

## **AGM 28 October 2015 Chairs Report**

### **Introduction**

I am pleased to present the annual report for HADAS this year. In my second year as chair a hard working and dedicated committee has ably assisted me with; Frances Wright (secretary), Andrew Robinson, (treasurer), George Barton, Chris Clark, Helen Robertson, Linda Shaw Stewart and Bill Rarity (also representing Haddington History Society). John Pelan (Scottish Civic Trust), Brian Young (former committee member) and Julian Tennent (representing Gifford) join us as co-opted members.

### **Activities and Achievements**

- **Visits, Talks and Awards**

Dr Peter Burman started off our new year highlighting the wonderful gardens and landscapes we are lucky to have on our doorstep in Haddington at our 2014 Tindall lecture.

We were treated to a fantastic talk by Lilian Main in April where she spoke about her work and publication 'The Closes of Haddington', which she produced as a part of the Haddington CARS (Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme) for East Lothian Council.

In June the committee joined HADAS members and colleagues from the History Society and enjoyed an informative summer outing to Clerkington Estate. Owner Charles Stevenson provided an insightful tour of the property and revealed some of its colourful past.

The Committee nominated the wonderful shop sign at 'Fabrication' on the High Street for a 'My Place' Civic Trust Award.

- **Development changes in Haddington and the surrounding villages**

We commented on the Council's Main Issues Report at the beginning of the year and worked with the Musselburgh Conservation Society to try and influence development changes in the County. We are waiting to see what changes the Local Development Plan will propose.

While we still have not seen any progress on the Sainsbury supermarket, other development proposals were passed that will this to change the appearance of Haddington. East Lothian Council approved 4 new housing developments at sites on the western side of the town (Letham, Gateside Commerce Park, Gateside East, Dovecot and Aberlady Road). HADAS supports the expansion of the town, but has pushed to reduce further expansion to the west and protect the important landscape setting, including Clerkington. We specifically pressed for improvements in the design of these sites so that they will contribute positively to the character of Haddington.

Our response to East Lothian Council's Special Landscapes consultation in March highlighted the role of local landscapes and their importance to our towns and villages.

We responded to a number of individual development changes across the area over the year.

- **Haddington Town Centre**

In March, the Committee funded the planting of 2 new beech trees to replace the loss of the copper beech at St Mary's Church in Haddington. They appear to have taken successfully.

HADAS are delighted to continue its support for the Haddington Community Development Trust. I am currently representing the Society on the Board, chaired by Frances Wright and looking forward to bringing forward town centre improvements in line with the Vision for Haddington.

HADAS have also joined with other community groups, businesses and East Lothian Council on the Haddington and Lammermuir Local Area Partnership's Haddington Town Centre Group, to refocus action on delivering improvements. HADAS will be looking to assist with new signage and historical information amongst the improvement priorities.

- **Improving Haddington and District**

Our committee members have taken personal interest in making improvements and uncovering our area's history. Brian Young and Bill Rarity have assisted ELC with plans to replace the railings around the entrance to the old station on the West Road. Their research has uncovered some interesting historic photographs that will be used to help create new proposals.

Helen Robertson has also been working on some research of her own and established some new evidence about St Mary's Pleasance Garden.

- **HADAS connections**

HADAS committee has agreed to help fund the replanting and upkeep of new sensory beds in St Mary's Pleasance garden this year. We look forward to seeing these in the spring.

In partnership with other local community groups, we provided support towards the successful funding application for a skate park for the town.

- **Thank you**

I would like to thank you all for your continued membership of the Society and generous donations. HADAS continues to be busy and we aim to continue celebrating Haddington and the surrounding area.

A reminder that our web site is the place to go for HADAS latest news and issues, my regular blog and details for new members [www.hadas-el.org.uk](http://www.hadas-el.org.uk) . Follow us on twitter too @hadassociety

Karen