

North East Aberdeenshire Members' Centre Newsletter

March 2024

(A registered Scottish Charity SC024227)

Notes from your Chairman.

We've had a great first couple of months for 2024. Attendance at our talks has been up and we appear to be generating a greater interest amongst the wider community. This in turn has led to some new members which is great news. The 2024/25 programme is almost complete and ready to publish. The first couple of events for May and June feature later in the newsletter. Book early! The Committee have come up with some other good ideas for events, which I hope will interest you all and continue to attract new members. Don't forget our AGM on 25th April at 7pm in Haddo Library. Please come along, hear about our activities over the past year and catch up with the ongoing progress with the planting and restoration of Ellon Castle Gardens.

Patricia Shaw

A Virtual Walk Down Union Street

You must have walked down Union Street and the surrounding area in Aberdeen hundreds of times, but how much of the history have you noticed? Having had the guided "tour" from Bill Diack perhaps you will notice more about



the often-overlooked history and characters of the city. Figures like Elizabeth Latto Ewan. Born in Fyvie in 1875, the daughter of the Free Kirk minister there, she studied in Edinburgh, and after qualification undertook further study of midwifery and women's diseases in Glasgow and Dublin. She began her ladies only practice in Aberdeen in the family home in Chapel Street in 1896. In 1898 she became the first woman member of the local branch of the BMA. She is commemorated by this plaque at 26 Chapel Street. She was an inspiration to generations of north-east doctors, including Dr Mary Esslemont who, like Elizabeth before her, fought for healthcare rights for the working-class women and children in the City.

At the top of the stairs leading down to The Green, there is a plaque remembering James Clerk Maxwell who lived in this building. Maxwell was a mathematician and scientist responsible for the classical theory of electromagnetic radiation describing electricity, magnetism and light as different manifestations of the same phenomenon. His discoveries helped usher in the era of modern physics, laying the foundation for such fields as special relativity and quantum mechanics. In a millennium poll—a survey of the 100 most prominent physicists in the world - Maxwell was voted the third greatest physicist of all time, behind only Newton and Einstein. Einstein, when he visited the University of Cambridge in 1922, was told by his host that he had done great things because he stood on Newton's shoulders; Einstein replied: "No I don't. I stand on the shoulders of Maxwell."



On the south side of Union Street, roughly opposite Broad Street, you can see a plaque to Caroline Phillips. Born in 1874 in Kintore, she worked for the Aberdeen Daily Journal, one of only 66 female journalists in the whole United Kingdom. She was also a feminist and suffragist. She, however, came to disagree with the increasingly militant approach being employed by the Women's Socialist and Political Union (WSPU) led by the Pankhursts who removed Phillips as leader of the Aberdeen branch. In 1912, she inherited the Station Hotel in Banchory from an aunt and moved out of Aberdeen. Phillips devoted herself to the hotel until her retirement to Kintore in the 1940s. She died on 13 January 1956 at the age of 85 and is buried in Kintore. In 2021, she was one of a collection of Scottish suffragists celebrated in a deck of cards distributed as part of an education pack to 100 schools around the country.





Trinity Hall (now the frontage of the Trinity Centre) was designed by John and William Smith in 1846. This is the only “historical” building on Union Street, being built in a Tudor style with a hammerbeam roof to underline the ancient origins of The Seven Incorporated Trades. Victoria and Albert drove up Union Street on 8th September 1848 on their way to Balmoral for the first time. Prince Albert was very impressed by the building and asked who the architect was. A week later the city architect John Smith was summoned to Balmoral and commissioned to design a new more spacious, more prestigious Balmoral castle.

Silk, Satin, Cotton and Wool: Haddo’s Hoard of Household Textiles



Working for the National Trust for Scotland as Regional Curator not only fulfils Emma Inglis’s passion for historic houses but also engages her in the research of collections and interiors, with a particular interest in domestic textiles, eighteenth and nineteenth century social history, and decorative interiors. During her talk she took a closer look at some of the amazing textiles at Haddo House,

some of which are displayed for all to see but many that are not. She shared some of their lesser-known histories and gave an insight into the challenges of researching and displaying these fabulous yet fragile links with the past. She explained that many items were obviously well used while others had been stored away unused. Some items were too fragile to be on display. She mentioned a beautiful bed cover started by Lady Anne, wife of the 2nd Earl, in 1740 and finished by Ishbel, 1st Marchioness of Aberdeen, over a century later. She also described how Ishbel, who was a great advocate of education for women, provided instruction in needlework to women on the Estate to increase their skills and enhance their ability to earn a living.



The Work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)



What do you think about when you hear the phrase “Commonwealth War Graves Commission? Perhaps it brings to mind an image like the one on the left – rows of Portland stone set in beautifully tended grounds in Belgium or France, but it is so much more than that. Elaine Edwards, Public Engagement Officer with CWGC explained just how diverse and widespread the work of the CWGC actually is. CWGC was founded by Sir Fabian Ware, who at 45, was considered too old to fight when the First World War began. In 1914 he headed up a mobile ambulance unit on the western front and quickly realised that if

someone didn’t start recording where casualties were being buried, they would be lost forever. Ware lobbied for a special team to care for the dead and the War Office agreed. In 1917 the Imperial War Graves Commission was established by Royal Charter. It was founded on principles of equality with everyone being commemorated in the same way whatever their rank or social status. Now the CWGC care for 23,000 war memorials and war cemeteries around the world commemorating 1.7 million Commonwealth casualties of the first and second World Wars. They are funded by the governments of Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, South Africa and the United Kingdom. Elaine described the scope of the work of the CWGC which includes not only gardeners (they are the largest employer of horticulturalists in the world) but architects, masons, blacksmiths, archivists, guides and volunteers. The CWGC supports sites in 150 locations around the world. Unfortunately, some of these are in areas still wracked by conflict, like Basra in Iraq and Gaza. There was so much fascinating information in this talk and the number of follow up questions and discussion with Elaine afterwards gave indication of how much interest there was in this topic. As time passes however, there is a danger that the stories of the wars and the sacrifice involved will be forgotten. Elaine not only gives talks to groups like ours, but also visits schools to help children understand the work of CWGC and why it is important. One important upcoming project to raise awareness and keep the memories alive will be happening this June. “The Legacy of Liberation” marks the 80th anniversaries of several pivotal moments during the second world war, from Kohima and Imphal to the D-Day Landings. There is a lot more information available on the CWGC website. Please see the links below to learn more.

The work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

[Our Work | News, Events & Commemorative Projects | CWGC](#)

Access the Archives and find records.

[Find Commonwealth War Records | CWGC](#)

Submit a story about someone who fought in the wars.

[For Evermore: Stories of the Fallen \(cwgc.org\)](#)

Volunteer

[Volunteer for Us | Maintaining War Graves | CWGC](#)

Donate

[Donate to the Foundation | CWGF \(cwgc.org\)](#)

What's Coming Up?

25TH April 7pm- Haddo House Library – AGM followed by a talk on the ongoing evolution of Ellon Castle Gardens

The AGM will take place at Haddo at 7pm. Please come along to hear about the past year's activities and the plans for the upcoming year. The business part of the meeting will be followed by a talk (approx. 7:30pm) given by John Webber and Alison Lyons on the development of Ellon Castle Gardens. Many of you will have visited Ellon Castle Gardens and heard the talk given by the late Alan Cameron on the history of the garden. John and Alison will focus on the planting in the garden and the ongoing work.

23rd May 7:45pm – Daviot Community Hall – NTS Gardeners' Question Time

Have you ever wished that your garden could look as good as those at our NTS properties? Have you ever wondered how they manage it, or perhaps there is a specific gardening question you really want to ask those skilled NTS gardeners? Well now's your chance. Chris Wardle (MCIHort), Garden and Designed Landscape Manager – Aberdeenshire and Angus will be our Master of Ceremonies for an evening of horticultural fun and education. Our Gardeners' Question Time Panel will include Gordon Thomson, Head Gardener at Fyvie Castle, Anna Christie, First Gardener at Fyvie Castle and Ruth Wardle, Head Gardener at Castle Fraser. This will be a ticket only event (ticket application form is attached) and questions should be submitted in advance. Tea/coffee will be provided. We hope to get a good crowd for this event. Please pass on the information to your friends and fellow gardeners. Tickets for non-members will be available through Eventbrite.

6th June 2pm – Visit to the Garden of Gordon Hay, Inverquhomery House, Longside

There seems to be no end to the talents of Gordon Hay. Not only has he entertained us with poetry, songs and music over the years but he is also a keen gardener and has kindly invited us to visit his beautiful garden at Inverquhomery House. This private garden is not usually open to the public. Refreshments will be provided. Tickets essential (see attached) and numbers will be limited.

What's Happening Locally?



Seven National Trust for Scotland attractions in Aberdeenshire have signed up to the region's "Loves Local Gift Card." In a first for Scotland, the historic National Trust for Scotland places will join more than 390 businesses and attractions with the aim of encouraging people to support regional shops and services and keep the spend local. You can now spend your gift card at Castle Fraser, Crathes Castle, Drum Castle, Fyvie Castle, Haddo House, Leith Hall and Pitmedden Garden. Iain Hawkins, National Trust for Scotland Regional Director for North East, said "We're delighted to join the Scotland Loves Local Aberdeenshire Gift Card to support the economy across the region and encourage people to spend locally, and in our gift shops at one of the seven

participating National Trust for Scotland attractions. We have a range of gifts on offer from Scottish makers, to suit all budgets perfect for all the family. Sales from our gift shops support our charity's mission to provide access to nature, beauty and heritage for everyone and helps us protect Scotland's natural and cultural heritage for future generations to enjoy." The gift card can be used in any of the participating stores across Aberdeenshire and can also be used online at participating retailers, provided that retailer has a physical presence in the region. In addition to

being able to pick up a gift card in-store at a growing number of participating businesses, Aberdeenshire Council also stocks them for collection at its main office Service Points.



Monday 15th April 2:30pm – Haddo House Library – Classical Legacies: A Poetry Reading by Prof. A. E. Stallings

Celebrated for her formal poise and wit, A.E. Stallings is a Master of poetic craft, writing brilliantly of a life spent between cultures and languages as an American poet living in Greece. She was elected Oxford Professor of Poetry in 2023. The event will begin with a short piano recital by Harry Wood, who is tutored by Prof. Nigel Clayton at NESMS.

Current Opening Hours for our Local Properties

Haddo House - House and Shop Mar-Dec Fri–Mon, 11.00–16.00 (last tour at 15.00)

Courtyard Café – Mar- Dec, Fri–Mon, 10.00–16.00

Fyvie Castle – Castle, Shop and Tearoom – 27 Mar – 7 Jul, Wed-Sun 10:30-16:30

8th Jul – 2 Sep, daily

Grounds and Garden – Open (weather permitting) 1 Jan–31 Dec, daily, 09.00–dusk

Pitmedden Garden – Garden, Museum Shop and Tearoom –4th Apr-29th Sep, Thurs-Sun 10:30-16:30

Grounds - Please note Pitmedden Garden car park is open daily between 9.30am–4.30pm. The car park is locked/secured overnight. Please also note that Pitmedden Garden will not be open over Easter this year. In a recent survey the conservatory, which for the last few years has served as entrance and shop, was discovered to be structurally unsound. The garden will remain closed until the structure has been safely dismantled.

What’s on at our Properties?

Fyvie Castle	Sat 20 th April 4pm	International Organ Day Recital
	Fri 17 th 10am, and Sun 19 th May 9:30am and 12:30pm	Well being walk around Fyvie Loch
	Sat 6 th July 7pm	The Secret Diary of Henry VIII
Haddo House	Sat 6 th April (and first Saturday in May, June, July and August) 10am	Outdoor Yoga on the Terrace
	Fri 5 th April (and 6 th , 7 th and 12 th May) at 1:30pm	Haddo Undercover
	Sun 28 th April and 26 th May, 2pm	Haddo Art Tour
Pitmedden	Sat 4 th May 5:30am	Dawn Chorus walk with the Ranger
	Wed 10 th July 11:30	National Teddy Bear Picnic Day

More details and tickets for all these events are available from each property’s webpage (under the “Events” heading) on the NTS Website. Please check the website in case opening times or event details change.

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

NE Aberdeenshire NTS Members' Centre

Thursday 23rd May at 7:45pm

NTS Gardeners' Question Time, Daviot Village Hall, Wellbrae, Daviot AB51 0HZ

Tickets £10 include tea/coffee and shortbread.

From:

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Tel.

email address

I would like tickets (£10 each)

I enclose £..... In payment, or I am paying by bank transfer.....

(Cheques should be made payable to: North East Aberdeenshire Members' Centre the National Trust for Scotland).

Bank transfers to: S/C 80 06 71, A/C 00687168, NE Aberdeenshire Mem Cent, Ref: "GQT"

If you are paying by cheque, please return to: Dr Patricia Shaw, 2 Aulton of Fochel Steadings, Oldmeldrum, Aberdeenshire AB51 0AT by Friday 17th May (Tel 01651 851411) enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for return of the tickets.

If you are paying by bank transfer, please complete this form and email it back to: patriciashaw404@gmail.com and I will email you your tickets (a photograph of the completed form will do)

I am happy to take my car and another.....passengers

I would like assistance with the travel to Daviot (Please delete as required)

NE Aberdeenshire NTS Members' Centre

Thursday 6th June at 2pm

Visit to Gordon Hay's Garden, Inverquhomery House, Longside, AB42 4TU

Tickets £12 include refreshments.

From:

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Tel.

email address

I would like tickets (£12 each)

I enclose £..... In payment, or I am paying by bank transfer.....

(Cheques should be made payable to: North East Aberdeenshire Members' Centre the National Trust for Scotland).

Bank transfers to: S/C 80 06 71, A/C 00687168, NE Aberdeenshire Mem Cent, Ref: "Hay Garden Visit"

If you are paying by cheque, please return to: Mrs Rosemary Dolman, Foveran House, Ellon, AB41 6AP by Friday 31st May (Tel 01358 789114) enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for return of the tickets.

If you are paying by bank transfer, please complete this form and email it back to: Ne.aberdeenshire.mc@gmail.com and we will email you your tickets (a photograph of the completed form will do)

I am happy to take my car and another.....passengers

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