



# Galloway Members' Group

## Newsletter

Autumn 2018

### Chairman's Welcome

I am delighted to include the Programme for 2018-19, put together by your committee. It includes a number of visits to places within Galloway and also a proposed day trip to Little Sparta Garden at Dunsyre in the Pentland Hills near Edinburgh. And as ever there will be our Winter Gathering with wine, canapes, raffle and carols.

I would like to record my particular thanks to Amanda Herries who, in her 8 years as an NTS Trustee, has ensured that the interests of the Trust's holdings in Dumfries and Galloway - especially those of Threave Heritage School of Gardening - have not been allowed to be neglected by Head Office. We owe her a lot.

It was lovely to see so many of you attending our past programme of talks and events, and enjoying the outings to areas within Galloway, some of which are described below.

### ***Gardeners' Question Time, 13 April.***

Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> was a lucky date for all those entertained - and informed - by GMG's very own 'Gardeners' Question Time'.



True, two people drove 35 miles hoping for an appearance from the BBC team, but they were not disappointed with our local experts. Helen Knowles of Tinnisburn Nurseries drove all the way from Canonbie in the East, bringing plant knowledge and a delightful range of her plants for us to buy. Richard Baines, Director of Logan Botanic Gardens, represented the West of our region and told us all about his private passion - the monkey puzzle tree. Colin Crosbie, a native of Kirkcudbright recently retired from the Curator role at Wisley and

relocated to Dalswinton, amused us with his stories. And home-grown Owen Harlow, second year student at Threave (and Scotland's young horticulturalist of the year), completed a lively and expert panel. (Owen has since graduated, and successfully gained a place on the staff at Threave as a gardener).

Over 80 participants had drinks and delicious canapés and challenged the experts with their questions. A good time was had by all, money raised for the GMG, and the general feeling was that this was another of those events which needed a repeat evening in due course.

### ***Bluebell Walk, Carstramon Wood, 16 May.***

Twenty three of us met at Carstramon Wood, Gatehouse of Fleet, together with experts David Hawker and Peter Garson. The group divided into two and we had a fascinating two hours looking at the spectacular bluebells plus other interesting flora and fauna.



David identified the plants and Peter encouraged us to look for red squirrels. We then went up to Rusco Tower where we were welcomed to a delicious tea and a guided tour of the Castle. It was so generous of Ian and Mandy Carson to show us round and give us so much time.

### ***Orchid Walk and Lunch, 13 June.***

Four species of orchid were in full bloom and the weather just managed to hold during the outing at Kirkland Farm, Colvend near Rockcliffe. About 40 people came to see the orchids and join one of the walks. For those who preferred not to stray

far some splendid orchids could be seen beside the pond in the garden. There was a longer walk to the Black Loch behind Colvend Church. This featured some pristine wetland habitat with a variety of interesting plants as well as Heath Spotted and Northern Marsh Orchids. The three groups of more intrepid walkers then followed the route through some meadowland with views across the Solway. There was some enchanting habitat and swathes of Heath Spotted Orchids in the little wetland flushes across the hill, making a delightful walk before the best orchid spot was finally reached.



Here we were treated to a site with two additional orchid species in bloom - white waxy Greater Butterfly Orchids and purple Fragrant Orchids. The latter were not quite as spectacular as some of the others but well worth kneeling on damp grass to catch the scent. Everyone seemed to smell something different, even cloves. We then returned to Faith and Clive Sinclair's roomy garage for soup, filled rolls, and tray bake. Special thanks to Clive for laying a special hardcore track for us across the hill and to Faith for use of the kitchen. The walks were facilitated by Faith Sinclair, by the expert local naturalist Brian Smith, and by David Thompson from Threave.

### ***Galloway Fling, 7 July.***

The GMG's first Reel Party was a great success. Sixty one glamorously be-tartaned guests arrived at Willy Peto's gracious home on a perfect summer's evening to be greeted on the terrace by our host offering a choice of either delicious Bellini or elderflower spritzer. Following the music of the next generation of piping Hannays (Edward) we toured the walled garden where the borders were 'en point', and were led into the church. Here we were stunned by the beauty of the interior: eleven enormous flower displays had been produced and arranged by Philippa Heuman and Carola Cliff. The tables also groaned with silver and yet more flowers. Each place held a charming dance card with a pencil attached – the nicest touch. (Quickly your chairman asked the fittest men present to partner her!) We sat down to feast on the most delicious gravlax and fairy toast, hot ham with Cumberland sauce and perfect

pavlovas accompanied by bowls of Scottish strawberries washed down by fine wine (the only hiccup being the corks which required a corkscrew). Waited on by Maggie's team of nubile waiters the evening got off to a tremendous start. A raffle was drawn for two nights at the exclusive Guards and Cavalry Club. Won by Luke Moloney's guests they will be drawing lots as to who actually goes (6 in a room may be hopeful!); then the tables were cleared and off we set, dancing to midnight and having a ball.



Everyone took to the floor for the Dashing White Sergeant and the Eightsome Reel and then, as a result of the practice put on by expert Scottish dancer - Mary Burney - the night before, we launched into a further five Reels; finally drawing stumps with exhaustion and ignoring a request for Mairi's wedding. We are hugely grateful to the hard work and generosity of our hosts Willy and Philippa, to Maggie who worked miracles in the kitchen, to Mary for her patience and to the members of your Committee who helped so much. We similarly acknowledge the most generous donations from those unable to attend. The whole lovely evening raised a substantial sum for the GMG funds.

Watch this space in summer 2020 – we plan a Raj Party. So start looking out Indian outfits and ideas for Indian food.

### **From the NTS Board Room**

The top-to-toe restructuring of Trust operations has nearly reached its conclusions. This has taken about three years to implement with the intention that the regions of Scotland are run by a team of six General Managers (with a seventh for the Natural Landscape) who have direct authority for the properties and operations in their regions. In many regions there has been a redeployment of personnel, recognizing the operational priorities as they have emerged. There is always the opportunity to add to and alter the make-up of the teams.

There has been much activity in the last six months. Two new playparks have been constructed and opened at Brodie in the north and Newhailes just outside Edinburgh. They join the adventure 'fort' at Culzean which has been enormously successful at attracting a new audience of parents, grandparents and children. Culzean is also showing off the new landscaping at the entrance, the new routing and carparks, and the first stages in the transformation of the Walled Garden. In the

north of the country both the Glencoe and Glenfinnan Visitor Centres are the subjects of major redevelopments, recognising - and intending to take advantage of - the tourist promotion of the north and the 'J.K. Rowling effect'. This is good – and realistic – recognition of market forces.

At the same time we launched a major advertising campaign, with ten Scottish celebrities (including Brian Cox, Evelyn Glenie, Chris Hoy, and Gerald Butler) extolling their 'love of Scotland' (and their services were free!). It aired on STV and was very well received, although sadly not available in Galloway. You can still see it on-line or via the website. It was part of a major initiative to drive the message that we do what we do, and we support it - 'for the love of Scotland'. Expect to see more of the same message in other marketing.

Lastly, the major redevelopment of the Trust's IT System is well underway. For years we have - like so many others - just 'bolted on.... and on'. The decision was taken to move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There are teething problems, but the end result should make all our systems easier and more efficient.

The 'Big Box' to cover the Hill House in Helensburgh while we work out what to do about water ingress is a major conservation project which has called for our biggest fund-raising campaign ever. There are new developments at Inverewe and Brodick and a rethink of the interpretation at Newhailes. 'Project Reveal' continues to record and reveal our treasures; our new President, Neil Oliver, is actively and regularly promoting the Trust in his editorial pieces and elsewhere.

In other words we are busy. We have committed to long overdue investment of some £20 million pounds in our portfolio and our operations over a five-year period. We've launched our new strategy (available online) and continue our campaign for new members. It's been an exciting time, and it's been a privilege for me to have been a Trustee for the last eight years, a role I conclude at the AGM on 1 September 2018. I will continue to support the Trust and wave the flag within and for Galloway. There is much still to do and to support.

Amanda Herries, July 2018

## **Our Forthcoming GMG Talks**

**15 October 2018. Presentation by Warren and Esther Tacke on 'Four Years Cycling around the World'.** We will hear how their bike trips became increasingly ambitious over the years. Starting at first on questionable mountain bikes until they acquired their first custom touring bikes to cycle across France. These joined an expanding stable of bicycles as they started to race Audax endurance events. Then they decided to go for a four-year journey around the world, in the end travelling 32,500 miles trip through a total of 39 countries, including USA, New Zealand, China and Turkey. Being unable to settle on their return they decided to move to Dumfries and Gallo-

way where they now run Galloway Cycling Holidays.

**12 November 2018. 'Between the Tides'. Jim Logan BSc, CBIOL, FRES,** will take you on a journey through what Jim sees as he surveys the marine environment. Over a career which began when he studied marine biology, going on to work for the Overseas Development Administration on a tropical disease called Schistosomiasis which took him for two years to Swaziland. Transferred to the unit investigating the control of termites as pests of crops, this involved many short visits to Sudan, Zimbabwe, Malawi and India. When retiring to Gatehouse of Fleet his interest in marine life was rekindled walking along the nearby beaches. He now surveys the marine life for the environmental records centre in Dumfries and the shells for the Conchological Society of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

**14 January 2019. 'The Trees of Kirkcudbright's Soaperie Gardens', Christopher Ingram BSc.** In this illustrated talk Christopher will aim to fascinate us with the many and varied trees in Soaperie Gardens, just by the Parish Church, Kirkcudbright. He took his BSc (Forestry) in Aberdeen 1969 and then travelled to Zambia, working in timber research. Returning to Scotland with his wife Jean he took up a post from 1973 until 1980 with Tilhill Forestry Scotland. There followed further forestry research in Malawi until 1985 when he returned to become firstly Lecturer in Arboriculture and then Senior Course Team Leader at Merrist Wood College, Surrey. From 2002 to July 2004 he became Arboricultural Manager at PBA Consulting in Liss, Hampshire. Completing his career as Arboricultural Consultant for Quaife Woodlands in Kent until 2013 and retiring to Kirkcudbright to live.

**11 February 2019. John Brough Scott MBE will talk on 'Churchill at the Gallop'.** Brough is a British horse racing journalist, radio and television presenter, and former jockey. He is the grandson and biographer of the noted Great War soldier "Galloper Jack" Seely. His riding career saw him ride over 100 winners including The Imperial Cup and The Mandarin Handicap Chase. He joined ITV in 1971, and was regularly seen and heard on *the ITV Seven* and later Channel 4 Racing for thirty years. He also briefly presented football coverage for Channel 5. He was racing correspondent for The Sunday Times (where he succeeded Roger Mortimer) and wrote for the Racing Post (which he co-founded with Sheikh Mohammed), The Independent on Sunday, and The Sunday Telegraph. He was awarded an MBE in the Queen's birthday honours list in 2009. A new book by Brough Scott has just been published on the subject of our talk.

**11 March 2019. The Annual General Meeting;** followed by a talk **by James Hutchinson of NTS Threave on 'The Ospreys of Threave'.** James has worked for the National Trust Scotland for four years; has been a Ranger at Threave Garden and Estate for three years, and is now Visitor Services Supervisor for

Natural Heritage. Having graduated from university he became a Secondary Science and Chemistry teacher and worked in a number of green energy and community projects. The talk will feature a short film produced by him and photographs taken by staff and volunteers. The Threave Estate is a valuable and important part of our heritage in Dumfries and Galloway and we are lucky to have such an abundance of wildlife and flora in this beautiful part of Scotland.

## **Our Forthcoming GMG Events**

**12 December 2018. The Winter Gathering will take place at 12 noon in Airds House, by Parton, Castle Douglas, DG7 2NF,** the home of James and Emma Ingall. There will be wine, substantial canapes, raffle, and carols.

**1 May 2019 at 11.00am. Visit to John Paul Jones Cottage, Arbigland, DG2 8BQ.** After the visit to the Cottage there will be a walk through Arbigland gardens at Arbigland House, (courtesy of Alister Alcock, Wayne Whitaker and John Welch). Thereafter, soup and roll lunch at the House on the Shore, home of Jamie and Sheri Blackett. There follows a walk on the beach and a talk explaining the shells and fossils by Nick Coombey. Projected end time is 3.00pm.

**29 May 2019. Visit to Craichlaw Gardens, near Kirkcowan, Wigtownshire, DG8 0DQ.** Formal garden with herbaceous borders around the house set in extensive grounds with lawns, fishing lochs and woodland. Also a water garden, and an arbo-retum in the old walled garden. (Home of Andrew and Mary Gladstone).

We then travel the nine miles to **Cumloden Estate, Minnigaff, Newton Stewart, DG8 6AF** for a picnic lunch in the conservatory of Andrew and Christine Stewart, at their shooting lodge set in a beautiful park.

**22 June 2019. Quiz night to be held at 7.30pm at Threave Visitor Centre.** Following the great success of the 2017 QUIZ night we invite you to make up tables of teams to battle it out. Do bring a team of four, or just come on your own. Lots of fun promised.

**12 September 2019. Visit to Little Sparta Garden at Dunsyre, (near) Biggar, ML11 8NG in the Pentland Hills near Edinburgh.** It was created by artist and poet Ian Hamilton Finlay and his wife Sue Finlay in the 1960's. Some members will recall the talk given by Magnus Linklater to GMG on this subject last autumn.

We are asking for **expressions of interest** for this event at present and ask you to give your name to \* Ian Watson, Water-side, Bladnoch, Newton Stewart, DG8 9AB (or email: watsonip@btinternet.com). More details will be provided in the Spring Newsletter.

## **Broughton House and Garden:**

### **Forthcoming Events**

The event on **21 October 2018 will feature a recital by Adrian Adlam** on violin accompanied by Thomas Hell on piano. The programme will feature Beethoven Sonata in D major op. 12 no. 1, followed by the Schubert Fantasy in C major D. 934, and finally the Beethoven 'Kreutzer' Sonata op. 47.

Adrian is a renowned violinist, conductor and music educator. He was educated at Westminster Abbey, Winchester College, Conservatoire Royale de Musique of Brussels and the Hochschule fur Musik, Hanover. He has performed as a soloist and chamber musician throughout Europe, the USA and Japan and appeared as concertmaster with several European orchestras, including the London Symphony Orchestra.

Pianist Thomas Hell studied at the Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media and enjoyed approaching music from different angles. He obtained his concert diploma for piano but also earned a diploma in Music Theory. Following several teaching posts at the universities of music in Hanover and Stuttgart. He was appointed professor of piano at the University of Music in Mainz in 2016.

Thomas has won prizes at several German and international competitions, including the first prize at the Concours International de Piano d'Orléans. He has appeared widely throughout Europe as well as in Japan and in Russia and is regularly invited to perform at major international festivals.

On **1 November 2018** photographic tutor at the Royal Botanical Garden Edinburgh RBGE, **Liz Cole, will deliver a talk on 'The Art of the Japanese Garden.'** As a regular presenter of short courses at the RBGE on various topics related to Japanese gardens Liz is eminently qualified to highlight an aspect of a country which held a special attraction for Hornel and his travelling companion George Henry during their visit in 1893.

Our regular '**Afternoon of Carols**' on **6 December 2018** promises to be another jolly mixture of music, recitations and songs with seasonal refreshments.

On **10 January 2019** **An Evening with Burns'** will feature Friends' favourite Robyn Stapleton. Voted BBC Radio Scotland's Young Traditional Musician of the Year 2014 she performs the traditional songs of her Scottish and Irish heritage in the Scots, English and Gaelic language. She has become one of Scotland's most respected folk singers and has performed with leading ensembles such as the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

## General Manager's Report (NTS)

There have been many staff changes in the Region as a result of 'Transforming the Trust'. However, the number of redundancies equalled the new posts which were created. There is greater emphasis on customer service and better co-ordinated working across the Region. There has been a dramatic increase in education visits led by our Natural Heritage team as a result of better promotion of the opportunities we offer.

I am pleased to report that on 17 August five students graduated from the NTS School of Heritage Gardening at Threave. We were delighted that the certificates and prizes were presented by Amanda Herries (NTS Trustee) and Don Murray (Head of Island Landscapes and Horticulture at Mount Stuart on the Isle of Bute). The students have made a very positive impact on the gardens at Threave and Broughton House. We welcomed our new crop of students on 17 August.

There has been a varied range of events at Broughton and Threave so far this year. These have included: Valuation Day, Vintage Teas, Gardeners' Question Time, Galloway Consort, Plant Sale, Mostly Ghostly events in Threave Garden, 'Wings over Threave family event, and outdoor theatre for children and adults. All of these have been profitable although attendance at some was affected by the World Cup television viewing. We look forward to our Vintage Teas on 30 September; and a 'Halloween at Threave' event on Saturday 27 October. The winter 'Holly and Ivy Festival will take place from 1-9 December. Look out for further details on posters and on Facebook.

The Terrace Café at Threave has had an exciting facelift, plus the installation of bright new outdoor furniture purchased with generous support from GMG (£3,000).

Other planned developments include: a Hornel documentary and screen with support from GMG (£2,400) at Broughton House; new outside planters at Threave House with support from GMG (£1,500); and a Garden of Contemplation at Threave, being a re-development of the old Sunken Garden with support from NTS USA—due to open in December 2018.

The Region was delighted to host a Thistle Camp in early August to repair parts of the footpath which ascends the Muckle at Rockcliffe under the direction of David Thompson, Estate Supervisor.

On 20 August Threave House hosted a workshop as part of 'Adapt Northern Heritage', an international partnership which is looking at how Heritage can adapt to climate change. Threave Estate is one of eleven case studies across the Northern Hemisphere.

Richard Polley, General Manager, NTS, Dumfries and Galloway.

## Chairman's Remarks

As your Chairman I would ask you to encourage your friends and those new to the area to join the GMG. Bring them along to the talks. Ask them to contact our Secretary, Gwen Shaw. Pass on to them a copy of this Newsletter which you can download (see back page). The more members we have the more we can do to help our local properties.

Keep an eye on the noticeboard at Threave to see what is going on in the House, the Garden and the Estate; what is happening at Broughton House and Garden; and what the GMG have planned for you.

Look out for a repeat of the wreath-making course so that your house can be bedecked with beautiful natural Christmas decorations. Come and use the Café; visit the shop which is bursting with goodies; support us by buying the Christmas cards; and do all you can to support the staff, students and properties. We are so very lucky to have such a strong and special NTS presence.

We realise it is hard to commit to our outings so far in advance but in relation to the proposed visit to Little Sparta Garden on 12 September 2019, should you be interested please email or write to Ian Watson ( \*see page 4). We need commitment and numbers if we are to arrange transport.

I look forward to seeing you all at our first talk on 15th October and I do thank you for your support and encouragement.

**Susie Ross, Chairman. September 2018.**



**Find us On-Line:**

For GMG Programme of Events,  
Booking Forms and Newsletter:  
[www.ntscentres.org.uk](http://www.ntscentres.org.uk)

For Further Information about  
GMG:  
[www.nts.org.uk/memberscentres](http://www.nts.org.uk/memberscentres)