

Members' Centres and Friends' Groups of the National Trust for Scotland

There are 39 independent centres and groups throughout Scotland including two south of the border in London and Cambridge who work to support the National Trust for Scotland. The groups have had a busy and successful year so far and The Trust is extremely grateful. The following pages illustrate the wide diversity of events and activities that the groups are involved in. Thanks to all who contributed towards this document with reports of activities over the year. More importantly, thank you for your ongoing support, both financial and practical.

Aberdeen & District Members' Centre (Charity Number SC000109)

Chairman: Joan McKichan

Secretary: vacant

North East Aberdeenshire Members' Centre (Charity Number SC024227)

Chairman: Lesley Gill

Secretary: Margaret Alexander

I must start with a lovely quote from a Historic Scotland property on the Outer Hebrides which I visited in October. 'We are a government agency so we can keep open all year, you see.'

Since September 08, we had a talk by Jack Webster, and talks on Persian Rugs, Everest, The Victorians and their Trees, Orkney, and Ellon's heritage trail. We now make a habit of organising a talk or two based on the places being visited on the next weekend trip. Perhaps we should have more talks on NTS properties, as the Property Managers are so enthusiastic. Our meetings all seem to go very well with an average attendance of 35 - 40 for talks, and more for other meetings such as a Barbecue / Musical evening; Carols for Christmas; biennial Burns Dinner; or a Supper and Talk.

We usually have our talks in the evenings except in January / February when we worry that it might be snowy.....we meet in lovely properties with particularly long winding drives!

In May 2009, we had an Antiques Valuation Day in the Hall at Haddo with Lyon & Turnbull. The three experts came up from Edinburgh and worked non-stop all day. These open meetings are nerve racking as you never know how many people will turn up but we had about 100 people and made about £1350. We have ideas for improvements next time,

such as getting follow-up press coverage of a particularly satisfied customer.

In June 2009, we had a very successful weekend trip to Orkney – the weather was brilliant! We were full of praise for the lunch provided for us at Culloden on the way north. Instead of the usual sandwiches, they laid out the fillings in bowls so that you could make your own salad or sandwich which was much nicer. On Orkney, Tour A visited the usual haunts on the Mainland, and Tour B visited two islands (Hoy, and Balfour Castle on Shapinsay). We all visited the Castle of Mey on the way home. There were no hitches except on the way to Hoy when the tide was low making the angle of the slipway very steep. This meant that the front and back of the coach were in danger of hitting the ground but fortunately an experienced skipper remembered an old way (with ropes) to save the day! Brightwater came up trumps as usual but their itinerary needed more added to it, and their attention to detail required careful scrutiny.

We had an outing to Dunninald and the House of Dun in July which made interesting viewing as one of the properties had had a lot of money spent on it (NTS) and the other hadn't. Our August outing to Findrack Garden was also much enjoyed.

We made a big effort in September to have an open meeting (*Men Behind the Medals*) which would attract a different audience, hoping that to draw their attention to the NTS and get some new members. The talk was attended by about 100 people but I don't know if the Membership Secretary has been inundated quite yet!

In October we look forward to a talk about the renovated McManus Gallery in Dundee, prior to a visit next year; and we end the Homecoming Year with a Supper in Haddo House with a Talk by Dr David Purdie. And the programme planning continues. It's a big effort trying to get all talks and outings planned far enough ahead to be in time for publication in the 'Events' leaflet.

When we have a special raffle, we are always grateful to the Holidays Department for so willingly giving us a prize of a holiday. It's such a wonderful attractive prize and we are very grateful.

Friends of Alloa Tower
(Charity Number SC017733)

Chairman: Betty Roy

Angus Members' Centre
(Charity Number SC024891)

Chairman: Valerie Officer

Secretary: Dorothy Booth

Argyll Members' Group
(Charity Number SC024786)

Chairman: Mary Sandilands

Secretary: Jim Kirkpatrick

Our year began in late April with our AGM. We were back at Loch Melfort Hotel at Arduaine, which gave people a chance to look round the gardens. After an excellent lunch and the business of the AGM, our guest, Linda Evans gave us a very interesting and informative talk on her job as Development Officer. Area Manager for Gardens, Robert Ferguson then answered our many questions on the proposed closure of Arduaine Gardens.



Arduaine

Our first summer outing in May was to the Island of Gigha. After lunch in the hotel, the Head Gardener, Micky Little, showed us round Achamore Gardens.

Our June meeting was to Benmore Gardens. After an informative introductory talk, members walked round the extensive gardens. This was followed by a visit to Kilmun Church to see the excellent stained glass windows.

The main trip of the summer was a four-day visit to Perthshire, based in Pitlochry. Our first visit was on the way to Pitlochry when we visited Blair Castle. We followed this with a visit to the NTS Killiecrankie Visitor Centre before reaching our hotel. Other visits during our stay included Scone Palace, The Hermitage, Stanley Mills and Drummond Gardens. We also went to an evening performance in the Pitlochry Theatre and followed this up, on our last day, with a backstage tour before heading home via House of Bruar for lunch and (for several members) some retail therapy.

We have two trips to come, our September visit is to the Marine Research Campus at Dunstaffnage near Oban and in October we will visit Cruachan Power Station.

There will be indoor meetings in November, December, February and March 2010.

Ayrshire Members' Centre
(Charity Number SC000387)

Chairman & Secretary: John Rattenbury

Banff & Moray Members' Centre
(Charity Number SC024693)

Chairman: Duncan Alexander

Secretary: Andy Collins

Our 2009 calendar started in March with the AGM, but the mundane routine thereof was afterwards brightened up by a presentation by Mr Colin MacConnachie, NTS Head of Interpretation, on his work for the Trust. Later in the month we held the first of our members' lunches for the year in Elgin, after which Dr Shannon Fraser gave a talk on her archaeological work with NTS, concentrating particularly on some of our local properties in the North East.

Each year we make a three or four-day tour to places of interest in Scotland, and in May this year the destination was Edinburgh and the surrounding area. A period of excellent weather allowed a coach full of members to enjoy visits to a number of properties over the four days. Good weather also favoured us in June for our annual coffee morning in Fochabers. This is one of our main fund-raising events, and a good attendance allowed us to raise £564.

The first of our one-day coach tours was in July, taking in Drum and Crathes Castles, and in October the second coach tour was to Dalgetie and Fyvie Castles. We travelled by coach also to our August visit to the Pitlochry Festival Theatre, where more than forty members very much enjoyed a matinee performance of "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie". This was a long day out from Banff and Moray, but the journey was broken by stops for coffee on the way south and for high tea on the way north.

The Centre's autumn lunch was again in Elgin in September, and on this occasion local athlete Mr Douglas Cowie entertained us with stories of his experiences as escort to the Olympic torch on its way to Athens in 2004 and his experiences on the Pan American torch relay in 2007. At this event the annual prize draw was carried out, this year raising £519. The first prize was a week's holiday for four in

a NTS property, but the winner was unable to take up the prize and generously offered it for auction at the final event of our 2009 calendar, the annual Quiz Night in November, where it raised £200. The Quiz Night itself was as always a great success, and again added significantly to our income for the year.

Our fund raising has allowed us to make a donation of £2,750 for our nearest local property, Brodie Castle, to purchase tables, chairs and table linen for use at corporate events and weddings at the Castle, thus saving the considerable cost of hiring those items. Looking ahead to 2010, a full programme of events is already planned and we anticipate another successful and enjoyable year.

Friends of Barry Mill

Chairman: James Anderson

Secretary: Mhairi Goldthorpe



Barry Mill

Now that the initial objective of our group has been achieved and NTS have halted plans to close Barry Mill for 3 years we are able to concentrate on getting more people to visit.

We've held two car boot sales, to raise funds, and are participating in the Christmas market being held by another local charitable organisation. The stall will be for information, hopefully gain a few more paid up Friends and we will be selling some items as well, as jute shopping bags for "messages". One of the committee are making them, and will be

similar to the grain bags used at the mill and will say Barry Mill, in a smaller, but same script as the grain bags.

The friends are still looking to develop a logo for our group and our Chairman is working on a webpage for the group as well. We are also exploring other avenues to tap into for promoting the mill as a place to visit. One of them being the Angus Ahead website, having reciprocal web links with local organisations (ie. C'noustie Twinning Assoc.) We have also been making contact with Angus College the Arbroath branch to develop a working relationship with them for future projects and are hoping to see if the Friends can also get some help from local business, we have been approached by one company already. Given that we have been involved for less than a full year, we've made lots of positive progress. Some of our committee has changed already, a few have come on and a few have left due to change in life circumstances, but even those who've had to step away for now are still active supporters and hope to become involved again at some point. There are a wide range of talents, ideas, a resource knowledge. I hope over the next year the group will continue to thrive and be enthused by the challenges of having a different remit.

Although the winter is a quiet time with fewer visitors than the other seasons of the year there are still plenty of things to be done. A series of meetings will be held with Angus Council and the National Trust for Scotland to make plans for the coming year and the longer-term success of the Mill. We will also be hard at work planning the events for next year. With all of this work we are always on the look out for people keen to help out. No matter what you can do, from stuffing newsletters into envelopes, to writing grant applications we and Barry Mill need you!

**Bearsden & Milngavie Members' Centre
(Charity Number SC025422)**

Chairman: Arthur Priestly

Secretary: Jean Forrest

Fifty-four of our members have recently returned from a very successful trip to Northern Ireland organised by Pamela and Gordon Rutherford and we all had a very enjoyable time there. For many it was

our first visit to Northern Ireland. Many thanks to Pamela and Gordon for making all the arrangements. I hope that the Highland Tour in 2010 will be equally successful! Members cannot fail to be aware that there are rumours of the National Trust for Scotland being in financial difficulty and the Media have made much of those alleged difficulties. Since becoming Chairman I have attended meetings where the subject was discussed at length and I do believe that the management of the Trust do have plans in place to improve the financial position. Mistakes have been made in the past, and the current financial crisis has had its effect on the Trust's investments, but the matter of future finance is being taken seriously. It is always regrettable, in organisations large and small, when redundancies take place, but it is a fact that staffing costs are normally the most significant feature in the accounts of any organisation and therefore the first target for cutting back, at all levels, on expenditure. Our Outings and Walks programmes have continued to be popular this year, although we did cancel the New Lanark Outing as there was very little support for this event. Dumfries House was very popular, to the extent that we organised a second visit to cater for those on the waiting list. Last Winter's programme also proved to be well supported.

Borders Members' Group

Chairman: Alastair Turnbull

Secretary: Vera Carstairs

**Friends of Brodick Castle & Country Park
(Charity Number SC033817)**

Chair & Secretary: George Davis

**Friends of Broughton House & Garden
(Charity Number SC012686)**

Chairman: George Makins

Secretary: Sandra Walsh

Our annual events programme began in April with an excellent illustrated talk 'Tips for Spring Gardening' given by David Ferguson, the Property Manager and Head Gardener from Greenbank Garden, Glasgow. David gave the

audience some novel ideas about how to make smaller suburban gardens seem more spacious, and attractive.

The May event was a talk by Roger Jones about the History of Scotch Whisky, from its earliest beginnings to its current global brands status. A scientist with a mass of knowledge about the inner workings of distilleries, he also produced samples illustrating marked regional characteristics. The enjoyment of his talk was surpassed only by the enjoyment of the samples.

Our old friends 'Gentle Jazz' provided another informal evening of musical magic in early July at Threave Garden Visitor Centre, playing to a capacity audience. Our thanks to Sheila Innes and her staff for making the more spacious facilities at Threave available.

Another musical evening was provided in September by the 'Warbling Birds' – the stage name for Hilary Irving and Sue St. Joseph – accompanied by Ruth Sandeford playing the clarsach. Another capacity audience enjoyed some wonderful Scottish songs, with ideal accompaniment.

In October Alistair Smith provided an insight into the skills and secrets of the NTS curator. An interesting and enthusiastic speaker, whose address was much appreciated.

Broughton House closed to the public on November 1, for the end of season conservation and cleaning routines. Property Manager Sally Eastgate will throw back the shutters and remove the dustsheets, however, for our annual 'Carols in an Afternoon' just prior to Christmas. The mince pies are good, and her mulled wine is something special.

Our events programme will conclude in January when Mike Duguid will host 'An Evening with Burns'. A local member of the Friends, Mike is also President of the Robert Burns World Federation, and his lively programme often draws inspiration from the extensive Burns collection in the Broughton House library.

Our AGM will be held on Thursday 18 March at Broughton House, commencing at 2.30 pm.

Cambridge Friends of The National Trust for Scotland

Chair: Julian Landy

Friends of Crarae (Charity Number SC033244)

Chairman: Anthony Brown

Secretary: Fiona Sinclair

Friends of Culzean Castle (Charity Number SC037983)

Chairman: David Kennedy

Secretary: John Rattenbury

Companions of the David Livingstone Centre

Chairman: Mary Frew

Dumfriesshire Members' Group (Charity Number SC031094)

Chairman: Marion Aitken

Secretary: Donal McLeod

Dundee Members' Group (Charity Number SC024151)

Chairman: Michael Wilson

Secretary: Christine Mollison

East Fife Members' Centre (Charity Number SC024846)

Chairman: Ann Varley-Tipton

Secretary: Mhairi Ramsay

Kellie Castle and Hill of Tarvit Mansionhouse being two of the properties in our area has made for disquieting times for members, but, despite this, the Centre has enjoyed a good year.

We began with our traditional members' Lunch in January where the guest speaker, David Hopes, Project Curator of the Burns' Birthplace Museum, inspired us with his energy, enthusiasm and knowledge. In February Edwina Proudfoot spoke to a large audience

about the John Geddy Map of St Andrews, a map of the town dating from the earlier part of the 16th century, but still the framework for today's townscape. Our AGM in March coincided with news of threats of closure for both Kellie Castle and Hill of Tarvit Mansionhouse, so, not surprisingly, it was better attended and more interactive than usual! Fortunately our speaker, Winifred Harley, was able to introduce a quieter and at times humorous note with her account of the Fife Folk Museum in Ceres. The following month a special evening tour of the museum was arranged for our members.

Five trips have taken place covering the following: Monzie Castle (rebuilt and restored in 1908 by Robert Lorimer, so of particular interest to our group); Drummond Castle Gardens; The David Livingstone Memorial at Blantyre; New Lanark; the Falkirk Wheel; the House of the Binns; the House of Dun; a visit to Pitlochry theatre (with some retail therapy at the House of Bruar en route!). As I write we have one more event still to come: a talk by Harry Lawson on "Wild Flowers around Balmerino". In addition to the above planned programme, a coffee morning and guided tour of the gardens at Kellie Castle was arranged, with all monies raised (£268) going specifically to the Castle; a well attended event. In July new members were welcomed to the home of our Honorary President, Mrs June Baxter, giving them the opportunity to meet members of the committee and find out more about the Members' Centre.



Kellie Castle

This year we have again been able to support properties in our area in a practical way, as well as making a fifth, and final, contribution of £1,125 to

the Buses for Bairns scheme. A total of £5,000 has been given to Kellie Castle, £2,500 towards the funding for an organic gardening student, £1,500 towards the production of "Wee Guides", and £1,000 towards the rewiring of the walls for fruit trees. At Hill of Tarvit Mansionhouse £2,000 has been given for the painting of the billiard room, and at Falkland Palace we have funded a seasonal gardener at a cost of £2,500.

Membership currently stands at 277 and we look forward to another year of friendship and fun whilst continuing to support the work of the National Trust for Scotland.

East Lothian Members' Centre (Charity Number SC026085)

Chairman: John Sheldon

Secretary: Rod Russell

The delay in finding nominees to fill gaps in some of the committee's positions postponed any discussion of a summer programme until 16th March, an agreed version being finally approved by 23rd April and its details circulated to our 310 members on 6th May. The team involved in this work, which comprised volunteers, won a warm vote of thanks from the newly appointed chairman and five interesting and informative visits this year were made available.

Thus encouraged, the 'season' started with a group of 31 members journeying in cars for an evening visit to Fountainhall in May. Here we were given a warm welcome by Mr & Mrs Cowe, the owners who took us on a personal tour of this family home dating from the 1500's. Over two storeys of the house, learning something of its 500 years' of history, not the least aspect of which was the present day difficulty in finding someone to clean its upper casement windows!

The outing's pleasure was further enhanced by the enjoyment in the garden of a glorious

evening sun followed by a convivial drink in the Hall's old courthouse.

June saw 47 members enjoy an afternoon visit to Dalmeny House, the home for over 300 years of the Earls of Rosebery. Once again, and this time in the person of Lady Rosebery, a warm welcome was extended to the group and a pleasant tour of the house and garden undertaken.

With mid-summer past and the height of the golfing season upon us, 46 members set off in July for a half day visit to Monteviot House, the home of Lord and Lady Lothian, where our party enjoyed seeing over the rooms and strolling in the gardens prior to a tea at a local garden centre.

By now, we were into the traditional harvesting season and it was, truly, a glorious 12th of August that witnessed our coach decanting 33 members outside Bamburgh Castle all set for a day visit. As this included not only an exploration of the Castle's massive rooms but also involved for the more energetic, a short walk to see the Grace Darling Museum and the neighbouring St Aiden's Church, the site of her tomb, there were not too many minutes to stand and stare at the surrounding vistas of land and sea before heading north and over the Border.

Bamburgh in August provided a range of places to explore with the castle, Grace Darling RNLi Centre and a very attractive village.

A month later, the 12th September, found 32 members on the banks of the Tay at Scone Palace, ancestral home of the Earls of Mansfield. Though it lay basking in sunshine on the day of our visit, it not need much imagination to conjure up images of Scotland's past such as the enthroning of Scottish Kings, the one-night stay of Queen Victoria in 1847, and the more recent one of Emperors of Japan.

Every room or corridor seemed to have a story, as too did the grounds with their resplendent trees, shades of David Douglas, and the old village's graveyard. Thirsty for more? Perhaps in 2010

**Eastwood & District Members' Centre
(Charity Number SC024601)**

Chairman: George Robertson
Secretary: Mary MacLennan

**Edinburgh Members' Centre
(Charity Number SC025732)**

Chairman: Ian MacDonald
Secretary: John Williams

**Galloway Members' Group
(Charity Number SC026207)**

Chairman: Fiona McCulloch
Secretary: Michael Brown

**Glasgow Members' Centre
(Charity Number SC024399)**

Chairman: Helen Cargill Thompson
Secretary: Moira Young

Yet again we have had a very successful year, all be it, one of two halves. The winter section was mainly taken up by lectures although we had an excellent trip to Hopetoun House Christmas Fayre in November 2008 – much enjoyed by the members who took part in the excursion. Our lectures covered topics as wide ranging as The History of the Glasgow Fire Services, The John Murray Archives, and The Burns Project, Alloway as well as Gardens, Countryside Conservation and Professor David Green talking about The NTS Western Regional Area.

Our summer section of excursions was also very well supported. We began with a visit in May 2009 to The Cruachan Power Station and Crarae Gardens followed in June with an outing south of the border to Levens Hall in Cumbria. July saw us at Leuchars Church and, after a tour of the church, we had a soup and sandwich lunch provided by the ladies of the church. We spent the afternoon at Balcarres House enjoying their collection of Early Renaissance paintings and, on a sunny day, their colourful gardens. In August we visited Thirlestane and in October our last excursion for the season was to Blair House, Dalry

followed by a tour of Dumfries House, Cumnock.

The September 2009 five day tour found us staying in Buckinghamshire where we visited Waddesdon Manor and Claydon House, both National Trust Properties, and had a brief sortie to Bletchley Park (secret World War II Code Breaking Centre) and Woburn Abbey. For me, the highlight of the weekend was our day at Boughton House, the third (Montague Family) estate of the NTS President, the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry. We were most royally entertained. The 5-day tour finished with a visit to 78 Derngate, C. R. Mackintosh's make over of a tiny Georgian House in Northampton for the Bassett-Lowkes family. We were blessed with good weather throughout the 5 days and I think everybody enjoyed themselves. Next year we stay in Scotland and our trip will be based in Strathpeffer.

Like everyone else we would like to have more members but we have acquired some new members this year.

Friends of Greenbank Garden
(Charity Number SC024113)
Chairman: Eileen Taylor

Highland Members' Centre
(Charity Number SC006203)
Chairman: vacant
Secretary: James Bain

Friends of Hugh Miller
(Charity Number SC037351)
Chairman: Martin Gostwick

Inverclyde Members' Centre
(Charity Number SC025313)
Chairman: Jean Marshall
Secretary: Elizabeth Berry

Our 2008/2009 session began in September in the McLean Museum, Greenock with a good turn out, which I am pleased to say continued throughout the session.

During the session we had speakers who included Duncan Stevenson from N.T.S. on Bats, Jacobites, Badgers and Naturists (not a misspell!). Members also

enjoyed presentations from Hugh Kerr on "Kayaking in the Western Isles"; "Railway Heritage" by Gordon Thomson, Secretary of the Ayrshire Railway preservation Group who operate the Scottish Industrial Railway Centre at Dunaskin near Dalmellington; and "Greenock 1800 – Tale of Two Families" by Eric Firth who kept us enthralled without the use of visual presentations. Our penultimate meeting was presented by Alex Hunter, a member of our Centre who stood in at very short notice when our speaker was unable to attend, and showed slides of activities our Centre had enjoyed over the years. A number of our members enjoyed a holiday to York during 2008 and our annual outing was to a "far place" – i.e. Glasgow, where we had a lovely time at both the Botanical Gardens and the People's Palace. All in all another very successful session and hopefully 2009/2010 will be just as good.

Friends of Inverewe
Chairman: Stan Lindsay
Secretary: Roy Dowsett

We now have 32 Members and two "observers" from two of the local Community Councils.

We have had a "Boot-Camp" day when four Friends of Inverewe came and gardened for the day under strict supervision of the Head Gardener which was terrific and they really enjoyed themselves. We have gained two volunteers who take our recycling to the local dump once a week - this only began in late September as a trial to try and help us retain our Silver in Green Tourism as staff used to do this; also we have three ladies who arrange the flowers on every other table in the 180 seater Restaurant. We have had two fund raising events to support our Wollemi Pine project and these have been very successful. So, a great beginning and as we did not start until earlier this year, a very encouraging beginning.



Inverewe in winter

**Lanarkshire Members' Centre
(Charity Number SC024465)**

Chairman: Kenneth Gray

Secretary: Margaret A Gray

As in previous years our Group's evening meetings have been held on the first Friday of the month alternating between East Kilbride, Strathaven and Hamilton. This arrangement helps to even out the distances travelled by members living throughout our wide area. Over these twelve months we have had excellent and interesting presentations ranging from "Women, Trams WW1", a "Seasonal Entertainment" in December by a choral group and "Work o' the Weavers". This Kilbarchan Weaver's Cottage was not the only BUILDING featured throughout our programme, as Pollok House, Gladstone's Land, Glasgow Merchant House and Trades House, East Kilbride's Old Hairmyres Hospital and The Tenement House all provided fascinating subjects inspiring plans for future visits.

Our day trips were also mostly involved with buildings. In October we visited Aberfeldy and Castle Menzies where we shared the bright but cold day with a wedding reception – such pretty wellie boots were being loaned to the bride and bridesmaids to negotiate a patch of wet grass. Our Glasgow day started with a dramatic talk in the fascinating Britannia Panopticon followed by an afternoon exploring the People's Palace. Our other intriguing buildings were Falkland Palace and Kellie Castle in June and Mellerstain and Eyemouth in August. A much longer but very worthwhile journey was to

Hutton-in-the-Forest near Penrith on a beautiful day in April and was an eye opener to most of us.

We have been fortunate with the weather on our ventures and our luck held in our holidays too. In September we "did" the Highlands. Four nights based in Inverness let us see north Scotland from coast to coast – Brodie Castle, Hugh Miller's Cromarty, Osgood Mackenzie's Inverewe, Ullapool and all that mountain scenery in between. The highlight, of course, was Culloden – and not just to see OUR stone. Our May holiday in the Durham area included a day at Beamish and a boat trip on the River Wear. En route home, Alnwick Castle Gardens made a good coffee stop – shop, restaurant, wonderful water feature and a tree walk up in the branches for the adventurous.

Our Annual Luncheon in September in Strathaven Hotel is an excellent tradition now as is the November Christmas Shop/Coffee Morning and both help us raise substantial funds for the Trust, as do our outings and holidays. Our members and committee work hard while enjoying ourselves. Long may that continue.

**London Members' Centre
(Charity Number SC027207)**

Chairman: Peter Dewar

Secretary: Shiona Robb

GENERAL

This is my fourth year as Chairman of the London Members' Centre, during which we celebrated the 30th Anniversary of its foundation in 1979. We organised a Reception at the Fleming Gallery on 20 October 2009 which was attended by our Patron, The Duke of Buccleuch & Queensberry, and some sixty of our members and their guests. We were also fortunate to be able to view their current exhibition of portraits on loan from the Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

On a more mundane level, we also completely revised and updated our Constitution which

was duly approved at an Extraordinary General meeting held on 18 November 2009. This now conforms to the latest requirements of the law, following the establishment of OSCR (The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator).

For the first time in our history, we now have an office of our own. This is at the Caledonian Club, 9, Halkin Street, London SW1X 7DR and we are most grateful to the Secretary and the Committee for having made this possible.

VISITS

Over the last year, the NTS London Members' Centre has continued with its successful programme of visits, numbering 28 or more, which have been well supported. All these require much organisation and for this we are most grateful to Colin Mackay and his Visits Committee. We aim to take our members to places that are not generally open to the public and venues over the last year have included:-

2008

The Mansion House (2 October); Christ's Hospital School (9 October); Freemasons' Hall (22 October); National Maritime Museum (4 November); RAF Club (27 November); London Fire Brigade Museum (11 December);

2009

RA – Byzantium Art (12 January); Dr. Johnson's House (21 January); Caledonian Club (4 February); Lloyds Insurance Building (24 February); Horse Guards & Household Cavalry Museum (3 March); British Library (12 March); Guildhall Art Library (24 March); Greenwich Ranger's House (2 April); The Old Bailey (15 April); Apsley House (28 April); Lords Cricket Ground (19 May); Kew Steam & Musical Museums (23 May); Trooping the Colour rehearsal (6 June); English National Opera (7 July); Kensal Green Cemetery (23 July); BBC Broadcasting House (2 August); Berry Bros & Rudd (26 August); Royal Courts of Justice (1 September); The Thames Barrier river trip (2 September); The Wallace Collection (9 September); Chelsea Football Club (24 September) and a concert at the Caledonian Club (29 September).

LECTURES

Two lectures were organised, again preceded by a buffet lunch. The first was our Christmas lecture 2008 by Hugh Cantlie, entitled '*Castles in Scotland*' (18 November) and the second, our Spring Lecture, was by Charles Beauclerk (Earl of Burford) who spoke movingly about '*Who Wrote Shakespeare*' (21 April). We are most grateful to Carol Mitchell. Anne Mason-Brown and Colin Mackay for all their help in organising these events. Our Christmas lecture this year will be '*A History of Christmas Shopping*' by Dr. Clare Walsh which will take place on 24 November 2009.

OTHER EVENTS

Other events included our AGM (20 May) which was addressed in our President's absence by a colleague of his who spoke about theft insurance. This was followed by a reception.

This year our tour was to Aberdeenshire (5-9 May). Thirty-five members and their friends participated and reckoned it to have been a great success. We visited Fyvie Castle, Dalgety Castle, Towie Barclay Castle, Pitmedden Gardens, Lickley Head, Crathes Castle, Drum Castle, Balmoral, Mar Lodge, Kincardine Castle, Cawdor Castle, Brodie Castle and Culloden,

So yet again, it has been another busy year which will enable us to contribute towards specific NTS projects. Already £5,000 has been given in support of the Burn's Appeal and £2,000 worth of tea towels have been donated to NTS shops for sale. We were also fortunate enough to receive a bequest from one of our members, but have yet to decide how it will be employed. Our heartfelt thanks are due to all those who have helped and made it all possible.

NTS LONDON COMMITTEE

I would also mention that the NTS London Committee, which is a separate but allied organisation, duly held its annual NTS Lecture & Reception (8 Oct) when Lieutenant General

Sir Alistair Irwin spoke on *'Of Scotch, a Fairy, a Roue and Some Little Houses'*. During the year, it also organised a Christmas Fair at the London Scottish Regimental Headquarters (18 & 19 November 2008), the Annual Reels Party at Porchester Hall (23 January 2009), a Burns Night Dinner at the Caledonian Club (30 January 2009) and a Reception and Beating the Retreat at Dover House (10 June 2009).

Friends of Malleny Garden
(Charity Number SC027169)

Chairman: John Peacock

Secretary: Yvonne Deacon

Motherwell District Members' Group

Chairman: Alan Frew

Secretary: Marion Munro

Perth & Kinross Members' Group
(Charity Number SC011062)

Chairman: Lindsay Dow

Secretary: Maureen Auld

The Perth and Kinross Members' Group have made a number of donations to NTS properties recently this year. We have donated £150 to Kellie Castle - £50 for a stepladder for the gardeners and £100 towards a fruit press. The Group visited Kellie Castle last year and was especially impressed by the lovely gardens and orchards. We gave £100 to Haddo House for educational costumes for children, hoping to encourage interest among young people. A donation of £250 has been sent to Culloden for a shaded area for dogs in cars – a need with which we can greatly sympathise.

The Group is also going to donate £500 to the Friends of Barry Mill with the idea of supporting the publication of a little booklet about the history of milling as told by Peter Ellis, the Property Manager. Discussions with the Friends are ongoing about this project. The Group made a very enjoyable outing to Barry Mill in August 2009.

Stirling Members' Centre
(Charity Number SC025499)

Chairman: Robert McKean

Secretary: Jack Sutherland

St Kilda Club
(Charity Number SC034266)

Chairman: Donald Paterson

Secretary: David Ackroyd

Friends of Suntrap Garden
(Charity Number SC025490)

Chairman: Phyllis Wilson

Secretary: Isobel Lodge

It was on a sunny autumn day in September that Susan Robertson, treasurer of Friends of Suntrap gave John Smith, the team leader and manager of Suntrap garden, a cheque for £2,500. This will go towards the renovating of the propagation glasshouse, which has rotted due to misting. It is hoped to bring it back into use by next spring and summer. The existing propagation unit will be moved in the spring to the conservatory attached to the classroom. The initial quote for a major refurbishment was £20,000! But, with a united effort, using voluntary labour where possible, and doing only the most essential repairs the cost can be reduced considerably. The 'Friends' contribution enables the work to commence. We have promised to help further if required. The greenhouse is essential for the propagation of plants, a source of valuable income for Suntrap and a teaching facility for students.



The 'Friends' are delighted to welcome back the horticultural students from Oatridge. We have missed them these last nine years. The

garden certainly has! After all so much of it, the beds, the classrooms, and the glasshouses were built around the needs of the students. An incomparable facility!

Susan also gave John a cheque for £125, an amount that has annually been given by the Friends to deserving students. From now on however, we wish the money to be a specific grant for students who attend Suntrap rather than for the College students in general. This could be used for an appropriate award for services to Suntrap garden. The Awards Ceremony for the current Suntrap users takes place in November.

The 'Friends' were formed in 1997 because we appreciated the facilities on offer at Suntrap. A conservation agreement was drawn up between the National Trust for Scotland and the local authority when the property became part of Lothian Region's policies. This conservation agreement was transferred to Oatridge when the College took over the running of Suntrap.

We have a long history of supporting the garden and are proud of our continued involvement. Under the management of John Smith it is now not only a facility for the students of Oatridge but also a haven for those with special needs. It is a source of inspiration for painting classes, and a home to the National Collection of Bonsai. It runs courses for the amateur gardener and is a regular garden club. It is open to the public seven days a week, gives gardening advice freely and continues to be a NTS Members' Centre. It is rightly named 'A Centre of Life Long Learning'.

Weaver's Cottage Support Group
(Charity Number SC026000)

Chairman: Christine Macleod

It's been a fantastic year for our Support Group and all our members have supported us in so many ways, I really can't thank them enough...they have provided the funding for the linen curtains for the Burns Birthplace Museum and individually hand sewn them. We have produced 3 rag rugs, all the team helped to make them and passed on the skills to visitors in addition to helping physically with the

welcoming of groups and individuals from nursery groups to the Minister for Culture...not to mention the support in supporting me, in many ways, throughout the whole of the making of the blanket for the bed in Burns Birthplace!

Christine Macleod



Weavers team with Caroline Glen, Manager and Alison Burke, Learning Manager of Burns Birthplace

West Fife Members' Centre
(Charity Number SC025426)

Chairman: Linda Brown

Secretary: Neil Ross

For support and advice on any issue please contact

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for Scotland

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