



**Number: 82**

**2023**

Welcome to our newsletter for Spring 2023 – No 82 as Covid confusion caused us to produce the last two editions both marked 80!

At our AGM in November 2022 we welcomed 20 members. It was reported that 2022 had seen the Friends getting back to something approaching normality with 28 private visits so far that year. The Open Days too were going well with 86 visitors in October and 114 in November. There had been two joint events with the Sacred Arts Festival during the Fringe, when Professor Gordon Graham, Chairman of the Sacred Arts Festival, had given a talk on the place of sacred arts painting in the Arts and Crafts movement and this was then followed by a tour of the murals given by two of our guides.

It was noted that we now have a new noticeboard in front of the Centre as the old one was literally on its last legs! This makes our presence more noticeable and the dates on which we are open will be updated regularly. We were also sad to report the death of Alec Mann, a long-term member of the Friends. A cheque for £5000 was presented to the Trust which was gratefully received by Dr Duncan Thomson, Chairman of the Trust.

As regards the Sick Kids Mortuary Chapel, there was a meeting in September at which Downing, the developer of the site, stated that they wished to have a commercial proposal for the building. Discussions are still ongoing.

David Slater, who has been a committee member for many years has resigned and was thanked for his long service and, as noted later in this newsletter, our Treasurer, Christine Lawrie, has also decided to hang up her abacus. New committee members and guides are urgently needed.

The lock-downs of the last three years have caused us some administrative problems and as a result we decided to make some minor adjustments to our Constitution - which again are detailed elsewhere in this newsletter. It just remains for me to wish you well and to thank you for your continued interest in and support for the Centre.

**Morag Austin (Convener)**

**Annual General Meeting : 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022.**

**Amendments to the Constitution.**

**Quorum for AGM:**

The quorum for the AGM was twenty members present in person. Hence, we were unable to have an AGM during Covid related restrictions. We have amended that to 'in person or virtually' to allow for Zoom type meetings in future. The quorum of twenty people present proved difficult to achieve so has been changed to ten per cent of the membership.

**Financial Year**

The accounting period will now be 1st September to August 31, the accounting period for 2022-23 will be eleven months. This brings us into line with the Trust. The AGM will now be in October when nights are lighter and weather less inclement which will hopefully encourage more members to attend.

These amendments to the Constitution having been agreed at the AGM were submitted to OSCR. If you wish a copy of the amended Constitution email [fmtc@mansfieldtraquair.org.uk](mailto:fmtc@mansfieldtraquair.org.uk) and we will send one out.

**Guest Speaker Celebrating Scotland's Art at the Scottish National Gallery by Tricia Allerston.**

Tricia outlined the approach being taken in the formation of the new galleries. There are three main areas: Collection care, Conservation, and Learning Team. Scotland's art represents 50% of the Galleries holding. The aim is to celebrate and promote Scottish Art. Tricia explained in detail how this will be achieved taking particular account of the international context, changing the experience of those visiting and using space more effectively. Extensive research informs the new approach. The time frame will be obvious to visitors and covers the years from 1600s to 1945. One of the most common queries was in regard to art produced by women, and more recently other diversity issues such as racism. Fourteen galleries will be available and space around exhibits increased to enhance visitor experience. An interesting feature is the eight-metre long window which will look out on to the City. A very thorough and interesting account of the project. The new galleries will open in summer 2023

**Friends Outing 2023** We hope to organise an outing in September 2023 which will take the same form as the planned outing which had to be cancelled because of the Covid lockdown.

### **Kellie Castle**

Medieval atmosphere meets Victorian style at Kellie Castle. The oldest parts date back to the 14th century, but the whole interior was overhauled in the late 19th century by the Lorimers, a famous artistic family.

Crow-stepped gables and fairytale stone towers form the outer frame, while indoors elaborate plaster ceilings and painted panelling lie alongside fine furniture designed by Sir Robert Lorimer, who spent much of his childhood at Kellie.



### **Scottish Fisheries Museum, Anstruther** *Boats, fish and folk*



### **Fish and chips, High tea, Anstruther**

Further information and booking form will be issued in the summer.

### **Treasurer/ Membership Secretary**

Our Treasurer has indicated that she wishes to retire from the Friends committee. We are therefore looking to recruit someone to take over this voluntary post. Previous accounting/bookkeeping experience would be useful.

### **Printing and Design/Web site**

We are also looking for someone who could organise our printing requirements, design cards, postcards and publicity materials. With regard to the website we have very few amendments, usually updating our Open Days once a year.

If you are interested in either voluntary post please contact us by email: [fmtc@mansfieldtraquair.org.uk](mailto:fmtc@mansfieldtraquair.org.uk)

### **New Members and Volunteers**

We have been concentrating on attracting new members. To that end we have new posters which have been displayed on our last two Open Days and attracted 5 new members.



We always need more volunteers, especially during the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, by the end of which our volunteers are exhausted. No need to train to give guided tours, just meet and greet, staff the sales desk and generally help out. If you are interested email [fmtc@mansfieldtraquair.org.uk](mailto:fmtc@mansfieldtraquair.org.uk).

### **New Guides**

Our guided tours can last as long as our visitors wish and are always extremely well received. New guides are invited to shadow until such time as they feel comfortable to “go it alone” and we have extensive material to assist with both training and guiding. We now have an increasing number of private tours, outwith our Open Days. These are being managed by a few of our regular guides and we need to increase this number to spread the load, especially over the summer period when people go on holiday.

If you are interested in becoming a guide email [fmtc@mansfieldtraquair.org.uk](mailto:fmtc@mansfieldtraquair.org.uk).

## Visitors' comments

Two recent visitors on Open Days left us memories of the early days of the Catholic Apostolic Church and of Father Columba Flegg who was one of the first members both of the Mansfield Traquair Trust and of the Friends of Mansfield Traquair committee. He continued to take an interest in the building until his death in 2015 and wrote a brief commentary on the History of the Catholic Apostolic Church which is still available from our book stall.

"Thank you for showing and giving the explanations of this beautiful Church. When I was a boy my dad took me once in a while to the liturgy in Munsingen near Berne in Switzerland.\* I think it was my great-great-grandfather (born 1829) who first got involved in the Catholic Apostolic Church, probably in the 1850's or 60's. His wife and children, including my great-grandfather, all went to the CAC in Munsingen.

The building still stands today and is still in use for prayer although only four or five old people now attend. My grandfather (born 1908) and my father (born 1949) were, and still are, of CAC faith and conviction.

There was no ordained priest left in Switzerland and so my father was brought quite a distance to Freiburg in south-west Germany for his baptism. My grandmother was also from the CAC and she told me about the beautiful services she experienced as a child and as a young woman. Nowadays there is a relatively active congregation in Berne with several families involved. It's a blessing to come from this heritage and although I don't share some of the convictions of my dad, we have great discussions and conversations about it!"

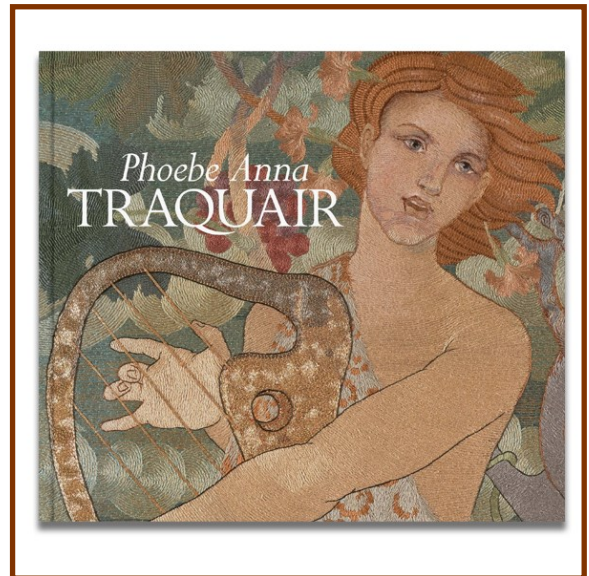
"I was very happy to be back to this incredible building and also to reconnect with the dear memory of Fr Columba Flegg through the book he wrote on the history of the CAC (Gathered Under Angels). Fr Columba was one of our priests in the Greek Orthodox parish of St Andrew in George Square when I arrived in Edinburgh in 1996.

His wife Elizabeth was also one of the pillars of the community, organising the weekly rotas. A true intellectual, he taught us many blessed things and gave a scholarly dimension that still characterises our community. They died six years ago in 2015, less than a week apart – a very blessed way to leave this world. May their memory be eternal."

\*One of the original twelve "new" apostles – Drummond – was appointed to look after the welfare of congregations in both Scotland and Switzerland.

## New book on Phoebe Anna Traquair

A completely revised and expanded edition of Elizabeth Cumming's book on Phoebe Anna Traquair has been published by the National Galleries of Scotland. Designed in a larger format, it now has twice the number of illustrations plus a completely new introduction which focuses on her personality. Using recently discovered letters throughout, this book is intentionally as much a biography as a piece of art history. It reveals much about her busy everyday life absorbed in art and many crafts from embroidery to manuscript illumination and art enamelling. There are also revelations about each one of her mural schemes, including identifying inspirations at Mansfield Traquair Centre. Prior to working on our building, Phoebe is shown to have changed both her ideas and strategy in tackling large scale work at the Song School at St Mary's Cathedral. Perhaps most intriguingly, she is shown to have slipped a self portrait into every one of her Edinburgh buildings and probably also in both of those south of the Border.



## Several blogs which might be of interest

The earliest, published back in 2015 is at:

<https://greatscottishart.wordpress.com/2015/04/19/20-catholic-apostolic-church-phoebe-anna-traquair/>

The second one is recent and was written by Molly Skinner who wrote a dissertation on Phoebe's embroideries for the Courtauld Institute in London a few years ago. Part of the Art UK website which has really expanded from 'only' listing art in public collections and now offers articles on all sorts of art subjects (a real timewaster if you get hooked on it!).

It is at :

<https://artuk.org/discover/stories/phoebe-anna-traquair-the-great-arts-and-crafts-artist-you-should-know>

There is also one in Dutch from last year at :

[https://indestilte.blog/2021/01/20/\\_trashed-3/](https://indestilte.blog/2021/01/20/_trashed-3/) .



Photoshoot at Mansfield Traquair Centre on Sunday 13th March for Gaita Medieval Music-info @gaita.co.uk  
Photographs: Max Caine (Instagram @maxcainephotography)