

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – NOVEMBER 2024

I'd like to give you a brief account of the Committee's activities since our last AGM.

IN DECEMBER we bought a Xmas Tree and decorated it and the museum, to make it more appealing to visitors over the Christmas season. We plan to do so again this year.

IN JANUARY we again held the James Watt Supper in the Corbie Inn. We were delighted to have some new members with us. Ian Scott and Chapter 4 entertained us and the evening was, as always, much enjoyed by everyone.

IN FEBRUARY the new Education Sub-Group met for the first time. Yvonne, our group leader, will speak a little about its aims and activities, before we show [the video](#).

IN MARCH we held Easter craft activities in the museum. We didn't have large numbers of children, but we had fun. We also offered guided walks on that day, which our three volunteer guides managed to continue to offer every Saturday, during the lunch hour, until the end of September on each day that Historic Scotland opened the house to visitors for indoor tours.

IN APRIL two of us and Daniel, our young volunteer, acted as stewards down at Bo'ness Foreshore for the Forth Ultra Team Event Marathon. This offered good publicity for the Friends, and we also received a generous donation AND we had a great time! We have said that we would be happy to provide stewards again.

IN MAY we participated in the Step Back in Science event held at Kinneil. The event wasn't as much of a success as the organisers (Falkirk Council) had hoped, as quite a few of their expected groups and activities didn't

turn up. We, however, had a very large number of children enjoying experiments we offered at our stall, and so for us it was very successful.

IN MAY we also held a gathering in the museum for you - our members. We enjoyed refreshments as we chatted together, and it gave all of us a chance to meet up with friends, old and new, as we again welcomed new members. Historic Scotland kindly opened the house especially for us, gave us a guided tour and showed us the improvements they had been making. It was another enjoyable event.

We had a break over the summer and then -

IN SEPTEMBER on Doors Open Day, which was also Big Roman Day, we again offered some craft activities for children in the museum. The day was a great success. Over 700 people visited Kinneil House. We had over 60 children making Roman swords and printing coins, and we also helped with the visitors in the house.

IN OCTOBER for Hallowe'en, we again held activities for children in the museum, helped to act as guides in the house, and Yvonne thrilled everyone with her famous White Lady appearances. The children's fancy dress competition was held and as always, it was difficult to choose the winners of the book tokens which we give as prizes.

As I said earlier, Jane our Vice-Chair is not with us this evening, but she has given me a comprehensive report on the Hidden Heritage Trail. I'm going to give a summary.

The project began in 2019 when a volunteer group was set up by Claire Mennim (park manager for Falkirk Community Trust). Existing funding was in place to design the information panels, and these were installed in 2021. Design work on the actual trail was completed and a bid for funding was made. At this point Claire left the Community Trust. Following the Community Choices funding being granted by public vote, the Council replaced the Community Trust and began to oversee the project. (In Spring of 2022 Falkirk Community Trust ceased and the Estate returned to being part of Falkirk Council's Leisure and Culture division). A sub-group of the Friends, led by Jane, was formed to keep in contact with the Council and support their progress. In 2023 Mike Ewart, parks manager

for Falkirk Council, became project manager. All through Jane worked hard to continue to try to keep the project moving forward and this summer, 5 amazing sculptures carved by Jonny Chainshaw were completed and delivered to site for installation. However, initial costings have been redone by the Council, only to discover that the cost of landscaping, equipment and installation is way over budget. We have suggested modifications, and these are being looked at by the Council. They hope to complete the work by 2025. I have condensed Jane's report on what has been a long and frustrating process.

DURING THE YEAR, among other activities, committee members attended meetings and conferences. Talks were given, containers were planted and the gardens around the museum tidied up, as well as work done in the orchard. Postcards and Christmas cards were designed and produced. As you'll have seen, we have a beautiful tea towel on display. It's thanks to Moira that it has been produced. She had the idea. Megan Lyall kindly agreed to design it. When they arrived, Moira ironed and bagged all 100 of them. They are on sale for £5 each. They will make a lovely gift, will raise funds and promote Kinneil. A very big thank you to Megan and to you Moira for all your hard work and enthusiasm.

Oh, one last thing. We have new fleeces with our logo on them. These are wonderful for publicising who we are at our events, and they also keep our guides warm when they lead their walks.

AND so here we are at another AGM. I said in my first speech at the James Watt Supper, that I would not be able to do many of the things which Ian had done as Chair, BUT, that I was good at delegating. I think the committee have found that to be true!

I've purposely not mentioned any names, as I spoke about all the work the members of the Committee have carried out over the year, because we all have our roles to play. individually as well as jointly and everyone has contributed to another successful year.

We are not just The Friends of Kinneil Committee. WE ARE FRIENDS. We really enjoy working together and it has been an honour and a pleasure to be Chair for this year.

HOWEVER, to continue to do all the things we would like to do, we need more members. If you feel you have the time and would like to join us, please offer. If you feel you can't make that commitment, we welcome your help in other ways. Once again thank you for your continuing support and for joining us this evening.

Eileen Jackson (Chair)

Signed ..... November 4<sup>th</sup> 2024