

London Members' Centre

supporting



Chairman's Newsletter

July 2021

(a Recognised Scottish Charity No. SC 027207)

www.nts-lmc.scot

Dear Members

We're back in business. Thanks to the efforts of Margaret Cund, our Covid-delayed 2020 Spring Tour took place last month. Margaret has written a full account of the adventure which is on a separate sheet accompanying this newsletter. This tour has resulted in nearly £1100 being added to our coffers which were severely depleted following our large donation to the SOS appeal by the NTS. Margaret is already considering a trip to Suffolk for 2022.

The next bit of good news is that we have a visit! The Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, is offering us a look round the newly refurbished building in September - see another attached sheet for full details.

Our visit leaders are still finding it difficult in making contact with potential visit sites, so we can't offer anything else quite yet but we hope for a London Walk in October - Geoff Schoon is planning this since Connie Sangster is still stuck somewhere the other side of the North Sea (OK - in The Netherlands).

Rusty Love is planning a theatre trip for December - another attached sheet says it all.

We are thinking our regular 'Christmas' Lecture, normally held in Crown Court Church Hall in late November. A speaker has been booked and is prepared to come in person or talk via Zoom. Would you be willing to come into Central London? Or would you be happier listening to the talk on Zoom? Or should we try and find a somewhat airier venue? We, the committee, will hold a meeting in September to decide which is going to be the best option and it would be very helpful to know the members' views. Despite the announcement that all restrictions will be removed in July, November is a few months away and things might change in that time. Who knows?

But we do have a Zoom talk very soon - **Wednesday 21st July at 7pm**. The talk is entitled "**Pioneering Female Aviators in the Regular RAF**". It will be given by Kathleen Sherit.

Dr Kathleen Sherit served in the Royal Air Force for twenty-two years as a training specialist. Initially working in engineering training establishments, she subsequently undertook more general appointments. She studied at the Joint Service Defence College and at the Royal College

of Defence Studies. After leaving the RAF, she became deputy principal of a large further education college in London before returning to academic study. She obtained her PhD in Contemporary British History from King's College, London in 2013. She has written articles published by the Royal Air Force Historical Society, the British Journal for Military History and Despatches, the Imperial War Museum's magazine for its Friends' Association. 'Women on the Front Line: British Servicewomen's Path to Combat', her history of women in Britain's armed forces post-World War II to the present day, was published in 2020.

I do hope you will join this talk, for which I will send the link in a separate email, for privacy reasons. This newsletter is available to all, since it is on our website. If any non-member would like to join us, please email me at chairman@nts-lmc.scot for the link.

Just in time, I received some information from the NTS in which I feel you might be interested:

National Heritage Lottery Fund

The NTS are delighted to share news with you of the support from the National Heritage Lottery Fund, donating an impressive £12.5 million support package for Cairngorms National Park that involves 45 partners, including the Trust, to deliver an ambitious project to tackle the climate emergency, protect and enhance biodiversity, and improve people's health and wellbeing. It is fantastic to be linking up with partners on projects like this „ we are more powerful when we combine our efforts.

BBC Landward visits Glencoe

BBC's Landward visited the team at Glencoe to see the incredible reconstruction of a 17th-century creel house using traditional methods. If you missed the episode, you can watch it here: BBC iPlayer - Landward - 2021: Episode 12
<<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000xjxf/landward-2021-episode-12>>

Best wishes



Charles Hope
chairman@nts-lmc.scot

LONDON MEMBERS' CENTRE



**MORNING VISIT TO
THEATRE ROYAL
CATHERINE STREET
LONDON WC2B 5JF**

ON WEDNESDAY 22nd SEPTEMBER AT 10.30 AM

(a Recognised Scottish Charity No. SC 027207)

Cost: £25 Members : £29 non-members

Maximum 20 members & guests

After visiting the theatre and backstage just before closure - be one of the first to see what has happened !

In January 2019, LW Theatres embarked on its most ambitious and exciting project to date - a £60 million refurbishment project to restore the historic Theatre Royal Drury Lane to its former 1812 glory.

Steeped in almost unrivalled theatre history over a phenomenal life that dates back to 1663, the Theatre Royal Drury Lane's enormous list of past performers and productions reads like a who's-who of theatrical royalty. Providing entertainment for the masses as well as every monarch since the Restoration, it's a true institution - but one that has never been afraid of innovating with the times.

The ambitious plans not only pay great attention to retaining the building's original features but are as much about its future as its past. When it re-opens, front of house facilities will be open to the public all day. It will include new bars, restaurants, and an afternoon tea, so the building can be enjoyed by everyone and not just those headed to the theatre.

Meet at the Theatre Entrance at 10.15am

The Tour lasts approximately 1 hour

PLEASE DO NOT ATTEND THIS VISIT IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A CONFIRMED PRIOR BOOKING.

PLEASE NOTE: there will be no refunds with 14 days of an event taking place.

Please detach slip below and sent, with your cheque, to:

Miss Joan Howe, 9, Torre Abbey, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK41 0UJ Tel: 01234 267 469



Visit to **Theatre Royal** on 22 September 2021 at 10.30 am

Please reserve _____ places at £ 25.00 members _____ places at £ 29.00 non-members

FROM: Name _____

Address _____ Postcode _____

(landline) _____ mobile _____

e-mail: _____

I enclose an SAE and a cheque payable to NTS-London Members' Centre for £ _____ for this event only.



London Members' Centre
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Proposed Pre-Christmas Theatre Outing 2021

Les Miserables Returns!

Covid 19 cancelled our plans for us to enjoy a pre Christmas theatre outing to see Les Miserables in December 2020 and first indications of its reopening in 2021 indicated unacceptable restrictions. However the most recent announcement has prompted the reinstatement of Les Mis as our preferred pre Christmas theatre event and the details are as follows.

This will be an evening performance, there are no matinees available at present, on Thursday 9th December at the Sondheim Theatre.

Tickets will be £45pp and payment to National Trust for Scotland - LMC should be made to reach me by 31st August.

As before please note that theatre tickets are non refundable and our normal 14 day cancellation terms do not apply.

Please complete the slip below and send to

Rusty Love, 50 Courtlands Drive, Epsom, Surrey KT19 OAL
or email rustylove1@gmail.com



FROM (Names)

Address

email

Tel No.

Mobile

Please reserve for me (No)tickets for Les Mis

I/We would/would not be interested in joining up for a meal before the performance.

NTS-LMC Spring Tour 2021

The recent Spring Tour to Dundee and Angus was unprecedented. Never before – and we hope never again – will such a tour be conducted during a global pandemic. Inevitably, there were certain restrictions, including in our Montrose hotels, but these proved no bar to enjoying a full programme. Ours was the only coach on the road and, being among the very first visitors for more than a year, we were given a warm welcome wherever we went.

Having emerged from a cold, wet spring, the rolling Angus countryside - set against the backdrop of the foothills of the Cairngorms - looked bright and fresh in the June sunshine. Herds of cattle grazed on lush green pastures, amid bright yellow gorse and pink-white may blossom. Our drive along Glen Clova – one of five Angus Glens – revealed the dramatic wooded scenery of the eastern slopes of the Cairngorms National Park. This beautiful, but little-visited, corner of Scotland deserves to be better known.



The highlight of the tour had to be our visit to House of Dun, where we received the ‘VIP tour’ promised by the NTS’s General Manager North East during his talk at our AGM. What a privilege it was to have the house – closed to visitors since early 2020 - opened especially for us, some weeks before the public are to be admitted again. Closure has provided the opportunity for a fresh presentation of the rooms to make them more atmospheric, whether through quiet piano music, flickering candles, smoking fires, or a pair of breeches thrown casually over a chair in the bedroom. The property has been fortunate to receive a legacy of over £700,000, which has

enabled the NTS to undertake its largest project in 2021 – the conversion of the courtyard to accommodate the Angus Folk Museum collection, which has been in storage for the past few years. Since this work is taking a little longer than envisaged, this area was not accessible while we were there and, instead, we were talked through how it will look when completed. It was timely that the latest edition of the NTS’s magazine has an article giving a full description of the courtyard development.

The NTS has two other properties in Angus. At the Barry Water Mill, the machinery was set in motion for us to admire its complexity and smooth running, while at J M Barrie’s Birthplace in Kirriemuir we squeezed into the tiny cottage to learn more about this prolific and popular author. In the garden, the ‘crocodile’ - which had swallowed an alarm clock - ticked, as it does in ‘Peter Pan’.

But there is much in Angus which long predates the NTS’s properties. Here are to be found more Pictish stones than anywhere else - their strange carvings, including mirrors and combs, still little understood. In Brechin, once the principal town in Angus, stands the 800-year old Cathedral and its even older Round Tower – one of only two such Irish-style round towers in Scotland. In Arbroath, which claims to be Scotland’s birthplace, the ruins of the Abbey exude “ancient magnificence” (in the words of Samuel Johnson). Against a cloudless blue sky, they looked at their most imposing.

What a contrast all of this was with the recently-opened V&A Dundee, with its Scottish Design Gallery. This work of an eminent Japanese



architect supposedly reflects the cliffs of Tayside but, to us, it looked more like a ship. Next to it is docked a real ship – the Dundee-built RSS Discovery which took Captain Scott on his 1901-04 Antarctic expedition. Clambering around the decks, we could get a feel for what life must have been like for the men living in such cramped conditions, made worse by the freezing temperatures. Also on a nautical theme, we visited the Signal Tower Museum in Arbroath to learn how, in less automated days, it was used to communicate with the Bell Rock Lighthouse, 12 miles off-shore and just visible across an unexpectedly blue sea.

No tour would be complete without a visit to a couple of gardens. At Edzell Castle, now in the care of Historic Environment Scotland, the curator led us around the garden created in 1604, explaining the symbolism of the statuary set into its walls. Completely different was our visit to the lovely Pitmuies Gardens where we stepped on perfectly manicured lawns to admire beds of peonies and aquilegias. Beyond the unusual turreted Doo’cot, the azaleas and rhododendrons along the riverside walk were in full bloom.



During our busy sightseeing schedule, we had, of course, to find time for refreshment. Being in a part of Scotland long known for its production of soft fruit, it was appropriate that, at the Carnoustie Golf Hotel, we sat down to tea and scones with Scottish jam, served with a view over the links course. Hospitalfield House in Arbroath, built in red sandstone in 19th century Scottish baronial style, was not yet open to the public at the time of our visit. But after our guide had told us the history of the house and explained its role today as a residence and studio for budding artists, there was coffee, cake and shortbread, and an opportunity to look around the recently-restored walled garden and fernery.

The tour ended on a grand note - in the splendid setting of Glamis Castle. There our guide led us through some of its magnificent rooms with tales of previous occupants of the Castle, including the late Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, who spent a happy childhood there.

The past year or so has been difficult for all those whose livelihood depends on tourism. It was good to know that our tour was putting something into the economy of Angus, and giving hope that one day soon things would return to normal. The tour also generated nearly £1100 in much-needed funds for the NTS.



Margaret Cund
(Tour Organiser)



*The group at
Barry Mill*