



## THE ST. ANDREWS PRESERVATION TRUST

### NEWSLETTER NO 24

WINTER 2001-2

#### **Christine M Wolfe**

It is with deep regret that we record the recent death of Life Member and former Chairman of the Trustees, Mrs Christine M Wolfe who was, until her retirement, librarian at the University of St. Andrews.

A staunch supporter of the Trust and its aims, she became a life member of the Trust in 1976. Elected as a Trustee in May 1993, she served as Chairman of the Trustees for the years 1993-1998.

A regular contributor of articles for the Trust's Yearbook, Mrs Wolfe was, in addition, an active member of the Planning and Museum Committees where her knowledge of the City, together with the history of the Trust and a major benefactors will be sorely missed.

As the designer of the map used by countless numbers of visitors to the annual Hidden Gardens day, she assisted many to experience the less well-known, but equally fascinating parts of our historic city. Her last personal contribution to Trust activities was the lecture she presented to an appreciative audience in the Museum in December when she talked about the life of Miss Janet Low.

#### **Members' Events**

On Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> November, Mrs June Baxter welcomed some 47 members of the Trust to her beautiful home at 46 South Street. The evening began with a glass or two of bubbly and canapes and much conviviality. Members then gathered in the Drawing Room where Mrs Dorothea Morrison, Chairman of the Preservation Trust, welcomed Dr John Frew of the School of Art History of St Andrews University, who then gave a brief lecture on the history of the house. Dr Frew's enthusiasm for the history of the houses of South Street delighted his appreciative audience. After the lecture members were invited to wander the house at will from the attic to the cellar.

This most successful evening was followed by a lecture in the Museum on 12<sup>th</sup> December when Mrs Christine Wolfe talked about Miss Janet Low and the early work of the Trust. It was a wonderful opportunity for those present to understand the strong link between 46 South Street and Miss Low, a previous owner and resident. The lecture also illustrated how much the Trust and St Andrews owe to that great lady. The evening concluded with mulled wine, canapes and mince pies.

The Chairman and Trustees would like to thank the members who supported these evenings, and their gracious acceptance of the charges made. Both evenings were planned as fund-raising events to support the work of the Trust and, in particular, to contribute to the cost of running the Museum. The Museum is the Trust's flagship, of which all members can be proud thanks to the capable curatorship of Miss Susan Kerracher, supported by her team of volunteers.

More events are planned for the enjoyment of members this year. An Events Calendar can be found at the end of this Newsletter. Tears off slips are provided for members wishing to participate in events up to May 2002.

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## **What's on at the Museum?**

This season's **contemporary art exhibition** will feature the work of East Neuk artist Karen Edward. Continuing with the theme of mermaids, which was the focus of her show at last years Pittenweem Festival, Karen is developing the legend of the St Andrews Silkie. The exhibition will include drawings, paintings and multi media works will be exhibited on weekends from Friday, 22 February until Sunday, 10 March. From 2.00 till 5.00 pm.

Using objects, costumes and photographs from the Museum collections, the **Easter exhibition** will look at domestic life in Victorian St Andrews. Fascinating displays of kitchen machinery and cooking utensils, china and mantle ornaments, glove stretchers and button hooks, will give a glimpse of what life was really like in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The exhibition will run from Thursday, 28 March until Tuesday, 2 April. From 2.00 till 5.00 pm

The **Summer exhibition** will be a celebration of the 1950s and **the Curator would like to take this opportunity to request a little help!** Do you have any items or photographs that you feel epitomises your life in St Andrews during the 'fab 50s' or you may like to volunteer some of your time as a guide during the season.

Call Susan Keracher at the Museum on 01334 477629

## **St. Andrews Green Belt**

Members of the Trust will be aware that the Scottish Executive issued, on 18th January, its Draft Modifications to the Fife Structure Plan as proposed by Fife Council.

Members will also be aware from recent press articles that the Draft Modifications proposed by the Scottish Executive are further reaching than could have been hoped, in that their proposals under policies SS7 and SS8 call for a Green belt to be established for St. Andrews that "should encircle the Town." And further, that "Local Plans will identify the precise inner and outer boundaries of Green Belt and in doing so they will ensure that they take into account the immediate setting, valuable middle and more distant views and horizons of which the towns form a significant part including key vantage points".

"Local plans definition of Green Belt boundaries including any village envelopes may reflect existing and planned urban boundaries where further urban development would be acceptable."

The Trust therefore wishes to thank all those who have, by writing to the relevant authorities over recent years in the campaign to achieve a Green Belt for St. Andrews, assisted in achieving the current status.

**The battle however is not yet won as the Scottish Executive is inviting any objections or representations to their Draft Modifications to be submitted to the Department by 1 March 2002.**

It is highly likely therefore that Developers, with an interest in projects around St. Andrews, will object to the Scottish Executives Modifications and it is further possible that Fife Council themselves may also object to the modifications to their Structure Plan.

**Can we therefore request that you write once again to the Scottish Executive in support of their Draft Modifications, such letters to be received no later than 1 March 2002.**

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A copy of the standard response form to be used in responding to the Scottish Executive is attached to this newsletter.

## **Planning Issues**

### **Proposed Nursing Home and Special-needs Flats etc.**

#### **John Knox Road**

Outline Consent for this development was granted on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1998 subject to a number of conditions, which included that the development of the site shall be limited to single storey development which would not have an adverse effect on views out of and into St. Andrews at this point. **For the avoidance of doubt, no development was to be permitted above the 50-metre contour line.**

In addition Section 75 Agreements were also stipulated to the effect that a minimum of two hectares of the application site shall be reserved for development for the purposes of affordable housing only.

A revised submission was received in August 2000 for the erection of a **3 storey** (attic) 60-bedroom nursing home incorporating a coffee shop and 18 **2 storey** (conventional) assisted living residential flats etc.

The Trust objected to this application on the grounds that it contravened the original approval for single storey development, and that it would have a visually adverse impact on views across the site into or out of St. Andrews

Notwithstanding our objection, the Area Development Committee gave approval of the scheme on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2000.

A further revised submission was lodged on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2002 for the erection of **60 affordable houses, 22 assisted living flats and an amended design** for the nursing home.

Appraisal of the drawings provided indicates that some of the affordable housing will, when the design height of the house is taken into account, be well above the 50 metre contour level.

This is clearly in breach of the outline planning consent conditions.

The Planning Committee is currently reviewing the application and it is most likely that we shall once again object the grounds of this breach in outline consent.

### **The Blue Stane**

This subject was recently raised at a Trustees Meeting and was also subsequently the topic of an article in the St. Andrews Citizen.

What however is the 'Blue Stane' and where is it located?

The latter question is the easiest to answer, as the 'Blue Stane' is to be found behind the railings of what is now known as 'The Raisen' on the corner of St. Mary's Place and Alexandra Place, opposite Hope Park Church. It appears that this large 'stane' has been in its present location or at least close to it, for at least the past 130 or so years, though it was apparently previously located close to the West Port after being brought from Magus Muir where it had apparently lain "for many years."

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### **The Blue Stane (cont'd)**

The 'Blue Stane' may however have been in the area of St. Andrews for much longer as it is reputed to have been the meeting point of Fife spearmen on the eve of Bannockburn in 1314.

Research into the subject matter in the Trust's library of local information establishes that it has had mentions in various publications over the years which include suggestions that it may be one of the oldest relics in our historic city with links to the heathen beliefs of the Picts prior to Christianity being established in St. Andrews. What the significance of the 'stane' was in this respect is however unrecorded.

The 'Blue Stane' was long rumoured to be the congregation point of dubious spirits and local myth refers to it as having been a missile thrown by a giant from Blebo Craigs or Drumcarrow at the tall tower of St. Rule, but falling short.

Perhaps more recent references to it's having been the meeting point for the Whiplickers (The Carters Society) on the day of their annual races, and as a meeting point for lovers are more accurate than the unsubstantiated myth and legend which surrounds the 'Blue Stane.'

Whilst suggestions have been made over the years for this relic of the past "to be a subject for the local Preservation Trust to schedule" and, on more than one occasion, to have requested some recognition in the form of a plaque setting out its reputed background, nothing has ever been done to better identify this forgotten relic

The tales that surround the 'Blue Stane' are surely of enough interest to locals and visitors alike to merit more than currently exists to identify its location and reputed history.

Why however is it referred to as 'Blue'?

If anyone can shed any further light on the origins of this local landmark, would they please pass on such information as they may have in their possession to the Trust office for the attention of the newsletter editor.

### **Executive Committee 2001-2002**

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Vice-Chairmen	Prof. T Lee	(478030)
	Mr I M Christie	(473989)
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### **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Annual Members

Have you paid your subscription for 2002?

Editor: John Peacock

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