

ST.ANDREWS PRESERVATION TRUST

NEWSLETTER NO 4 - AUTUMN 1996

Welcome to Issue 4 of The St. Andrews Preservation Trust Newsletter.

THE PAST YEAR

The Trust's official year is the calendar year to 31st December. But to many Trustees, Staff and Helpers we tend to think of a year as starting in the Autumn and ending in early Summer. We achieved a good deal in 1995/96. We completed the alterations to our offices in Queens Gardens and moved all our stored museum artefacts into the new safe storage there. Dairsie was a worry to us because of the state of the building, insurance costs and vandalism. We will save both time and money with everything now in St.Andrews. The other major work was the creation of the new museum garden. This is still not complete, but is already looking most attractive and provides a lovely backdrop to the museum on sunny days. Do look in to see it if you have not already been.

THE COMING YEAR

There is a break in Trustee meetings over the summer months which also makes us feel that our year starts in the autumn. The first Trustee meeting after the 'break' is at the end of September. Those of us involved in the Trust

committees are busy planning for the next few months. It looks as if we will have to give priority this year to long term planning consideration for the future of St.Andrews. The new Fife Council is now getting into its stride, and we are expecting its Strategic Study to be published early next year, very much later than expected.

This Strategic Study will map the future development proposed for the whole of the St.Andrews area for the next five to ten years. Already some strands in its format are beginning to appear. Just recently the Trust received a copy of the report 'The Landscape Assessment Study of St.Andrews'. It is at present under our detailed scrutiny, but at this early stage we can say that it provides us with some encouragement and yet at the same time with considerable worries about the future expansion of the town. We will let members have our more considered views in the next newsletter.

We are aware that you, our members, find the whole planning process rather a daunting subject whether it be for just one new house, a whole new housing estate, or alterations to an existing building. The

Trust's Planning Committee has considerable expertise in this, as they are sent a copy of every planning application for the whole Conservation Area for comment. We feel much of this knowledge should be available to members, so we plan to produce an article for our next Newsletter explaining the Planning Process to you. Only if we enlist the support of our members can we hope to make a strong impact over unsuitable developments such as St.Nicholas.

SUMMER EVENTS

Our A.G.M. in May was a well-attended meeting and the guest speaker, Professor Charles McKean of Jordanstone College, Dundee gave a most interesting and thought-provoking talk on "When did history stop?".

Museum Summer Exhibition

The Museum in North Street opened on 1st June with a new exhibition "on Foreign Soil - The Polish Army in St.Andrews 1940-43". Members were invited to a preview evening on 31st May where they were able to enjoy a glass of wine, chat, and look at this well thought out exhibition. The exhibition itself was opened by Leszek Wiecech, a Consul General of Poland.

A large contingent of Polish people attended the opening and throughout the summer many others have visited the exhibition which brought back many memories of their lives at that time.

The Beecharove Garden

The 'hit squad'¹ visited the museum garden for a second time on 6th September and helped with advice, plants and gardening. Our Tree and Environment Convener, Penelope Fraser, has worked wonders on this new garden for the Trust. Her design ideas, planning of the work, application for grants, plant purchasing, not to mention hours of physical work, have been marvelous. The small paved garden is now complete and well worth a visit. The large main garden is now clean and levelled and work on it is progressing. Our thanks go to both Penelope and to Gillian Falconer, our Museum Convener for all they have done.

The Summer Outing We first went to Dairsie Church where Mrs June Baxter pointed out interesting features and told us of the various structural changes following the original dedication in 1243 to the Virgin Mary. The church remained in the Priory of St.Andrews until the Reformation. Its appearance prior to reconstruction in 1662 is not known, but Bishop Lamberton may have rebuilt it in 1300 after completing

St.Andrews Cathedral. Archbishop Spottiswoode reconstructed it in 1662 and his coat of arms are still visible over the main entrance.

We then moved across to Dairsie Castle where our guide was Mrs Christine Wolfe who showed us a copy of the plans on which the new owner had based his reconstruction. Sadly we were unable to see inside the Castle, but a further visit is planned for some future date, and an announcement will be made in the local papers about this.

Our next visit was to Monimail Tower where we plunged our way through undergrowth and along a muddy path to be welcomed by the young architect who is leading the group which is restoring the tower. Bishop Lamberton built an episcopal residence at Monimail of which the tower formed a part. Cardinal Beaton is believed to have made structural alterations to it, and John Hamilton, the last of the Romish archbishops of St.Andrews made the house his residence.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Autumn Church Crawl

This takes place on Saturday 28th September starting at 1.30 p.m. prompt at Martyrs Church in North Street. After the visit to Martyrs we move across the road to St.Salvators' Chapel. Our Chairman, Bob Murray, has agreed to give us a brief recital on the

interesting baroque organ in the chapel.

Christmas Card Sale This is in the Town Hall on Saturday 2nd November. Our new trust Christmas Card, a copy of the Leckie Ewing painting hanging in the Trust office will be on sale. This is a lovely view of sheep grazing on the golf courses with the town spires as a backdrop. Members can purchase these cards at a discount direct from the office (and view the original there) in October onwards.

FUTURE EVENTS

A visit to the interior of the restored Dairsie Castle is planned as this was not possible on the Summer Outing. The date is not yet known. A Quiz Evening is planned for the festive season when some of our more unusual artefacts will be available for you to try to identify. We plan to offer you a glass of wine that evening to aid the thought process. A coffee morning aimed at explaining the work of the Trust is planned for sometime next year. Trustees are aware that a large number of people have a poor image of the Trust and we hope that by explaining just what the Trust does that we can gain the interest of more people in the town. The programme committee are always looking for places and events to interest members. Suggestions please to the Trust office or to Dorothea Morrison on 01334 473365.