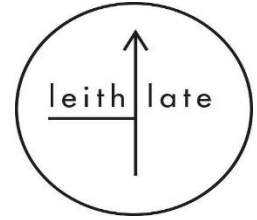


Speaker: Cameron Foster (Guide)

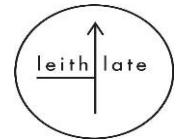
Mural: Leith Dockers

Audio 00:03:20



So, here we are then, welcome to Leith Dockers Club- cheap pints and a warm welcome await inside however we're here to have a wee look at this cracking mural by Tom Ewing. You might know Tom's work from around the Lothian's, there's one out at Preston Pans for example, where he specialises in work that celebrates industrial heritage so when the Dockers club were looking for someone to commission for a mural celebrating Leith and the Dockers he was an obvious choice. The mural was commissioned in 2013 and completed at the end of that end of that year and as you can see from the inscription it was formally unveiled by some dude called Irvin Welsh in 2014. The process here was a little different for some of the other murals in Leith. Rather than spending time interviewing locals, the Club collected old photographs from its members and charged Tom with the task of creating a cohesive piece. Not necessarily an easy task but absolutely a better way of creating a brief than you'll get from a lot of organisations that's for sure. To be quite honest with you, I think Tom's done really well with it.

And you can see how the resources have affected the final piece. Given that some of the photos were in colour, some were in black and white and some were even older and had that sepia tint, Tom decided that, rather than try to artificially colour the older photos he would restrict his pallet to the creams and browns you see here. I think this works on a few levels, obviously artificial colouring requires either a ton of research or a ton of guesswork - or likely a bit of both - and even then, in the real world, colours clash and tones don't always sit well together so there would always have to some compromise to the verisimilitude y'know, to make the image work as a whole. I think this choice leads to a far more harmonious composition and what's more, with the prevalence of



photography in society now that we immediately understand this a reflecting memories rather than contemporary life.

Just to run through some of the things we're seeing here. On the left we've got a view looking down Leith Walk to the Old Kirkgate, I'm not sure how ironic the inclusion of the trams is here but its provoked a few wry smiles. The centre panel is the Old Kirkgate itself before its redevelopment in the mid-60s a scene that is reflected again the the Leith History Mural next to Leith Theatre. On the right, and I imagine that's the only time you'll hear these guys described as being on the right, are final 30 workers being piped out of Henry Robb Shipyard in 1983 which brought to an end 600 years of ship building in Leith with the backdrop there being, of course Imperial docks. Some of the wee vignettes dotted around include Lambs house, the old Gaiety theatre in the Kirkgate, Leith Citadel which was built to house Cromwell's troops in the 1650s and the former Seaman's Mission which is now a Malmaison Hotel and arguably sees more seaman now than it did then. Up the top you've got the two Jimmy's Messrs Dalglish and Greenan are former secretaries and you can see the club crest and the Leith crest either side of the reference to the seminal Proclaimers song, Sunshine on Leith.

Tom told me a really nice story about this mural actually- so when he was installing it and because painters often work in layers, it didn't immediately look like it does now. So, he'd be up a ladder working away in the cold and some of the members would walk past and give him a few pelters and even after it was unveiled, he wasn't sure how well it had been received. But when he came back to do the first mural tour he noticed all lights and flowers that has been installed around it and he was really touched. I think the dockers club is right to be pleased with it too, as I said at the start, its a cracker!