

## COVE IN BLOOM CELEBRATE THE HISTORY OF OUR VILLAGE

When our gardening workshop regulars volunteered to run Cove in Bloom for the Beautiful Scotland competition in 2013 we decided that our work should include reminders of the heritage of the area, and we agreed that there were three historic industries in Cove that we wanted to commemorate - farming, fishing, and quarrying.

As Leiths were still working the quarry in the area we started there, and Leiths was good enough to donate and site three standing stones at the entrance to the village of Cove on the Coast Road, our heritage stones. The



farming industry turned out to be easy because we found two horse-drawn

ploughs in a steading that was about to be pulled down, as well as a pony cart, so these were cleaned up, renovated, and sited in the village with our floral displays.



During this time, Stewart Milne Homes bought an area of land in Cove that had previously been a tip and contracted with Blackwells to clear out the tip and reinstate the land for building. The site foreman presented Cove in Bloom with three ornaments made from oil industry parts that had been found in the tip, and the recent history of Cove was added to our displays, along Cove Road, placed on bases made by Leiths.

The fishing industry still had nothing, however, and this is where our most exciting project was to fit in. We wanted a statue to commemorate this industry, and we had found our sculptor – a locally based Brazilian named Albertino Costa, whose working style had fired our imagination, as he works in a flexible way, incorporating ideas from all around him as the work progresses. Fund raising began, including sponsored walks, along the route Isie Caie had taken to carry her fish into Aberdeen to sell – a walk of approx. 6 miles, donations from sponsors, including her granddaughter, who made a generous donation to the work.



Albertino was commissioned to make a sculpture for the Cove fishing industry based on Isie Caie, the last fishwife in Cove, who was still selling fish in Aberdeen in the 1960's. We had the marble stone brought into Cove Harbour in July 2016, and he started work, initially, just one day a week, chipping and cutting at the stone, and talking to the folk who visit the harbour. Obviously, this included the fishermen using the area, a sub aqua diver and photographer, kayakers, artists, families, dog-walkers, among others, and of course, the harbour



owner, who is a plastic surgeon and a Hindu. Albertino not only listened to the stories he heard, he found ways to incorporate them into the sculpture, and so our memorial developed with not just Isie Caie, who can be seen with a creel on her back to the front of the stone, but fishermen bringing in their nets, the prow of an Aberdeen registered boat, a mother and children, limpets, a fish or two, a crab – held safely as explained by a fisherman, waves racing up the stone, a starfish, and an elephant trunk representing the Hindu god Shiva, and so many other things you will have to visit it to see them all, as these pupils from Charleston School did!



Planning permission was obtained for the sculpture to be sited in the Green on the corner of Stoneyhill Terrace, the road where Isie had lived, but it needed something to sit on, and this is where Leiths again became involved, by providing and siting a large block of granite for the piece to sit on. We were invited into the quarry to choose our rock, and in August 2017 the base was set in place just in time for the Beautiful Scotland judges



visit to Cove. They were impressed with what we had achieved with the sculpture and with the generous support given to us by local companies, such as Leiths by providing our base and Colin Lawson Transport who moved the stone for us.



Moving the sculpture on to the base proved more difficult than we had anticipated. The weather had been unkind to us, and the ground had been too soft to permit the final positioning. The first effort was unsuccessful, but we tried again, unsuccessfully,

however with a new hi-ab with a longer arm Colin Lawson was finally able to move her to her final resting place, and Isie Caie and her fishing history were in place. Albertino added the finishing touches to his work



before the Grand Unveiling, which took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, with as much symbolism as we could squeeze in!



The Lord Provost agreed to attend and say a few words; Isie's granddaughter, Chirsty MacSween came up from Glasgow to share her memories of her grandmother, and our sponsors were all invited to attend the ceremony and then join us for a meal afterwards along with local councillors and representatives from Aberdeen City Council Environmental Services, who support us so well.

We had fishing and sailing related music in the background, we 'veiled' the sculpture with a length of fishing net, and we toasted the Cove fishing at the close, before taking our honoured guests to the Cove Bay Hotel for a fish tea.



The weather was kind to us, a beautiful sunny day, if cold, but very little wind. Wendy Suttar opened the event and welcomed all the visitors, including a group of children from the local primary school who had visited the sculpture earlier in the year and helped Albertino polish the stone. Chirsty's reminder of her grandmother's life kept our listeners rapt, and the Lord Provost concluded the speeches. He then took one

corner of the fishing net, Chirsty took another, and together they drew it off the sculpture to applause. After a short opportunity to look at the sculpture and speak to the sculptor, we raised our glasses to the Cove fishing to finally conclude the public ceremony. Folk began to wander away about half an hour later.

Representatives of Cove in Bloom joined our speakers, sponsors, local councillors and invited guests at the Cove Bay Hotel (a traditional posting inn, and one of our longest standing sponsors) for a light tea, consisting of a delicious fish pie and our celebration cake.

Our original three year plan was complete – even if it had taken five years to get there!

