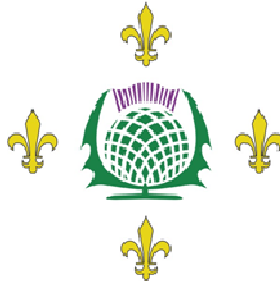


ST ANDREWS—LOCHES ALLIANCE



NEWSLETTER; NOVEMBER 2012

A letter from the Chairman

Our friends in Loches normally visit St Andrews at the end of November to share in our celebration of St Andrew's Day. I have spent a little energy over recent years, trying to persuade them to visit at some other time of the year when our local weather should be more welcoming.

This year, they agreed to visit towards the end of June, when it was planned that they would concentrate on our local gardens and, most importantly, participate in the Preservation Trust's "Hidden Gardens" event.

Six of our visitors arrived a couple of days beforehand and appeared to have brought November weather with them! A hardy lot, they braved miserable cold and rain to see the town and do some shopping, while two of them (Claudine and Thierry Jouanjean) actually played eighteen holes on a wet and windswept Jubilee Course—and claimed to have enjoyed it.

Saturday 23rd June saw somewhat improved weather and the start of the formal programme with a visit to Cambo House and its delightful gardens. Thanks are due to Sir Peter and Lady Erskine, who were such delightful hosts and who have subsequently taken a great interest in establishing a link with the horticultural college at Verneuil, near Loches. Our visitors were entertained to a light lunch at the Fairmont spending the remainder of the afternoon at leisure in and around St Andrews.

Another outstanding local garden was the venue for the evening's activities, that of James and Lindsay Murray. Our French visitors were joined by members of the Alliance for a "pot-luck" supper at which Lindsay's delicious offerings were supplemented by dishes prepared and brought along by Alliance members. The weather had improved enough to permit al fresco dining and a keenly fought game of Boules (or was it Petanque?) between Scotland and France. The Scots inflicted a crushing defeat on the French who accepted the result very graciously. Undoubtedly the social event of the visit, our thanks are due to James and Lindsay Murray—charming hosts



as always—and to those who helped to make the evening such a success whether by providing food or drink or transport.

Sunday 24th June started off (not too early) with a hearty breakfast at the Links Clubhouse. Then small groups went round the town visiting the dozen or so "Hidden Gardens" all of which were close to the centre of town and easy to access on foot. The weather was far from perfect but, compared with that of

a few days earlier, was reasonable and all were able to enjoy their visit. The St Andrews Preservation Trust had received splendid support from our local gardeners and was able to offer a range of very different gardens, all of which were in wonderful condition in spite of the rain and strong winds of the previous week.

Most of our visitors left on Monday morning and arrived safely back in Loches late the same day. A number of messages were received saying how much the visit had been enjoyed.

A week or so after the date of the visit had been agreed and arrangements for it were in hand, I found that I had to attend a family wedding in Dublin on Saturday 23rd. So, even more that is usually the case, I owe a debt of gratitude to all those who made the visit such a success, whether as hosts, providers of food or transport or simply as good companions. Thank you all!

Barely a fortnight after the “Hidden Gardens” weekend a lunch was held at the Byre Theatre to commemorate Bastille Day. It was well attended and everyone seemed to enjoy the event.

Many members will remember the successful art “competition” between primary school in Loches and St Andrews in late 2011. Thanks essentially to the efforts of Joyce Duncan, this year’s primary school activity is an exchange of poetry readings in French and English. The Alliance will present modest prizes to recognize the best efforts and thank the Head Teachers and their staff for their enthusiastic support.

Future plans

In St Andrews, it is intended to organise three or four social events for members; these will almost certainly include a Quiz Night and a wine & cheese party. More anon about the detailed programme. We will continue our efforts to promote exchanges between swimmers, tennis players and photographers.

Our French friends are trying to organize a visit by Les Baladins, a choral group from Loches and the surrounding area. Virginia Fowler has agreed to coordinate this at the St Andrews end.

St Leonards School has sadly had to end the long-running exchange with Loches, but we are delighted that an exchange involving Madras College seems to be going ahead smoothly. The school will handle all the arrangements direct with their French counterparts, but Lyn McCartney, the principal Modern Languages teacher, knows that she can call on the Alliance for support if necessary.

The Lochois have invited us to visit in October next year. We are looking at a number of options to add colour to this visit, with Scottish Country Dancing amongst several being considered. Do please consider joining in this visit. Last year's October visit was truly memorable and I would expect the 2013 sojourn to be equally entertaining. More of this anon.

Changes

Sadly, Syd Littleford felt that he had to resign from the office of Treasurer due to pressure of work. I am happy to be able to say that Bill Sangster has agreed to take on this responsibility. Joyce Duncan has taken over as our Secretary and Lindsay Murray has taken on a new role as Events Secretary.

On behalf of all members I would like to thank Syd for his sterling service as Treasurer and for the delightful hospitality offered at Middlefoodie when he and Roberta were such gracious hosts. Happily they remain members of the Alliance. Our thanks must go also to Joyce and Lindsay for the massive efforts that they have made in so many ways to make the Alliance a success.

Subscriptions

Forgive the reminder, but annual subscriptions of £ 10 per household will fall due on 1st January 2013. It would be appreciated if you would send a cheque for £10 payable to "St Andrews-Loches Alliance" to:-

Bill Sangster, 24 Main Street, Strathkinness, KY16 9RU.

If by chance you forgot to pay for 2012, you may include it with your subscription for 2013.

May you and yours have a Very Happy Christmas and

A Healthy and Peaceful New Year



John Matthews