

Unstone Grange Trust Annual Report

From Feb 1 2011 to Jan 31 2013

I report back with pleasure on the last two years at Unstone Grange. Last year we did not have an AGM, choosing instead to join it with the year ending Jan 2013.

We are full of appreciation for all the energy and enthusiasm that the many and varied groups and organizations coming to use our facilities bring to the Grange. Thank you all for coming - where would we be without you? We regularly revisit our aims, not really because we thought we might forget, but to keep the Unstone Grange Trust vision fresh in our minds, so that we can be sure that we are truly here in service to the collective. It helps to keep us on our toes! We hope that what we offer to everyone who comes, is opportunity - the opportunity to learn and grow from participating in an activity, workshop or event, the fruits of which can be taken back to feed communities, whether of interest or place; and also the opportunity to bring your gifts here to share as you volunteer in one way or another. We hope that whenever people visit the Grange they will leave feel enabled and empowered by the love and care that we show for this place, and inspired by our guiding principles. The world is changing, in ways we often find challenging. If those who visit Unstone Grange leave us having re-charged their batteries, it helps to make our work worthwhile; all the more so if they take away with them renewed hope for what the future offers, and for the world we pass on to our children and our children's children.

Thanks

I need to say a big thank you to the many people who have contributed to the Trust over this time. I would like to give special mention to the resident volunteers who have been walking their own personal and spiritual paths as they continue to serve all who come here. My thanks to Bobby and of course Megan and Martha who add their own specialness to the place.; to Leela, and to Peter and Carol who joined us over this period. We also thank Polly and Ollie who both joined us and moved on. Particular thanks to Tim who was with us for about 10 years before moving on last year to a life afloat on his canal boat. This ever changing

posse of volunteers are constantly vigilant to people's needs, and I more than appreciate the care they bring to this task.

I also give my thanks to our dedicated band of Trustees. They have the important duty of paying attention to the bigger picture, keeping the Unstone Grange Trust true to its vision and purpose, as well as on track financially and practically. A very big thank you to Alec, Sue, Gill, Mary and Pete. Elaine and Ann joined us over this period too but were unable to make the meetings so reluctantly had to leave. My very special thanks to Alec, for all the extra support he has given to me and to the staff over this time. Mary has also been unable to make the meetings so leaves us having firmly stamped her mark on the décor and style of Unstone Grange during the improvements.

Possibly the most significant change is the engagement of James in the Office, primarily to take the bookings but increasingly to take care of most of the Unstone Grange Trust administration including, to my great pleasure, the accounts. The reason we are able to meet so early in the year is that the accounts were completed in record time. James also has a good understanding of the mission of Unstone Grange and the groups we are now getting bookings from reflect that.

Improvements

And since I mention improvements I would like to crow a little about the work we have managed to achieve. Not just the regular on-going repairs, maintenance and making good, which in themselves is no small undertaking, but the rather larger matter of the rebuilding of our bathroom facilities and the whole landing area above the south entrance. This has been a dream for almost two decades and to see it come to fruition is really heart-warming.

We have also replaced part of the roof which was leaking and showing its age. This does not have quite the same visual appeal as the bathrooms but it does mean we now have dry rooms most of which have also been redecorated.

As part of our programme of health and safety reviews we have replaced most of our fire detection system and this will be completed in the New Year.

We have replaced some of our beds already and plan to build new ones to replace the remaining older ones.

We have created a new website to bring us up to date. This is more useable and attractive and we hope this shows off Unstone Grange to better advantage.

Gardens

Our wonderful organic gardens are still looking good and feeding the volunteers that help there in many ways. Resident staff share their skills with the volunteers who come to join them every Wednesday. A sizeable team of people show up regularly to, quite literally, learn and grow. The resident staff team takes care of the whole estate - no small feat. There is never any shortage of work to be done, and new volunteers are always made welcome!

Looking Forward

And so we press on, looking forward to the future and the many new projects we have on our list. We want to improve and extend our staff accommodation and add to our resident staff so that we can do all that we do already but even better. We will soon be replacing the staff kitchen, replacing the damaged floor and putting in new kitchen units and services. We hope to build a new kitchen to the barn and create a new staff space in the centre block. This will be in addition to our regular programme of repairs and renewals and responding to feedback from groups.

We hope this year to acquire the piece of land adjacent to the barn for use as a car park and as a useful extra space.

Throughout the worst of the economic downturn we have managed to continue to bring in enough bookings. We are looking good for the year ahead and plan to reach out to new groups. Most importantly we look to pursue our mission to create opportunity for people to come here and somehow take the healing and growth back into their own lives and communities. In this small way we contribute to living in some kind of balance with our ever changing world.

Steve Baker
Chair