1848, the truth was buried deep along with him - at 40 feet below the huge stone mausoleum. The unusual marble frescoes on the sides were sculpted by Alfred Gately and depict the Jews' flight from Egypt and the parting of the Red Sea.

Marionville House (3)

Standing by St. Ninian's Church, this mansion house was built mid-18th Century for the Misses Ramsay - two well-to-do Edinburgh sisters who had made a small fortune with their hatmaking business in the High Street. The locals found the pair pretentious and took to calling the place 'Lappet Ha'or Hall (from the Scots for a patch of material) - in contempt of the ladies and their trade!

Ownership of the house later passed to a Captain Macrae and his French wife Maria, who it is said gave the house its name. The high life they led there was unexpectedly short-lived, after Macrae's renowned fiery temper sparked a conflict which led to his eventual disgrace and even exile. In April 1790, Macrae got into an argument with his acquaintance Sir George Ramsay over a chair in the theatre! Without going into the full details, the unfortunate affair ran into a full scale dispute, which a week later was settled by duel on Musselburgh Links! Here Macrae shot Sir George and was forced to flee to France, causing quite a sensation in Edinburgh society. Outlawed, and leaving two children behind him, he was unhappily forced to live out his days abroad, by all accounts a broken man.

Marionville subsequently had a number of different owners, more recently was bought by the Archdiocese for St Ninian's Church, and has since been home to various St. Ninian's priests.



KEY TO MAP

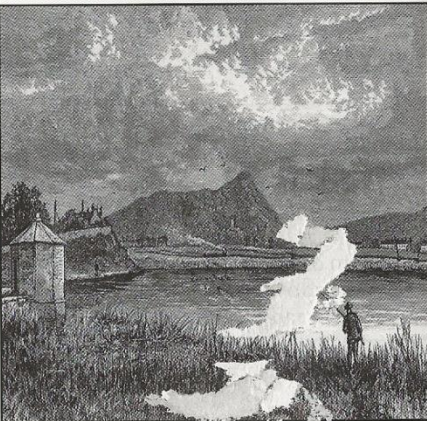
- (1) St. Margaret's Church/St. Triduana's Well
- (2) St Ninian's Roman Catholic Church
- (3) Marionville House
- (4) Restalrig House Site
- (5) Craigentenny Castle (Community Centre)
- (6) Craigentenny Marbles
- (7) Piershill Barracks Site
- (8) St. Margaret's Works Site
- (9) Restalrig Village
- (10) Lochend Castle (Link-Up premises)
- (11) Plague Kiln
- (12) Site of Hawkhill Estate
- (a) Craigentenny Primary School
- (b) St. Ninian's Primary School
- (c) Y.W.C.A. Centre
- (d) Ripple Project Office
- (e) Lochend Neighbourhood Centre
- (f) Leith Academy School
- (g) Meadowbank Sports Centre

(10)

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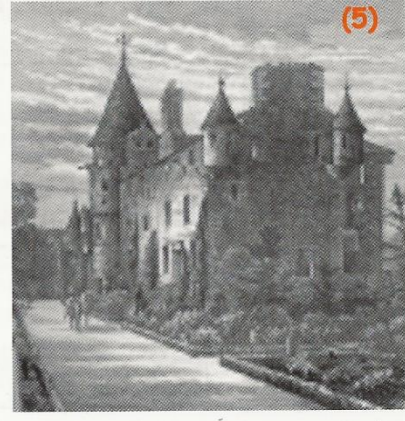


(e)

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'Look Back' by The Ripple Project, originally created c.1998 and digitised as part of the Restalrig, Lochend and Craigentenny, People's Parish Project in 2022.