Digging up the past can



BY DR CHARLIE LYNCH

IT'S a Saturday afternoon in Glasgow in early autumn, and I've been battling my way through football crowds to finally arrive on the banks of the River Clyde near Tollcross.

There I find archaeologist Dr Eddie Stewart standing beside some holes in the ground looking rather pleased with the day's work.

He's been leading a short dig searching for remains of Harvie's Dyke, a series of structures dating from the 1820s.

Attentive readers of this column may recall that last year, it featured emeritus professor Chris Whatley's book, Harvie's Dyke: The People, Their Liberty and the Clyde.

In the early 19th century, Thomas Harvie, a wealthy distillery and colliery owner, purchased a country estate near Tollcross, named Westthorn.

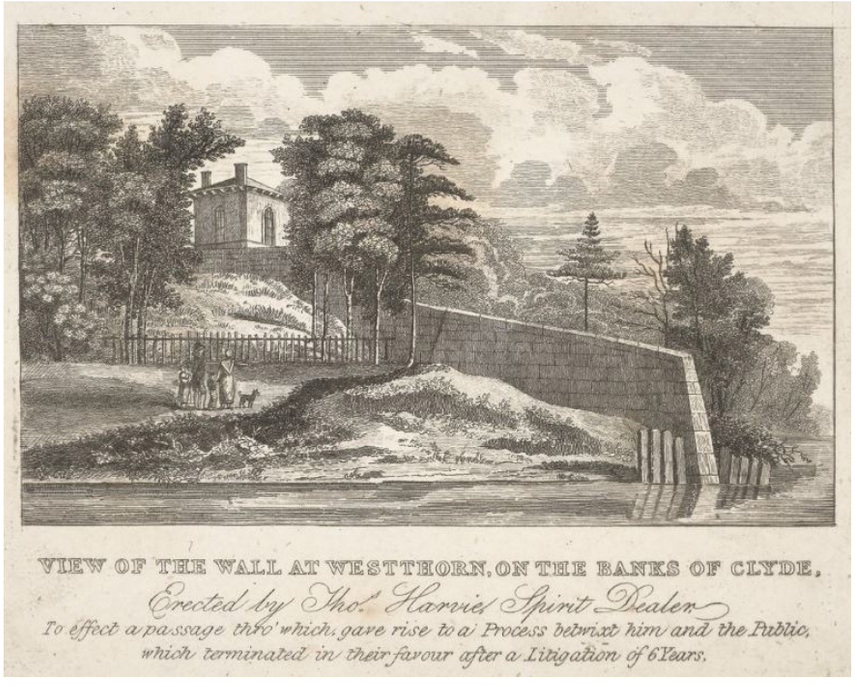
The ground between his garden and the banks of the river was crossed by a long-established pathway which was beloved of many locals and which they were accustomed to using, including to access the river for swimming.

Harvie, who hated this – and working-class people more generally – had two 12ft-high walls constructed, surmounted by iron spikes. Dramatically, he also had a watchtower containing guards, which was defended by live cannon.

Stewart says: "He had additional defences as well, in the form of shattered glass in the river so people couldn't swim or wade around the walls."

Incensed by Harvie's Dyke, a crowd of local people including weavers and miners descended upon the Westthorn estate and attacked the walls with picks and bars and with explosions of gunpowder.

Harvie, seeing an armed mob, raced to the city centre and returned with a cohort of mounted soldiers, who charged the people with swords drawn, causing many to leap into the river and swim to the other bank, from which they shouted abuse. Comparatively few people were arrested. Crowds in the city cheered those who were. Even fewer were successfully prosecuted, with witnesses unwilling to testify.



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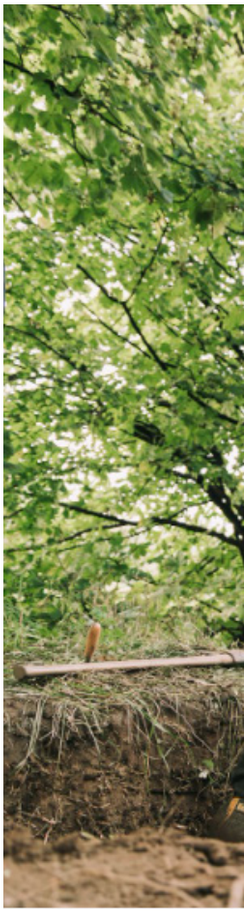

Harvie rebuilt his walls but was then challenged in court by local activists, who managed to raise money for their campaign.

After six years of legal dispute, Harvie was defeated, first in Edinburgh, then in the House of Lords in London, and was ordered to make open doorways in his walls.

The case resulted in a landmark ruling which defended and defined public rights of way. Financially ruined by the court cases, and by a city-wide boycott of his businesses, Harvie later died in poverty.

What exactly happened to the walls during the rest of the 19th century seems less clear. The path along the river has since remained open, and is now part of the Clyde Walkway.

The Westthorn Estate disappeared, and, ironically, is now occupied by two distilling giants – Suntory Global Spirits and Bacardi Dewars. Remarkably, one section of the western wall survives to full height alongside Thorndyke Lane.

Archaeology Scotland, in partnership with Glasgow Building Preservation Trust and Glasgow

Study gives public a voice in helping to shape the future of

BY LUCY GARCIA

RESEARCHERS asked people from across Scotland what questions they want scientists to answer about dementia and brain health, in a first-of-its-kind study.

It is hoped the approach will drive forward better and more meaningful research in the future.

The study was led by the University of Glasgow in collaboration with NHS Research Scotland Neuroprogressive and Dementia Network, Alzheimer's Scotland and the Universities of Edinburgh and Dundee.

It aims to give the public a greater say in how research funding and resources are directed.

Currently, research agendas are commissioned and influenced by experts in government, policy and funding bodies.

The project, which was supported by the Scottish Funding Council through its Brain Health Arc, is also the first national research priority-setting exercise to consider brain health alongside dementia.

The research team collated thousands of responses from national surveys, focus groups and workshops from people living with, or at risk of, brain health conditions; current and former carers; and members of the public and professionals.

The results were refined and ranked to produce two "top 10" lists for future research, one focused on dementia and the other on brain health.

Among the questions raised by the public and judged by the researchers to have the greatest potential impact included further studies exploring what can be learned from people who maintain a healthy brain into older age.

Dementia is the second leading cause of death in Scotland, with an estimated 90,000 people living with the condition. Participants in the study also identified questions extending beyond traditional areas of dementia research.

They included how people can financially prepare for the possibility of future dementia care; how the workforce should be prepared to meet the future needs of people living with dementia; and what Scotland can learn from countries with different models of brain health and dementia care.

For dementia, improving the pathway of care was mentioned the

unearth lesson for today



Neil Orr digs out a trench to help uncover the Harvie's Dyke remains

City Council, spent the weekend investigating the remains of Harvie's Dyke, with the help of local volunteers and students from the University of Glasgow.

Stewart said: "We know that one section still survives but on this side, the wall was demolished at some point in the 19th century.

"We've been trying to uncover where exactly that was, to what extent it is preserved and whether there is any scope to issue protections, to see if it would be worthy of being scheduled."

At this point I'm with him, peering into the ground. "So in our larger trench," Stewart continues, "We have a kind of wall face. It has collapsed, so we've got the big spread of mortar and rubble.

"We're going to be doing a couple of slots through that later on, just to try to see if we can define where the interior is and what deposits exist below it."

By the end of the dig, the archaeologists had uncovered mortar, floor surfaces, roof slates and fragments of plasterwork, suggesting that they may have located the remains of the fortified summerhouse which once overlooked the riverside path.

THEY also found a rare 1791 Glasgow trade token - similar to a coin – bearing the city's motto, Let Glasgow Flourish, which was adopted by campaigners who opposed Harvie's Dyke, leading the team to speculate that it might have been deliberately deposited.

The site of Harvie's Dyke straddles the boundary between two local council wards, Calton and Shettleston, and councillors from both have been supportive of the project to "rediscover" the walls.

Funding came from Local Area Partnerships. The city convener for neighbourhoods and assets, Councillor Laura Doherty, said: "The funding demonstrates the value that both area partnerships place on projects which deliver real benefits for local people.

"What makes this project stand out is that it uses our local heritage and archaeology within a combined programme of education, community engagement, health and wellbeing, and skills development for residents."

Bailie Linda Pike, representing Calton, added that she was glad to support a project which explored a story rooted in east end communities.

A core purpose of the archaeological work here was to help the city authorities decide how best to preserve and interpret Harvie's Dyke.

Ingrid Shearer of Glasgow Building Preservation Trust said: "It's really up to people in the east end in terms of what they would like to see done. Harvie's Dyke is a nationally significant story but at the moment there's no protection for the remains here.

"I'm aware there's a certain amount of irony in calling for that, because if you'd said to the protesters back in the 1820s that we're looking for legal protection for the structure they were trying to pull down, they may not have been terribly impressed."

The dig was supported, too, by Glasgow City Council's Neighbourhood and Regeneration Service, while Glasgow Life Museums and Libraries Service hosted a pop-up exhibition and public talk.

Shearer said: "There have been some great walking tours by Rebel Glasgow and local history talks. Fiona Fleming, an artist, has been here doing some sketching."

There was also, when I visited the site that afternoon, a participatory performance of a play, Tam Harvie's Dyke by Davey Anderson, which featured Whatley in character as a judge in a dramatisation of the court case between Harvie and his opponents.

Stewart said: "I think Harvie's Dyke is a really important tale of the people coming together and collective action – particularly at a moment when our own right to protest is being infringed in various ways.

"There's something really important about celebrating those moments when we have pushed forward through direct action by communities.

"It's a really exciting story about how ordinary people can come together and challenge the owners of big business who might infringe upon our rights. Perhaps it has direct relevance today to many figures across the world."

Charlie Lynch thanks Ingrid Shearer for her help with this article, and Tiu Makkonen for the photographs of the archaeological dig

dementia research in Scotland

most. The results are being shared with government and research funders to help ensure future research speaks to the priorities of the people it is designed to help.

Several of the issues identified have been discussed at a Scottish Government roundtable on dementia and brain health.

Terry Quinn, professor of cardiovascular ageing at the University of Glasgow's School of Cardiovascular and Metabolic Health, said: "Scotland has already been ambitious in its approach to brain health and dementia.

"Giving people a direct voice in deciding the questions we try to answer is an important part of making sure future research reflects what matters to society."

The project was part of the Scottish Funding Council Brain Health Alliance for Research Challenges (SFC ARC), with contributions from experts by lived experience, Chief Scientist Office of Scotland leads for Ageing, Neuroprogressive and Dementia, and Enabling Research in Care Homes.

The study can be viewed at academic.oup.com/ageing/article-lookup/doi/10.1093/ageing/afag261

Scotland has already been ambitious in its approach

Queen memorial views sought

MEMBERS of the public have been asked to give their views on a new permanent memorial in Scotland dedicated to the late Queen Elizabeth.

The Scottish Government announced an online engagement portal has been launched to give people the opportunity to share ideas on the memorial's purpose, design, scale and location.

A series of community engagement events will also take place this autumn, led by lord lieutenants and involving community organisations and groups.

Scottish ministers are expected to be presented with recommendations for the memorial in spring next year.

The portal also invites people to give personal memories and reflections on the late queen and her connection to Scotland.

The engagement portal will be open until Sunday, December 13 and can be accessed online at https://tinyurl.com/5n757a9