

the volunteer

The newsletter for volunteers with the National Trust for Scotland • Autumn 2008

Opportunities
Opinions
Online recruitment

Spotlight on
Castle Fraser &
the North-East

See yourself
here? Volunteer!



the National Trust
for Scotland
a place for everyone

the volunteer

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Welcome
to the
autumn
edition of
*The
Volunteer*.

It has been a busy summer with some notable changes to the way the department runs and the ways volunteers are recruited and supported. Firstly, our new website and online recruitment facility is firmly established and has attracted lots of interest. In addition to the recruitment section, there is a news section with links to our newsletters. Remember to look us up at www.nts.org.uk/volunteering

Changes have also been seen in the non-virtual world with all the volunteering team now located together in one office in Charlotte Square. Looking out of my new window, I am reminded of the bane of Scottish summers—the weather! From heat-waves to

floods and everything in between. I'd like to thank all of our volunteers who have braved the conditions to ensure that the Trust continues to offer such excellent services in all aspects of its work.

Volunteers can often pilot new services and this has recently been shown to be the case with the opening of a Sale Shop in Charlotte Square. Manned by volunteers for the first few weeks, the shop demonstrated its potential and the need for a paid employee. We are now also looking to reopen our shop in St Andrews, so do get in touch if you are able to help.

Finally, I'd like to thank Thomas Meek and Joanna Sterling who have helped create this newsletter, spreading the news about the great work of our volunteers.

**Violet Dalton
Head of Volunteering**

Help protect and preserve Scotland's Environment Handy Hints to Go Green

Vegetables—grow your own or buy more seasonally and locally produced food

Only boil as much water as you need for that cup of tea and save water and energy!

Leave the car at home once a week and walk, cycle, car-share or use public transport

Use rechargeable instead of disposable batteries

Never leave the tap on when you're brushing your teeth

Turn off and switch off! Save energy and electricity by turning off lights and not leaving machines on 'stand-by'

Ensure you use a lid with your saucepans when cooking—reducing heat and energy loss, and saving money!

Ease into going green and before long one little change will become a habit!

Recycle recycle recycle!

Leeches and Lavender at Culross

Have you ever wondered just what people did in the 17th century to cure all those aches, pains and ailments we now have antibiotics and prescriptions to cure?

Well, Culross has an informative exhibition created by volunteer Susan Mitchell to tell you exactly just what you would have needed to do if you had a headache in the 1600s.

This exhibition, complete with dried-out mouse skins

and live leeches, follows on from last year's celebrated witchcraft exhibition which Susan also coordinated.

While you're in the Royal Burgh, you can explore the plants in the palace gardens and try to match up which ones were used for which ailments!



One of the many flowers found in the gardens



Some remedies on display

Culross is the most complete example in Scotland of a 17th century Royal Burgh, and this is the perfect way to learn about such an interesting time in the history of Scottish people.

For more about Culross, log on to www.nts.org.uk/Property/22/

Did you know?

The juice of primroses was used as a lotion for spring rashes.

To prevent toothache, a popular method was once to tie a dead mole around your neck!

Charlotte Square Exhibition

The annual exhibitions held at No 28 Charlotte Square have always been interesting and successful events, with past exhibitions including Culloden and Canna.

Inspired by the 500th anniversary of printing in Scotland, the theme of this free exhibition is the arts of printing and literature. It runs from 1 August until the end of October .

You can see Scotland's printing history come to life as Robert Smail's Printing Works provide the tools to print your own name, as well as demonstrations on what happens to create that fully formed novel.

A first edition of *Peter Pan* by J M Barrie is on display, alongside a rare 18th-century Robert Burns collection, complete with misprint!

Don't forget to pop into the shop after to find Robert Smail's special literary themed gifts.



The traditional printworks at Robert Smail's

Volunteering at Castle Fraser

Standing in a picturesque glen just south of the River Don, Castle Fraser is the most elaborate Z-plan Castle in Scotland, and a spectacular sight to behold. Completed in the early 17th century, Castle Fraser shows off the elegant, feminine influences of the French chateau of the period, combined with the native granite that make up its dominant, masculine tower – an inspiration for the similar tower at Balmoral.

It also stands as an inspiration for volunteering in the North-East of Scotland, with staff and volunteers keen for others to join them in this exceptional property. Marie Buckley, Property Manager at Castle Fraser, shares her volunteering vision:

‘We have eight property volunteers at the moment

but we have room for lots more.’

‘There are roles for guides, event volunteers, musicians, gardeners and even storytellers to name just a few.

But in reality, we'd just appreciate anyone with skill and time to spare. Volunteers are so important as they help preserve Castle Fraser's role as a real living, breathing, exciting property.’

This exciting property has played host to a variety of volunteering projects in the last year—from team building Corporate Challenges to shelter building Thistle Camps.



Shelter built by a Thistle Camp volunteer team

And at only 16 miles away from Aberdeen, it's a short journey by car along one of the most scenic routes in Scotland. Public transport can also be arranged with the A2B dial-a-bus service.

‘Castle Fraser is like a retreat for people's inspiration,’ says Marie. ‘It's so rewarding to help people enjoy this heritage, and Castle Fraser has so much more potential to do so.’



A Volunteer's Tale: Judith Napier explains why she loves Castle Fraser

Volunteering was the easy part. Castle staff and management were warm and welcoming. Doing some preliminary reading was the tricky bit. How on earth would I distinguish one Fraser from another? Colonel Charles – he of the wooden leg and 14 children – was blessedly distinctive. As was Miss Elyza, an inspiring middle-aged unmarried lady laird.

However, earlier generations, sharing the same name, left me baffled. In between times, I paced around my kitchen,



The Great Hall at Castle Fraser

declaiming 'WELCOME to the Great Hall' to the cat. I felt sick with anxiety that first morning, my entire confidence resting on the fact that I would be in the Great Hall, which I had researched thoroughly.

However, badge on, guidebook clasped like a security blanket, I soon realised that visitors were there not to trip me up but because they had a love for and interest in such historic places, and were genuinely interested in anything I might tell them.

For me, the great gift has been meeting so many really interesting people from all over the world, and hearing their stories. Often, I feel they give me a lot more than I give them.

Read more about Castle Fraser at www.nts.org.uk/Property/16

Ryden Corporate Challenge

In June, over 100 employees from the Ryden group offices in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Leeds got together with the National Trust for Scotland to participate in an exciting Corporate Challenge at Ben Lomond.

Led by members of the Volunteering Department, the volunteers were split into a number of teams to do the following tasks—the clearance of large sections of *Rhododendron Ponticum*, charcoal making, removal of the existing dilapidated deer fencing from the hillside, fence building and litter picking.

At the end of a hard day's work, a tired but enthused group of volunteers gathered at the front of the hostel to enjoy the warmth of the sun and a well deserved glass of wine before the ceilidh and barbecue started at the Rangers' station.

The Trust would like to thank all the volunteers involved and hope that they will come back and see the continued impact their work has helped to create.



Taking a break from the hard work to pose for a photo

Corporate Challenge is an exciting Trust initiative that takes teams from public and private sector organisations onto countryside properties to carry out vital conservation work. Find out more about how to get involved at www.nts.org.uk/volunteering

Battle against bracken at Rockcliffe

by Rhiannon Hatfield, Seasonal Ranger

This summer there has been a renewed battle against bracken at Rockcliffe.

Conservation Volunteers have been wading through stands and beating the bracken back with specially designed swipers (two coils of fencing wire with a duct tape handle!). As well as the sophisticated technique of hand swiping, the more inaccessible, areas of bracken are rolled using an all-terrain vehicle.

On a more serious note, bracken is encroaching into what would historically have been meadow areas and is a big challenge at the property.

Damaging bracken fronds has been shown to be more effective than cutting it back, as this weakens the rhizome and thins growth. This in turn allows wild flowers to become



Conservation volunteers battling away re-established in areas which had become overgrown with bracken and encourages a greater insect diversity.

A big thank you goes out to all the volunteers who assist us in this work. Without their help it would be impossible to stay one step ahead of the bracken.

Online Opportunities



Alan at Gladstone's Land

Alan Brailsford Aitken is a special Trust volunteer, and it's not just because of his dedicated work helping to bring to life Gladstone's Land in Edinburgh. Alan also

happens to be the first volunteer recruited via the new volunteering website, which has already seen over 60 new recruits join National Trust for Scotland teams across the country in just a few months.

Three years after calling it a day with the working life, Alan thought it was time to put his skills and experience towards a good cause. 'I've always had an interest in historical buildings and visiting Trust

properties made me realise just how much these buildings need volunteers. I found the volunteering section on the main Trust website, and worked my way through the application form. And now I'm really enjoying my time at Gladstone's.'

Always keen to delight tourists with the stories behind the property, Alan is a real asset to the National Trust for Scotland. And so is the new on-line recruitment service!

With its accessible search methods, it is now quicker and easier than ever to discover what opportunities there are at properties near you.

It's never been easier to volunteer.

Log on to www.nts.org.uk/volunteering to see for yourself the many roles and locations the Trust can offer, from Budgie Buddy to Gallery Guide.

Trust Award for Students

It was burgers and sausages instead of spades and boots for three Queensferry High Students at Inveresk Garden, near

Musselburgh, as they enjoyed a barbecue to celebrate their hard earned certificates for achievements with the Community Partnerships Programme.



Kim and the boys with their awards

Stuart, Robert and Chris, as well as Liam who couldn't make the barbecue, started helping with the Trust in May 2007 as part of the XL programme, which offers an alternative option to a Standard Grade.

Led by Community Partnerships Co-ordinator Kim McKintosh, the youngsters helped construct a path through the garden, as well as helping with the day-to-day tasks of Head Gardener, Louise.

'I've been so impressed with the work they've put in, and the support they've given each other,' says Kim.

'I've learnt a lot about responsibility and leadership,' adds Stuart. 'If I wasn't doing this, I'd just be on my sofa playing my Xbox.'

Stuart is now about to start studying mechanics at college, with Liam beginning landscape gardening studies. And with Robert looking to come back next year to help out new students, it appears working with the Trust has opened up new opportunities for these boys, showing the benefits of programmes such as Community Partnerships.

In Brief . . .

Scots are 'Europe's Biggest Volunteers'

According to a Scottish Government survey, 3 in 10 Scots volunteered in 2007, a higher rate than any European neighbour. Log on to www.thirdsector.co.uk for the full article.

Award for Newhailes Volunteer

After 10 years and 7000 hours hard work in the grounds of the Musselburgh property, Bob 'Mr Newhailes' Cranston was treated to a barbecue and certificate to celebrate.

Annual General Meeting

Members are invited to come along to the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre on Saturday 27 September for 2008's AGM to discover more about the Trust's work.

Book now on 0844 493 2497

A Recipe For CV Success: Tomato and Basil Risotto (serves 12)

A recent discovery of some old newsletters turned up this handy recipe to keep an army of Conservation Volunteers content. If you have your own recipes suitable for up to 15 people, then get in touch at volunteering@nts.org.uk.

Ingredients: a handful of fresh basil leaves, 4 chopped garlic cloves, 12 ripe tomatoes, 200ml extra virgin olive oil, 200g pine nuts, 1.2kg arborico rice, 2.5l vegetable stock, 75g parmesan

Method: Gently fry together basil, garlic and tomatoes with half the oil for 10 mins. Season and remove from heat until required. Meanwhile, pour remaining oil in pan, add pine nuts and toast until golden. Add rice and toast in same way and stir. Begin gradually adding hot stock and stir the rice. Stir in tomato mixture and resume cooking. After another 10 mins, the grains should be firm, but the risotto creamy. Remove from heat and stir in cheese.

People

Joan McKichan, Members' Centre Chairperson

Joan McKichan has been involved with the Trust since 1977, after being encouraged to join by her husband, Finlay, also a dedicated volunteer.

Based in Aberdeen, Joan has had a long association with properties such as Castle Fraser and Drum Castle, with her current role seeing her arrange and co-ordinate volunteers for the estates and the many events that they hold.

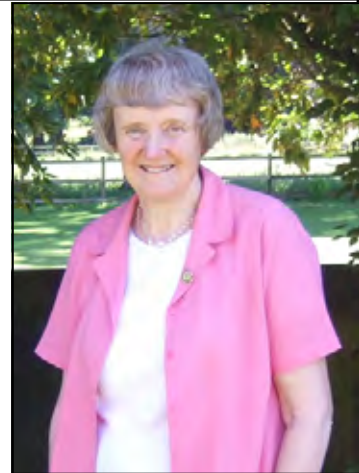
Over the years, Joan has held a variety of positions in the Trust, including leading roles in the running of the Aberdeen Christmas Shop. Her most fondly remembered task, however, was working in the rose gardens at Drum Castle. 'I loved helping out there,' she recalls. 'It was just so beautiful and peaceful.'

It's no surprise this is Joan's favourite memory with the Trust, considering the passion she has for her own garden.

'It's my number one priority,' she says. 'Gardening's my way to relax.'

And Joan has certainly earned that relaxation time. With the difficulty of arranging volunteers in North-East

Scotland, Joan has had to put more effort than most to make sure the National Trust for Scotland's properties get the people they need, always making sure there's a cup of tea and thank you for their efforts.



If you'd like to help out people like Joan, then why not join your local members' centre. Further details are available at www.ntscentres.org.uk or by phoning your local council.

A Winning Shot



In the last edition of *The Volunteer*, we told you about The Philip Schreiber Photography Award, a photography competition open to all Trust volunteers and staff.

It was a tough choice, with numerous entries sent in of properties all over

Scotland, but the judges eventually decided that volunteer Tracey Rolley's photo of a sunny St Kilda was the most outstanding of the entries.

The judging panel commented upon the dramatic and unusual angle of the shot, and its excellent understanding of composition and colour, making for an inspired photo.

The award was named in memory of Philip Schreiber, former Lead Surveyor for the West, who passed away in January 2008, and always had a great love for both the Scottish countryside and photography.

For more information, and to see the runners-up, log on to www.nts.org.uk/photography