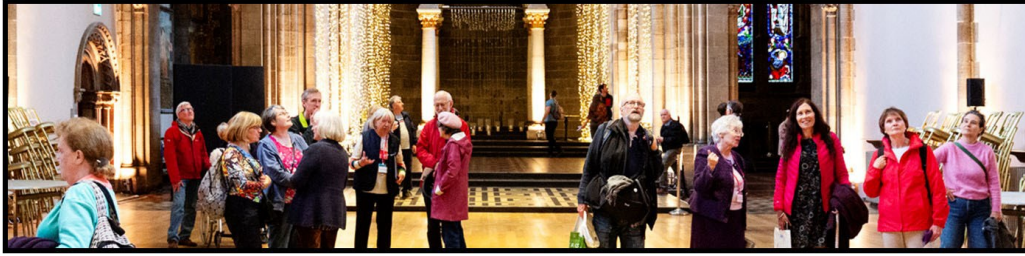


# Mansfield Traquair News

No: 83



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## Convener's Report for AGM October 2023

Welcome to the Autumn 2023 newsletter.

After nearly three years of disruption, I am delighted to report that 2023 has seen a return to normal. Our numbers at Open Days have been keeping up well – 168 visited us last Sunday – and we were particularly pleased on Doors Open Day – now organised by the Scottish Civic Trust – when we welcomed 472 visitors in the space of 4 hours.



***We need more guides!***

The Private Visits have also been popular with around 30 in the last year ranging from 1 (quite a few have asked for a specialist tour for an individual visitor) to 50, when we welcomed, as in several previous years, students from the Edinburgh University Summer School – always a delight to have with us. Thanks are due to Mel McLeod for organising these.

In addition, four of us did a whirlwind, and only slightly chaotic, pre-dinner tour for 60 American golfers, threading our way between tables laden with glasses! Our new notice-board brings us to the attention of more people, and it will be up-dated again with a few tweaks, and dates for 2024 in the new year. Whether as a result of this or not, we have acquired 20 new members of the Friends this year!

We were sad that, in spite of asking the Broughton History Society to join us, we were still not able to attract sufficient numbers to make a trip to Kellie Castle and the Fisheries Museum viable during the summer. Any suggestions for future outings to appropriate venues which might be more appealing to members would be gratefully received.

Our website, now separate from that of the Trust although still connected to it, has just this week gone live. It has had a make-over to make it a little more modern and more accessible for those wanting to book tours, pay their subscription or make a donation. Our newest committee member, Maggie Hughes, has put in a lot of work on the website, building on the work done by our

Treasurer Christine Lawrie. You may also have noticed our new logo on the letter inviting you to this meeting and on the badges worn by the guides on Open Days.

We have acquired a “Zettle” machine which is rather simpler to use than the PayPal card reader we used previously for sales, and this is proving very useful now that so many people do not use cash. We have had Elizabeth Cumming's new book – updated and with many more illustrations – available for sale since the beginning of the year and this has been selling well – at a slight discount from shop prices! We have also received quite a few generous donations from individual visitors and Friends.

Unfortunately, there is still no good news about the murals in the Mortuary Chapel of the old Sick Children's Hospital – which continue to deteriorate. Downing, the construction firm which bought the site, is close to completing their programme for the student housing block and about 200 students are now occupying the lower 4 floors. The Mortuary building is currently covered in scaffolding while Historic Churches Scotland and the Mansfield Traquair Trust have had meetings with Downing. Nothing has so far been agreed and Downing are said to be looking at other options.

Two new guides have joined us during the year and another two have started training but we are always on the lookout for new recruits, either to guide or to greet visitors and deal with sales. We were severely stretched on some days during the Fringe so you would be made most welcome!

It only remains for me to thank Muriel Buchanan, our hard-working and indefatigable Secretary and Christine Lawrie who chases our subscription backsliders and ensures we stay solvent, as well as the rest of the committee, for all their support over the past year and to thank you, our loyal Friends, for continuing with your interest in our wonderful building and unique murals. With all good wishes for the festive season and hope for a happy and healthy 2024.

**Morag Austin**



### New website!

We are delighted to tell you that the Friends launched our new website in October [www.visitmansfieldtraquair.uk](http://www.visitmansfieldtraquair.uk) (note that it is just .uk – not .co.uk). The website designer worked closely with a small group of committee members to create a site that deals with all aspects of visits to the Centre and highlights the work undertaken by our volunteers, who guide and welcome visitors. It also enables people to join the Friends, volunteer to help and make donations.

We have included a link to the main Trust website where there is more information about the building and the murals, images of which are used prominently throughout the website, hopefully encouraging people to come and see our amazing Centre for themselves.



As part of the website development we also had a logo designed for the Friends. This has been used to create a new letterhead and badges for our volunteers. The new website and email addresses are on our “Welcome” handouts and Open Days date cards and will appear on our cards and postcards over time. Email: [enquiries@visitmansfieldtraquair.uk](mailto:enquiries@visitmansfieldtraquair.uk)

The website has been designed to be easily updated by members of the Friends so that we are not dependent on the website designer for routine ongoing maintenance. Initially this will be undertaken by the same committee member who updates our Facebook page (The Mansfield Traquair Centre) on a regular basis. **Maggie Hughes**

### Doors Open: September 2023

This year’s Doors Open was spectacular—472 visitors. All the volunteers were exhausted and hoarse by the end but the atmosphere was great and everyone seemed to enjoy their visit. We also had our new member Anneleen Lindsay, a professional photographer, wandering around taking photographs for our new, and now live, web site. We did ask politely if visitors were happy to have their photographs used and received very positive responses

