

Welcome to the Multi Use Path Joining Kingseat to Dunfermline

Colin Smith: The walkway/cycleway

The village of Kingseat was founded circa 1880 to house the miners and their families following the discovery of coal on the southern banks of Loch Fitty in the late 1800s; the last coal was taken in 1946 when the mine workings were abandoned due to flooding.

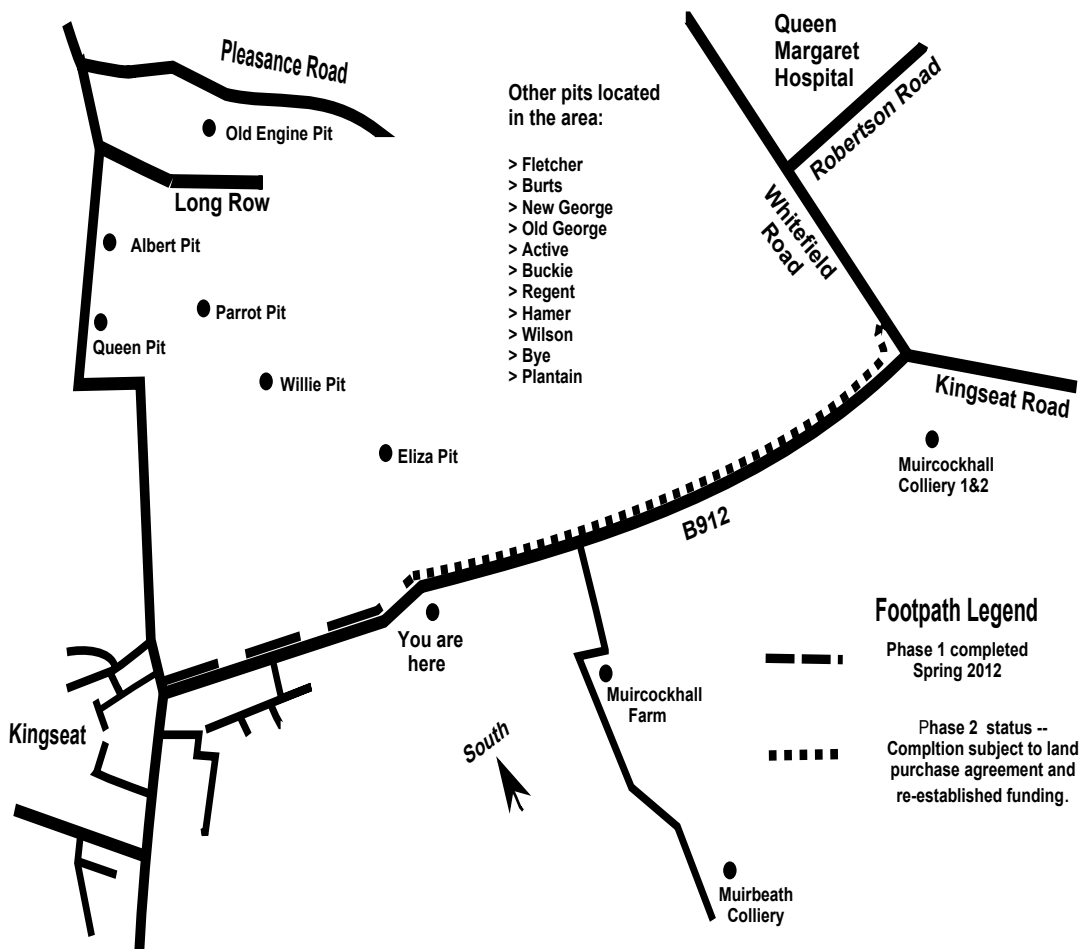
Since its beginning Kingseat's footpaths have ended at its boundaries limiting safe pedestrian access to Dunfermline and surrounding areas. This has been compounded over recent years with an increase in the volume of through traffic serving Kelty, Cowdenbeath and Dunfermline with its Queen Margaret Hospital and adjacent railway halt.

Colin Smith, the vice-chairman of Kingseat Community Council from 1999 to 2012 was conscious of this and strove to improve pedestrian and cycle access for the local community. His initial success was to obtain funding from Fife Council to extend the existing Henderson Street footpath along a short section of Cuddyhouse Road to connect with the now abandoned Keirsbeath Opencast Coal access road. This allowed safe transit along the very busy road for pedestrians to a pathway which connects to Halbeath and Hill of Beath; this was completed in 2012.

Colin had a vision to establish a safe pedestrian/cycle pathway for the local community to travel between Kingseat and Dunfermline. It was his tenacity and determination that resulted in Fife Council agreeing to design a multi use footpath running parallel with the B916 from Kingseat to Whitefield Road, this first phase was completed early 2012. As of June 2014 commencement of Phase 2 awaits an agreement on land purchase and the reinstatement of funding. It is the intention of the Community Council that the project will be completed in due course.

Colin was also the Chairman of Bloom in Kingseat. His group has done much to improve the appearance of the village. The village initially achieved a Silver Gilt award in the "Beautiful Fife" campaign, gradually rising to Gold in the year of his death. Colin died before the award was made and will be sadly missed by the community.

Colin Smith (1952 - 2013)



Halbeath Pits

From this vantage point looking south coal has been mined since the mid 1700s. There is evidence indicating that mining has taken place for many centuries and that some of the ancient underground workings may in fact date from the same period when serfs wrought coal for the monks of Dunfermline Abbey.

It is not known exactly when the various small coal-works formed themselves into the "Halbeath Colliery" but some sources suggest that it must have been a thriving colliery by 1738. The Willie Pit, Plantations Pit and Parrot Pit and many more are early pits of the Halbeath Colliery. These pits were the first in the area to employ Atmospheric and High Pressure engines to pump out water and for winding. The Queen, Albert and Eliza Pits were the last pits to be worked on these lands. The latter pit's location can be seen to the south west of this information board close to Dean Park. The pit was sunk to a depth of 110 fathoms around 1862 and was closed in 1876. Some of its seams continued to be worked until 1902 from the neighbouring Muircockhall Colliery.

To the North West, about half a mile from the Eliza Pit, were sited Muircockhall number 1 & 2 pits located at the edge of Townhill Wood. Operations here commenced in 1868 and after 75 years of working the pit was placed on a care and maintenance basis during 1943 with 230 men employed there transferred to nearby collieries.

Muircockhall and the "Bevin Boys"

Towards the end of WW 2 it was necessary to direct resources into producing coal for the war effort and domestic use. The then Government devised a scheme whereby conscripts and volunteers would be given mining training; these would become known as the "Bevin Boys". The scheme was the brainchild of Ernest Bevin the then Minister for Labour and National Service. Muircockhall Colliery was designated the training centre for Scotland and North of England; becoming operational during March 1944. Training would be undertaken in two phases the first at Muircockhall Colliery over a 4 week period and the second at an operational pit for a further 2 weeks. Over the forthcoming years until its closure in April 1969 thousands of trainees passed through this facility coming from Scotland, North of England, Eastern European Countries and Ireland.

The Interpretation Panel was sponsored by Kingseat Community Council with financial support from St Ninian's Royalty Fund and Bloom in Kingseat.

In the preparation of this display panel Kingseat Community Council wish to acknowledge the use of information presented by the Fife Pits Memorial web pages and the work undertaken by Fife Council Parks Department.