

Congratulations

In 1992 I heard an interview on the radio with a lady on the occasion of her 100th birthday. Entirely predictably, the interviewer asked her, “To what do you attribute your longevity”? Without a moment’s hesitation the lady replied, “My generosity”. This wasn’t the reply the interviewer expected and asked the lady to elaborate. “Well” she said. “When I was 20 I had a ticket and I gave it to my younger sister”. “A ticket? What was it for?” asked the interviewer “The maiden voyage of the Titanic” was the reply.



I’ve just accompanied Sarah Adamson, Jean Long and Mary Clarkson (see photograph) to deliver a NATS birthday card to our own centenarian and Honorary President, Elizabeth Farquharson, whose birthday is today. **CONGRATULATIONS ELIZABETH** and best wishes from all NATS Members. The

link, of course, with the story above, is generosity. In the short time I have known Elizabeth she has been unfailingly generous with her time, knowledge and experience, something from which many NATS Members have benefitted. Although she is now less able to attend outdoor excursions, she is a regular at our winter talks, as well as hosting NATS Council meetings at her home, and I look forward to seeing her at the next series of talks, which starts in September.

Lecture Secretary

Talking of winter talks, Joanie McNaughton has organised the programme for four years and never failed to provide us with stimulating subjects and interesting speakers. She has indicated that she wishes to retire and we are looking for a Member to take on this important task. Joanie has produced a simple but comprehensive guide and would be happy to provide initial practical help for a new Lecture Secretary. Please let any Member of Council know if you are interested or would like to nominate anyone else. Joanie has fully organised the programme for 2015 - 16 so the new Lecture Secretary won’t be immediately in at the deep end!

Another way Members may help is to let the Lecture Secretary know if you come across a suitable subject and/or lecturer who might be approached to contribute to future programmes. Please speak to Joanie in the meantime.

Betty Smith

Many Members will have heard of the death of Betty Smith in June. Betty was a long-time Member of the NATS and I was recently told that it was on a NATS excursion that she met her future husband, Bob.

Betty’s funeral was a sad occasion, lightened by stories and tales of her life-long involvement with environmental issues and conservation. It was well attended by NATS and SWT Members who clearly recognised and appreciated the work done over many years by Betty and Bob Smith.

Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan

NATS has been a partner in City of Edinburgh Council’s Biodiversity Action Plan for some time and two Council Members are contributing to discussions about the content of the new Action Plan for 2016 – 19.

A recent development which Members might have noticed is the change to the management of green spaces in certain areas of the city, with planting of wild flowers as well a changed grass-cutting regime to encourage species-rich grassland.

The plan is to expand the number of areas where these measures are applied if the reluctance of council staff to stop mowing everywhere to within an inch of its life can be overcome!

I would be happy to hear your opinion on how this might be working in your area or about anything else which you think the new plan should address, so we can feed this back to the Biodiversity Officer.

Workshops

In the last two editions of NATS News I've mentioned difficulties with accommodation for our very successful workshops. There is some good news, at last – David Adamson and I have visited the Education Centre in Holyrood Park, a modern building near Holyrood Palace. I've used it for meetings of other organisations I have been involved with and it has excellent facilities. The Manager at the Education Centre is very happy to accommodate NATS workshops and we anticipate that something will be arranged later in the year.

Identification Corner

Council has agreed to a proposal by Vladimir Krivtsov to have an "Identification Corner" in the guide Hall before and after each of our winter lectures. We are particularly concerned to ensure that nothing changes the well-established routine of these evenings or detracts from the central position of the visiting speaker but feel that something which takes place before and after formal proceedings may well provide a further opportunity for Members to share useful information. This activity will take place within the times that we currently have access to the hall and we would be glad of any feedback on how useful you find it.

Microscopes

Just a reminder that microscopes we recently purchased are available for loan to Members when not required for workshops. Further details may be obtained from Pauline King at paulinekhhome@msn.com.

Excursion Committee

The Excursion Committee will be meeting soon to discuss a winter programme. They have also been asked by Council to recommend a slightly more formal process for announcing to Members any necessary changes to arrangements for individual excursions (perhaps due to weather, access restrictions etc.). Without wanting to pre-empt what the Excursion Committee may recommend, discussion of this topic at the recent Council meeting suggested that we ought to consider having a deadline for a decision on any change (say, a certain time on the preceding evening) and a way of announcing it, perhaps involving social media. Council looks forward to hearing what the Excursion Committee recommends and will ensure that you are made aware of any developments as soon as possible.

Members' Night

I'll keep reminding you – we will need speakers for Members' Night and I'm sure your excursion/holiday/adventure would be of great interest. I already have the first offer. I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

Peter Leach
President

If you would like to know more about anything mentioned above, you can speak to any of the following members of Council at indoor meetings or excursions:

David Adamson, Noeleen Donachie, Elizabeth Farquharson, Pauline King, Peter Leach, Jean Long, Joanie McNaughton, Ian Schoolar, Rob Wallace, Katherine White.

This Newsletter is distributed to members by e-mail and a few printed copies will be available at Outdoor Meetings. If you know of a Member who can't access it in either of these ways, please consider printing them a copy.