

Scottish Stone Liaison Group

NEWSLETTER

Natural Stone Institute

Issue No. 3 Spring 2002

Launch of the NSI

The inaugural meeting of the Natural Stone Institute was held in Stirling Castle on the 19th September 2001 with the main speaker being Professor Gordon Benson, architect of the new Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. Some 70 people attended the meeting.



The Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, designed by Benson and Forsyth Architects.

The story behind the building

With the aid of slides, Professor Benson detailed the development of the project and described the manner in which architects approach design, in particular he addressed how architects approach design in stone.

Pointers for NSI development

Some key points were raised that indicate important action areas for the NSI:

- there is little emphasis on materials as a subject area within architectural education and stone is almost completely absent from syllabuses.
- understanding construction - buildings are complex three-dimensional entities. A dialogue is required between architect, builders, and material suppliers in order to make a beautiful, long-lived building.

Other speakers

Mr Andrew McMillan, Convener of the NSI Project Team, and Mr Dennis Urquhart, Director of the SSLG, outlined the strategy for the future development of the NSI. In the first instance, development will be taken forward by a number of Working Groups reporting to a Steering Group. For more information, see below.

Development structure of the NSI

The NSI is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee with a Board of Directors that currently mirrors the Board of the SSLG but it is recognised that this could change as the NSI develops.

Steering Group

A meeting of the NSI Steering Group was held in the offices of the British Geological Survey on the 23rd October when the following Working Groups were established. The names of the Conveners are in brackets.

Working Groups

Publications - (Ms Audrey Dakin). As the name suggests this Group will be the "clearing house" for all NSI publications.

Education - (Mrs Pat Gibbons). The scope of this Group is very wide dealing as it does with all aspects from primary schools to serious academics. Already a submission, entitled "*Developing understanding of Scotland's Stone Built Heritage through effective education*", has been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Fundraising - (Mr Dennis Urquhart). With the NSI initially being supported by the SSLG, both in terms of staffing and finance, it is essential that the Group explores and secures external financial support. Whilst Membership income could be significant it is envisaged that the financial needs of the NSI will require a more substantial base.

Research - (Dr Maureen Young). Building on the current levels of knowledge this Group will seek to identify areas of research requirement and establish international contacts.

Events/Publicity - (Mr Alan McKinney). This Group has progressed the organisational structure papers and these will be presented to the Annual General Meeting in September for consideration/amendment.

The Conveners, having been advised as to the areas of interest of those who attended the NSI Launch, will develop these working areas and report progress to the Annual General Meeting.

The NSI Steering Group will meet again on the 25th April.

Proposed membership structure

The SSLG meeting in March 2002 agreed the following Membership structure:-

- **Members:** On payment of their subscription, will be entitled to accept nomination for office and have full voting rights.
- **Corporate Members:** Will, whilst not being entitled to sign nomination papers, be entitled to ONE vote.
- **Overseas Members:** As with the Corporate Member this category of Membership will enable one vote at meetings but such Membership will NOT enable the holder to sign nomination papers.

Application forms for Membership will be circulated during July 2002. Attendance at the AGM will be open to all but ONLY Members will be able to vote and accept nomination to the elected positions.

Proposed rules & by-laws

A draft paper detailing the "NSI Rules and by-laws" was presented to the March 2002 meeting of the SSLG. Some minor amendments were proposed and these will be incorporated in the next draft which will be presented to June 2002 meeting of the SSLG for final consideration. Once all such matters are resolved then papers will be circulated to those who indicate their intention to attend the AGM.

The AGM Business Meeting will then consider the papers, propose amendments and ultimately approve the NSI structure. Any proposed amendments will then be submitted to the NSI Board for consideration.

Report on promotional activities

COSLA Conference

The SSLG/NSI had a display stand at the COSLA Conference in Crieff on 20th - 22nd March. This provided the opportunity to make contact with Councillors, Chief Executives and other council officials.

Stone in Wales

Andrew McMillan, Convener of the NSI, will be attending the "Stone in Wales" conference that is being held in the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff on 2nd - 5th April.

Historic Buildings Council for Scotland

The 2000/2001 Annual Report of the HBC for Scotland (pages 10 /11) stressed that the "shortage of Scottish slates continued to be a major concern". The Council also supported the creation of the SSLG to "[bring] together all those with an interest in reviving the Scottish stone industry".

Noticeboard

NSI AGM

The main theme of NSI AGM will be the "*Innovative Use of Stone*". Further information regarding the AGM, date, time and place, will be issued in due course but the meeting will be held in September. All those on the current Newsletter mailing list will receive an invitation to attend the AGM.

A Business Meeting will be held to enable the NSI to develop from the current Steering Group operation to a more formal structure with elected office bearers pursuing the directions of the Membership of the Institute.

Stone supply for the architect Seminar series

The relationship between the architect and the production quarry is being probed in a series of Seminars planned for this autumn/winter.

For further details contact Alan McKinney at the address below.

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