

North East Aberdeenshire Members' Centre Newsletter April 2019

Notes from our Chairman

It is hard to believe that April and time for our Members' Centre AGM has come around again already. It only seems like days ago that I was wishing you all a "Happy Christmas". As you will see in this Newsletter we have had a good start to the year with all our events being well supported, not only by old friends but also attracting some new members. The Committee are hard at work developing the 2019-2020 programme. The new programme cards will be issued shortly. There's a wide variety of events proposed and I'm sure you will find something to pique your interest. I hope you will all come along to the AGM at Fyvie on 17th April at 7:30 pm and hear about the results of our work over the last year, get more information on upcoming activities and take the opportunity to vote on the Committee membership and office bearers. If you would like to join the Committee please let me know and I can put your name forward for election at the AGM. Hope to see you there!

Margaret Alexander

Looking Back – A Review of Recent Events.....

December



The first Sunday in December always sees the Members' Centre Carol Service in Haddo House Chapel. This is always a popular event, signalling for many the beginning of the festive season. The service, led by Rev. Will Stalder, included performances by violinist Miriam McDonald and the Haddo Choral and Operatic Society junior choir "Haddo Voices" as well as readings and poems telling the Christmas story. Of course there was plenty of opportunity for the congregation to raise their own voices in familiar carols. Tea, coffee, mince pies and shortbread served in Haddo Library made sure everyone left suitably refreshed and full of Christmas cheer.

January

All great, historic houses have their secrets and Haddo House is no exception. During a talk on 15th January, Simon Welfare shone the light on some of the secrets that have been lurking in the attics at Haddo. Seemingly innocuous objects, stored away and forgotten served to illustrate significant events and the prodigious talents of the Gordon family over the years. For example, a picture of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, testament to the diplomatic skills of the first Marquis and his wife Ishbel, who helped mend divisions in the church at the request of the King; a wonderful train set, representing a lifelong passion for railways shown by several members of the family and boxes of costumes and fabrics relating to the love of theatre and the arts for which Haddo has become famous. A delicious afternoon tea was included and the many attendees all agreed the event was well worth braving the nasty weather.

February

There was an excellent turn out of members and visitors in the Gallery at Fyvie Castle to hear Prof. Ian Davidson, explain how Braemar Castle – why it exists and how it looks – illustrates pivotal moments in Scottish history. **Why is it there?** – to send a message that the 2nd Earl of Mar was back in charge of his lands after his previous exile. **Why isn't it as pretty as some of the nearby Highland castles?** – because it was an army barracks for many years to make sure there were no more Jacobite uprisings. **Why is it still standing and why has there been some**

attempt to romanticise it? –because of the great flowering of Scottish cultural tourism in the 19th Century when the castle became a “party house” for the Farquharson family and backdrop for the Braemar Gathering. Now in a state of disrepair, the castle is managed by Braemar Community Ltd. They have been successful in securing funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to repair the harling, improve the grounds and build a Visitor Centre with 21st century facilities to ensure the Castle remains a valuable asset and at the centre of the community.



March



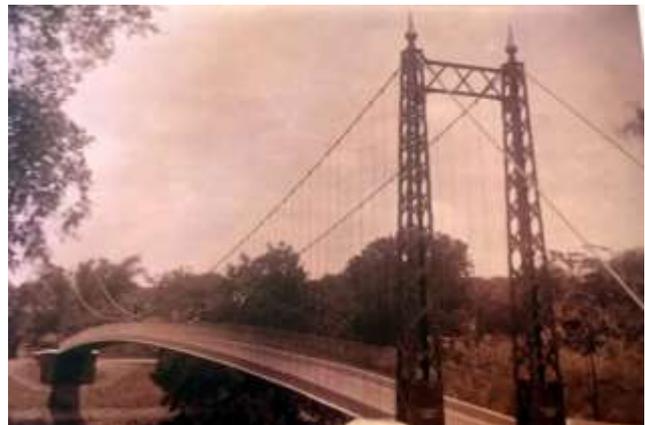
If you have visited Craigievar you may have wondered why there is a collection of modern ceramics designed by some of the leading artists of the mid 20th Century. Doesn't it seem a little out of place in the baronial hall? At our talk in Haddo Library on 19th March, Sue Taylor, a ceramic historian and volunteer at Aberdeen Art Gallery, helped explain all. The collection is due to the interests of Lady Cecilia Sempill, who as Cecilia Dunbar Kilburn (before she married William Forbes Sempill, 10th Baronet Forbes of Craigievar in 1941) was a sculptor and had co-founded the London shop 'Dunbar Hay Ltd'. This shop provided opportunities for graphic artists and students from the Royal College of Art including Eric Ravilious, Eric Bawden and Enid Marx, to show their designs, including furniture, furnishings, ceramics, fabrics and patterns. The shop closed in 1940 and was destroyed during the blitz, but Cecilia maintained her interest in modern design and kept contact with her artistic friends. As a result many of the furnishings, decoration and utensils at Craigievar feature their work. The talk gave a fascinating insight into some of the lesser known

recent history of the castle, illuminating the significance of objects which might otherwise pass unnoticed during a visit.

Looking Forward - What's Coming Up for the Members' Centre.....

April

Come along at 7:30 pm to our **AGM on 17th April at Fyvie Castle**. Hear how our past year's success has helped support our local NTS properties and find out what interesting activities are planned over the next 12 months. The AGM will be followed by a talk “River, Railway and Ravine” given by Douglas Harper. Douglas Harper is an Aberdonian, qualified as a geologist, a doctor and a surgeon. He is the great grandson of John Harper of Aberdeen, who developed a method of constructing rigid and light foot suspension bridges. Harpers went on to build in excess of 60 of them throughout the UK and the British Empire between 1870-1910.



May

Spring has arrived and many of us are developing our garden planting plans for summer flowers. Well, we can help with that. This month we are doing something a little bit different and are organising a coffee morning featuring a Bring and Buy plant sale. Dr. Jim Beattie has kindly agreed to provide the venue. Jim landscaped his garden himself, developing woodland areas and a magnificent pond. The rhododendron should be out and looking wonderful and there is plenty more to admire. If you have some spare plants you would like to contribute bring them along, or if you are looking to fill a space in the garden come ready to buy a plant (or two) or if you simply just want enjoy this beautiful garden please join us on **Saturday 18th May at 10:30am, Birch Field, Clovenstone, Kintore. AB51 0YG.**

What else is on

The new season is just about to start and some exciting events are planned at our local properties including the now traditional Cadbury's Easter Egg Hunt which is happening across all the properties over 19th-22nd April. More information about booking and prices on the NTS website.

Haddo House	Fyvie Castle
12 th April – Busy Birds – Children's Ranger's Walk	3 rd April – Bushcraft Skills
18 th May – Ladies Day at Haddo	12 th May – Tea Dance
19 th May – The Green Fingered Gardener	18 th May – Katherine Jenkins Tribute with Fiona Kelly
25 th May – Haddo Arts Jazz Piano Concert	26 th May – Children's Magic Show
Pitmedden Garden	
4 th May – Craft Beer Tasting and the Travelling Cooper	
11 th May – The Dawn Chorus at Pitmedden	
11 th May – Gin Tasting	
18 th May – Whisky Tasting and the Travelling Cooper	
25 th May – Wine Tasting Quiz	

And a little further afield....

Crathes Castle	Drum Castle
13 th April – Spirits of Crathes: A night of Whisky	11 th April – Snuffling About; Badgers at Drum
21 st April – Easter Storytelling at Crathes	21 st April – A Considered Place (exhibition – see below)
4 th May – Outdoor Cinema ; Star Wars – The Force Awakens	11 th May – Minival 11; The Castle Party (electronic music festival)
5 th May – Flowers through the lens: Photography workshop	17 th May – Gin Tasting
12 th May – Campfire and Woodland Adventures	
18 th May – Crathes Plant Fair	
26 th May – Landscape through the lens; Photography workshop	
Castle Fraser	
10 th April – Pond Dipping	
18 th May – Gung Ho! Aberdeen 2019	

Ever wonder where the money goes?

Each year our Members' Centre donates the money raised during the previous year to Haddo, Fyvie and Pitmedden to support projects that might not otherwise get funded. In 2018 the £1400 donated to Haddo House was used to purchase two sundials in aid of the garden restoration. Attached is a picture of a sundial in place with some of the Haddo House staff and lovely volunteers. The £1000 donated to Fyvie has been used to commission a 3D printed model of one of the "Fyvie Guardians". This provided the opportunity to have one of 'The Guardians' at ground level, for a closer



inspection of its condition and also its carvings, without the associated risks of removing one of the stone sculptures itself. The model will also be used to engage with the wider public on the significance of the stonework and the importance of saving it for future generations and hopefully inspire further donations to help with this ongoing project.

News from around the Trust

Drum: As you know each year the upper gallery at Drum Castle hosts a changing art exhibition. This year's exhibition, "A Considered Place" is a bit different. The exhibition brings to Drum the work of leading British artists in the fields of contemporary woven tapestry (Sara Brennan, Jo Barker and Susan Mowatt) together with the glass and ceramics of Edinburgh-based Andrea Walsh and London-based artist Jane Bustin, whose work incorporates painting, ceramics, metal and textiles. This will be the first time all five have exhibited together. Moreover, with the exceptions of Brennan and Barker, their work has not been shown north of the central belt. "A Considered Place" is a selling exhibition in partnership with The Scottish Gallery (Edinburgh) and the Copperfield Gallery (London). A proportion of any sale supports the important conservation work of the National Trust for Scotland.

Haddo : Some of you might know Jerome Cryne, First Gardener at Haddo. On 15th April he will be moving to a new role as Head Gardener at the House of Dun. Jerome has done a great job over the last year in developing the Haddo garden team and transforming the Haddo Gardens into a fantastic visitor attraction in its own right. We wish him luck with his new assignment.

Crathes: The new wildlife hide at Crathes Castle Garden & Estate has now been officially opened and already the wildlife is finding its way to the feeders as shown here. Funding for the hide came from the Peoples Postcode Lottery and it was made by prisoners in Grampian prisons. Support also came from NTS volunteers, guides groups, local schools, adult mental health groups and more. Do call in next time you are at Crathes.



Thank You! As always we would like to thank Mackies of Scotland for their help with the postage of our Newsletters.