



SALTIRE

NEWSLETTER OF THE SCOTTISH FLAG TRUST

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East Lothian Civic Flag Unveiled

The Scottish Flag Trustees are delighted that a new civic flag has been approved for East Lothian, and moreover that the winning design is based on a saltire. This is entirely appropriate for the county that is the birthplace of Scotland's national flag.

It was the Trust's initiative, back in 2017, to put forward the idea of a public competition to design a new flag. The Trust formally approached the Lord Lyon and East Lothian Council with the proposal which was enthusiastically embraced by both, leading to a petition being duly lodged with the Lyon Court. On St Andrew's Day 2017, the *Design a Flag for East Lothian Competition* was launched.

The competition captured the public's imagination, and no fewer than 623 entries were submitted. A judging panel comprising the Lord Lyon, the Lord Lieutenant of East Lothian, the Lord Provost of the Council and the Trust Chair, then had the daunting task of sifting through the entries. In whittling these down, the judges were keen to identify designs which were distinctive, representative of the whole county and would fly well on a flagpole. Finally, a short list of 4 of the best designs was identified, and these were publicised and put out to a public vote. Over 1,500 people cast a vote.

On 13 December 2018, Provost John McMillan hosted a reception for community representatives in Haddington at which the winning design was unveiled. This had been submitted by Archie Martin of Gifford. His eye-catching flag design is based on a double saltire cross in gold upon a field of blue, overlain in the centre with a gold lion rampant. The lion, which appears on East Lothian Council's Coat of Arms, is associated with King William the Lion (1165-1214) whose palace was in Haddington on the site now occupied by the county buildings. During the reception, a short video was played of the new East Lothian flag being hoisted and flown briefly above the Saltire Memorial in Athelstaneford Kirkyard, courtesy of a drone flyover operated by Drew Ramsay.

Trust Chair, David Williamson, commented "Scotland has seen a growth in civic flags in recent years, with a number featuring a Nordic cross, for example Orkney (2007), Caithness (2016) and Barra (2017). It's pleasing that the public in East Lothian have opted for a flag based on a different design of cross, namely the cross of Scotland's patron saint, St Andrew."



The Lord Lyon and East Lothian's Lord Lieutenant Michael Williams display the flag.



Deterioration of Harling

The Flag Heritage Centre occupies the Hepburn Doocot, and when the building was restored in 1996/7, the walls were harled and given a limewash in a pinkish colour. Ten years later, the doocot was re-harled, and this time the limewash chosen was of a warmer and more orange hue.

Today, it has become clear that the harling and limewash on all but the south-facing wall are starting to deteriorate and peel badly, leaving exposed patches.

Advice is now being sought from the Scottish Lime Centre Trust as to the best course of treatment and the likely cost. Potential sources of funding and grants will also need to be investigated.

CHANGES IN TRUST PERSONNEL



New Trustee Fraser Thompson at the entrance to Athelstaneford Kirk.

At the end of 2018, Fraser Thompson was welcomed on to the Trust, bringing the number of Trustees to seven. Brought up on the Isle of Bute, Fraser is married with two young children and now lives in Haddington. He is currently working as a senior parliamentary aid Office Manager for an Edinburgh Member of the Westminster Parliament, and brings to the Trust a wealth of administrative and IT skills.

As of June 2019, the Trustees also welcomed new Treasurer, Moray Cattnach, who lives in Dunbar. Brought up in the Highlands, Moray has a keen interest in Scottish history, and is a member of a number of historical and clan associations. He works in the financial sector in Edinburgh.

Standing down as Treasurer is Kenneth Stewart who has held the position since 2014, as is Robin MacCormick who has held the position of Clerk to the Trust for 15 years. Both Kenneth and Robin have agreed to continue as Trustees which is excellent news.



Incoming Treasurer Moray Cattnach (right) and Kenneth Stewart by the Memorial

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4 Star Status: VisitScotland carried out an unannounced inspection of the Flag Heritage Centre in April 2019, and the Trustees are delighted to have since received confirmation that the Centre's 4 star visitor attraction status has been retained.

Direction Signs: A number of new direction signs to the Heritage Centre have been erected at Drem Station, courtesy of funding from the East Lothian Community Rail Partnership. Drem is the closest railway station to Athelstaneford (2 miles away), and the signs are intended to assist visitors, whether on foot or cycling, arriving at the station.

Doors Open Day: The Cockburn Association has announced that the Flag Centre is to feature in the 2019 Doors Open Day for Edinburgh and East Lothian on Saturday 28 and Sunday 29 September.

Invitation to St Andrew Service: The annual service to Scotland's patron saint will take place in Athelstaneford Kirk at 11.00am on Sunday 24 November, and all Friends are welcome to attend. The service is to be taken by the Rev Tom Gordon, and Haddington Pipe Band have kindly agreed to pipe the Saltire along Main Street after the service.



View to Battle Site Restored

Back in 2001, the Trust's Patron, Winnie Ewing, officially opened the viewpoint by the Hepburn Doocot. It comprises a semi-circular green oak bench with interpretative panel facing over the East Lothian countryside towards the scene of the 9th century battle above which the Saltire appeared in the sky and inspired the Scots/Picts to victory.

In recent years, the panorama for visitors has been increasingly obscured by the growth of trees planted along the field margins. With the approval of the farmer at Athelstaneford Mains, the Trust arranged for the trees to be taken down at the start of 2019.