

GRANGE ASSOCIATION SUMMER WALK 2017

Introduction at start point (RVS cafe).

The Astley Ainslie is a convalescent hospital and rehabilitation centre and is famous for pioneering rehabilitation medicine in the UK. The hospital at one time had more than 200 beds.

We are visiting by invitation, so please remember this is a working hospital and respect the needs of patients and staff. It is a requirement for the NHS staff to use only the zebra crossings when crossing roads, so we must be particularly aware and careful of traffic when crossing. Please watch your feet - some of the paths are slippery and if you prefer to keep off wet or grassy areas please do so. We have to state that this is an informal walk and you are responsible for your own safety - I am not a qualified leader, and can take no responsibility for your safety, so please watch out. The grounds are much less well cared for than previously. In the early fifties there were twelve gardeners and garden labourers on site. .

Our walk today will take around an hour.

The hospital lies within the boundaries of the Grange Conservation Area, and is therefore also within the area served by the Grange Association and also the Marchmont and Sciennes Community Council.

NHS Lothian plans to move the facilities in the Astley Ainslie to new purpose-built accommodation on the Royal Edinburgh site. The NHS Trust is required to make the most of its assets (on our behalf) and may retain some services on this site, but no final decision has been made. Note that three Public Rights of Way have recently been established across the site, to acknowledge historic usage and secure public access. (Canaan Lane- South Oswald Rd side gate, Egypt Mews to opposite RVS, Whitehouse Loan to junction near Edith Simon sculpture.

You may care to think about, and suggest the best use for this site and the interests of the local area. We hope you will give us your ideas and comments by returning the questionnaire or by emailing AAHComReps@gmail.com.

Today's hospital was established using a bequest from David Ainslie of Costerton, a wealthy East Lothian sheep breeder and lawyer who died in 1900, leaving a substantial fortune to create an institution where patients from the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary could recover. He had inherited substantial sums from his young nephew John Astley Ainslie - hence the name. His will stipulated that his endowment should be invested for 10 years before the hospital opened, but due to the First World War the Astley Ainslie Institution, as it was known, did not finally open until 1923 in this wonderful parkland setting 1½ miles south of the city centre. It has grown from being a small experimental convalescent hospital to become a leading rehabilitation centre and school for occupational therapists.

The hospital now covers 42 acres and includes the grounds of several 19th century mansions of Canaan Cottage, Canaan Park, Millbank, Morelands and St. Roque, which we see. These were purchased when they became available at different times during the last century and mostly remain as administrative blocks. If you look carefully, you can still see the garden walls dividing the original properties and some of the gatehouse lodges. (i.e. across Moreland's lawn).

A thousand years ago this area was the forest of Drumsheugh (note: Drumsheugh in West End) and a royal hunting forest that stretched from the present-day Tollcross to Craiglockhart in the west and across to Newington. In 1143 David I granted Edinburgh its Royal Charter and bestowed upon it the vast lands of the Common Muir. This is where he, it's said, hunted on a church feast day and was confronted by a fierce stag. Following his desperate prayer for safety, a cross is said to have appeared above the stag's head, and it turned and fled. In thanksgiving for his deliverance he built the Abbey of Holyrood.

Stop 1 RVS Cafe:

The RVS cafe is part of the Balfour pavilion, which is a relatively recent addition to the site but already partly closed off. **The gates and lodges (listed Cat B)** at the Canaan Lane entrance are by Jamieson and Arnott 1932 (as North gate) and are reputedly modelled on those at Floors Castle; these are listed Cat B. The various buildings opposite the cafe are some of the earliest built when the hospital was established, and contain various facilities including the main dining room, over the wall is Woodlands House once part of Napier University but in the site.

Carry on to the front of the scientific block

Stop 2 The Scientific Block. (Listed Cat C)

This flat land on the southern part of the site ahead of you was originally a ladies' golf course with entrance and clubhouse off South Oswald Road. Note the fine view of Blackford Hill, Braids and Pentlands (a good environment for convalescence and rehabilitation) and the deliberately low profile of the "new block".

The building is by Jamieson and Arnott 1929 (a row of squidgy. Doric columns attempts a touch of swagger)). It originally had artificial sunlamps and Faradic equipment which could stimulate paralysed muscles. It now houses X-ray and physiotherapy, with swimming pool and gym.

Across the road (to south) are **the Pavilions**, each with 43 beds in two wards, one built for men and the other for women. Edinburgh Hospital Broadcasting Service broadcast the first live outside broadcast from a ward here in May 1963. In front of them is the Friends Notice board describing a walk established with seats and signs for patients and staff to enjoy and a copy of the portrait of John Astley Ainslie Original in Administration building.

Beyond you can see **the Smart Centre** which includes Prosthetics and Bioengineering, which were originally at the Princess Margaret Rose Hospital. Beyond the Smart Centre, the spruce trees mark where there were vegetable gardens and at the foot of the slope is the railway.

Walk along the path, or in front of the Occupational therapy unit, eastwards towards the gap in the wall.

Stop 3 The Timber huts (Unlisted)

During the last war all non-military patients were discharged and the AA became a military hospital. These three large huts were built as additional wards. One of them (the first in Scotland) was opened by Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother whose aunt, coincidentally, lived around the corner at Ellerton on Grange Loan. The Pain management clinic is being refurbished at least internally!

As it worked out, the hospital was used for surgical and medical conditions, not war casualties. Most of the gardens were put to growing vegetables 'Dig for Victory'. The name was changed to the Astley Ainslie Hospital in 1946.

Note the black gate that was closed 5 years ago but was the preferred entrance for many using the AA as a thoroughfare. **NB There is a small pedestrian entry off South Oswald road open all the time – it is the east end of one of the rights of way.**

Now go through the gap in the wall.

Stop 4 The dogs' cemetery

You can admire the birches here and display of rhododendrons. The lawn is thought to be a possible plague gravesite. The fine house ahead of you is St Roque. On the edge of the lawn note the dogs' cemetery - presumably belonging to the owners of St Roque, although one of them is recent.

On your left behind the hedge and fence, is the original Patients' Garden from Canaan Park - It contains the third of the mediaeval wells on the site.

Continue up the path past the yew trees and stop by the large chestnut tree.

Stop 5 The Spanish chestnut with dragon seat

The chestnut and holm oak could be contemporary with the house. Dragon seat is now missing - it used to encircle the tree. In the trees and under the ivy on left (towards Canaan Park) is a mound rumoured to have been one of the plague graves.

Walk eastwards towards St Roque .

Stop 6 St Roque (Listed Cat B)

The house was named after St Roque, the patron saint of the vanished chapel. The house is c.1845, with a garden fountain and dragon bench (now gone) all listed Cat B. It is Italianate with some additions. Note the wrought iron lantern with a dragon chasing a bird, by the front door.

This building is now the NHS Lothian headquarters of Primary and Community Care. = check.... Also physiotherapy home care.

Follow the path towards the north-east gate but to keep the walk short only go as far as

Stop 7 The ancient trough and well - one of three in the grounds

In mediaeval times this particular part of the forest was partly cleared of trees and used as a quarantine area for Edinburgh townspeople suffering from plague or thought likely to become ill. Edinburgh had numerous attacks of plague in the Middle Ages and dealt with them by various stringent hygiene methods. Victims were brought out from the town and their clothes and possessions boiled or burnt to prevent spread of infection. There were severe penalties for concealing anyone thought to be suffering from the plague.

Trees were felled to build wooden huts for these people. A small chapel was built here, constructed on the orders of James IV in 1507 and named for the patron saint of plague victims, St Roque. It stood here for about 300 years. It is likely that the area contains the bodies of many plague victims. This well was probably used by the plague victims and people who cared for them.

By the Grange Loan gate is the nursery for 3-5 year olds - some people may remember when this building was the WRVS canteen. This gate is the original entrance and drive to 'Morelands Cottage' to the west. Morelands was the last Villa to become part of the hospital

in 1947 and was used as extra hospital accommodation. It was once the home of Charles McLaren, one of the founders of 'The Scotsman' newspaper.)

Stop 8 By the school building.

The first experimental Children's school for the convalescent hospital, opened in 1931 and carried out a great deal of pioneering work of interest to visiting doctors and surgeons. This building, built in 1957, is by Stuart Matthew (of the firm Lorimer & Matthew formed by Sir Robert Lorimer and John Matthew, father of Stuart and Sir Robert). Note the attractive carved stones, a pool with animals and lettering, carved by Maxwell Allen. Behind it is the Head Injuries Building or Charles Bell Unit, originally the Children's Unit, another innovative development, designed by Michael Laird in 1963-65.

Stop 9 Near St Roque

Although it's not known exactly where the Chapel of St Roque (the patron Saint of plague victims) stood, this is the most likely site, as the 1896 map shows 'grave yard' here. The City's Design Brief for the site shows this area is of archaeological interest and should be investigated.

A chaplain offered prayers for the sick who lived in huts surrounding the church. James IV gathered part of his troops on the Burgh Muir and is said to have prayed at this chapel before marching to the disastrous battle of Flodden.

Note the interesting pavement which is in fact part of the old steam heating system.

Continue towards the roundabout and note the very tall sequoia (a young giant redwood with a lot of growing to do) on the right. Use the zebra crossing to reach the pavement. Turn left .

Stop 10 Canaan Park (Not Listed)

This Italianate villa was built around 1845 and was once a residence of the Forbes of Pitsligo (hence Forbes Road, Pitsligo Road). By 1900 it had become a school for girls and was the first building of the new Astley Ainslie Institution in 1923 and, until the pavilions were built, in 1929, the only building. It housed 34 ladies, all convalescing from the RIE, and allowed new ideas about convalescence to be tried out on a small scale. These were bed rest, fresh air (some slept outside on verandahs!), good food and sunshine. The garden here for food and patients' exercise is the one that is now closed off. (it is possible to peer over the wall but not recommended for a guided walk.) Many patients were recovering from TB. This was an endowed hospital - i.e. it has no support from government or from public subscriptions (like the RIE) and of course pre-dated the NHS.

The Astley Ainslie would provide for those requiring longer care and supervision to fit them for normal life. It might also take in Infirmary patients who needed to be built up for surgery, but it would not be used for patients with chronic disability or debility due to old age where a return to normal health would not be expected.

Substantial alterations to the original house included a double verandah on the south side for 'heliotherapy' (i.e. sitting in the sun.) the holes where it was attached are still clear round the back.

Continue along the road and pass through the old boundary wall

The walls here were once surmounted with heraldic beasts described on the tape as 'chindits' but looking more like lions - (does anyone know what a chindit is?)

Through the wall turn right to front of admin building (using the crossing)

Stop 11 Canaan House (Cottage)/Administration Building (Listed Cat C)

The building immediately in front of you is Canaan House (c1805 and originally called Canaan Cottage but almost doubled in size in 1877 and renamed, listed Cat C), It is now known as the Administration Building and contains the original portrait of John Astley Ainslie. This will move to the new site eventually.

The "Passion Stones" once were in front on the house (now only one remains on the ground). These were vaulting bosses with late Gothic foliage and the symbols of Christ's passion which had been in the Millbank garden next door. They are thought to have come from Trinity College Church (on site of Waverley Station, demolished and partly rebuilt in 1870s between Jeffrey Street and High Street)

You can see the Doctors' cottage / bungalow (Listed Cat C), with original lodge and orchard to north. (Note Bhutan pine, gardener's seat in memory of Bald, a head gardener and fruit trees - apples, pears and damsons.)

Walk north...There may not be time to go to the gates but you can indicate what is there.

Stop 12 Whitehouse Loan Entrance (Listed Cat B)

The sentry pavilions, gates, gateposts and railings are all listed, Cat B. and were designed by Auldjo Jamieson and Arnott in 1932 at the site of the original lodge and entrance to Millbank. Millbank originally had gardens that stretched from here nearly to the Canaan Lane entrance.

The lodge house to your right (eastwards) is the original lodge and drive to Canaan Cottage.

To your left (westwards) are new flats which have replaced Southbank house and gardens built 1928-29? for the first medical superintendent of the Astley Ainslie hospital, Col John Cunningham. He worked here from 1929 -1948 and was the father of Mary Cunningham, director of the Occupational Therapy Dept..

Pass through a narrow gap in hedge to look at the curved wall.

Stop 13 The Curved wall.

This curved wall is listed Cat C, but is not shown on early maps so was built to define Col Cunningham's garden. It contains more old stones possibly from Trinity College Church.

The garden here contains the second of the three wells on the site, and is another possible site of St Roque's chapel. Beyond is the site of a tennis court used at least up to 1980's.

The Grange including the Astley Ainslie has been designated as a conservation area under the statutory provisions of the Town and Country (Scotland) Act 1997. When the Astley Ainslie was first included, Historic Scotland gave the area "outstanding" status.

Council planners prepared a design brief for the AA site in 1999 and finalized it as the Development Brief of 2002. The brief indicates listed buildings, walls and tree belts and stipulates that these should be retained. We are told that this brief will be used as the basis of a master plan to guide the sale of the area.

Pass through the gap in the wall and head towards the Millbank Pavilion.

Stop 14 The Millbank Pavilion

Millbank was one of the early Canaan villas and was originally the home of the Neilson family. It was here that in 1820 Anne Neilson married the Sultan of the Crimea, who had been sent to Edinburgh by Tsar Alexander of Russia to receive a Christian education. The couple settled in Morningside (where she was known locally as the Sultana).

It was later purchased by the surgeon, Professor James Syme (1799 - 1870), and here in 1856 Syme's daughter married one of her father's students Joseph Lister (1827 - 1912) of antiseptic surgery fame. There were extensive and renowned gardens and glasshouses. The Turkey oak to the north of the pavilion is one of the largest in Edinburgh, Author Thomas Carlyle (1795 - 1881) recuperated here in 1866 after being operated on by Syme.

The house was bought by the Astley Ainslie Institution in 1930. It was thought to be unsuitable as a hospital ward and demolished, to be replaced by the Millbank Pavilion.

Retrace your steps from the Millbank Pavilion and past the Admin building again to go south down the road. (it is possible to walk south from Millbank over the lawn down some hidden steps to the left but not recommended for groups)

Stop 15 Administration Building lawns

Point out the old trees: cone-shaped yews, deodars (cypress) and the cedar of Lebanon, which was probably planted at the same time as the original house.

To the west is the Balfour Pavilion for geriatric care, built on the old Millbank garden site. It is mostly closed. The car park here was possibly an earlier orchard - note the pear trees.

If time allows cross the road at the zebra crossing in front of the RVS, east towards the Edith Simon sculpture and the Cunningham Unit (newer building) across the lawns to your left.

Stop 16 by Edith Simon sculpture ('Health Service' 1980)

The building on the far left opened for rehabilitation therapy as the Day Hospital in 1971 and was later named the Cunningham Unit. People recovering from heart, stroke and other conditions are assessed and treated here by physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, clinical psychologists, dieticians and medical staff. Immediately to your left is the (older) Occupational Therapy unit. This was the first Occupational Therapy Unit of its type in Scotland established in 1930.

If time is short omit stop 16 but point it out.

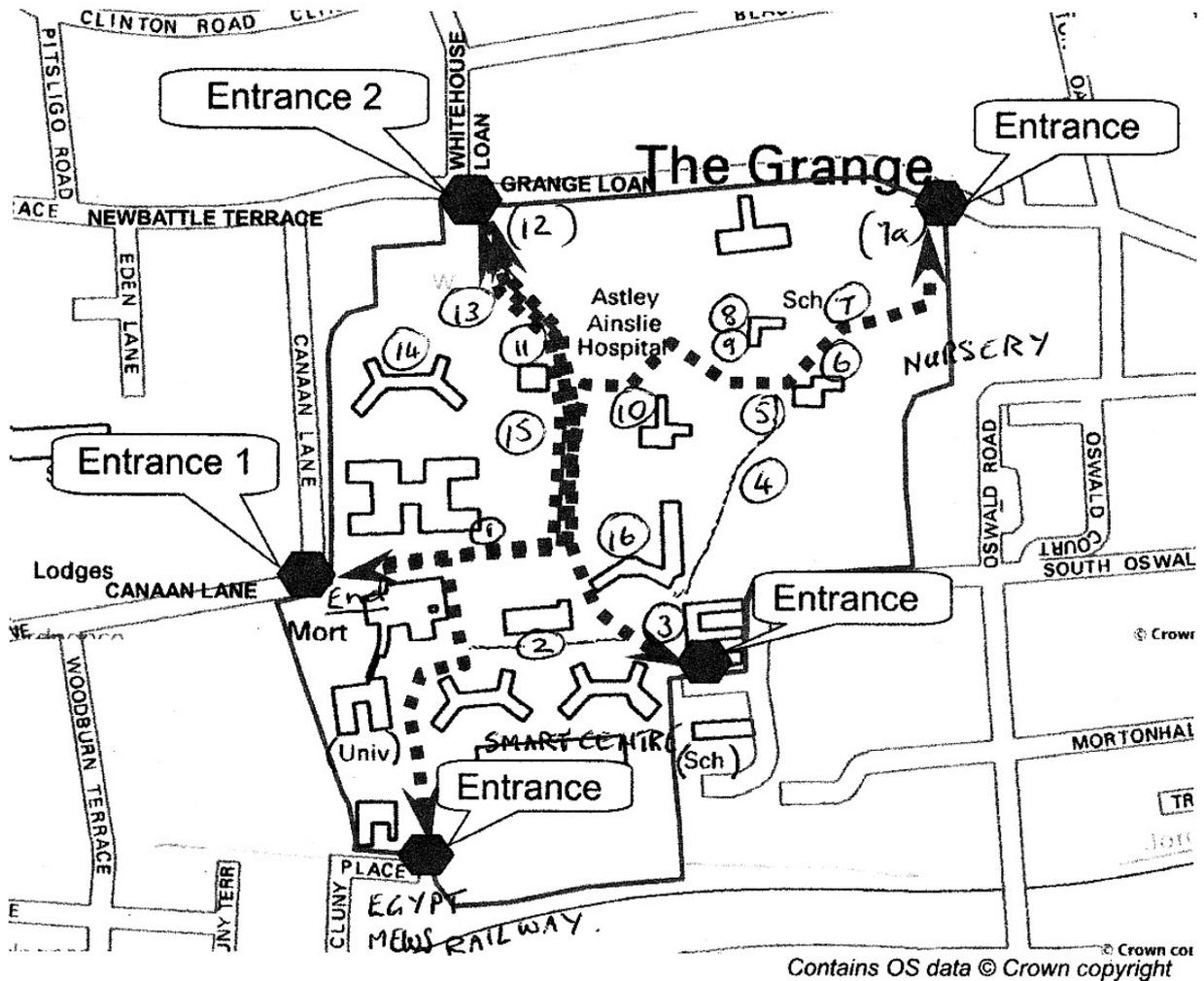
Retrace your steps to the Canaan Lane entrance lodges. The road to the left beside the dining room is part of the right of way coming up from Egypt Mews.

The future of Woodburn House further along Canaan Lane towards Morningside is yet to be made clear.

Refer anyone with questions to a committee member. There are still a few booklets by C Smith, *Between the streamlet and the Town* for sale upstairs in the Admin block - £4.00.

10/8/17

Astley Ainslie Hospital: Guided Community Walks Meeting Points



Key:

- Boundary of site (indicative only) – Post code EH9 2HL
- Entrance location
- Indicative walking routes between entrances

Meeting points for the walks on September 30th and October 8th are at the Canaan Lane (Entrance 1) and Whitehouse Loan (Entrance 2) entrances. Stewards will be at these entrances with information and will organise visitors to be taken on a tour of the grounds by one of the guides. There will be no more than 10 on each walk which will last about one hour. The last walk will start at 4pm