

BAHA'I COUNCILS AND TRAINING INSTITUTES

Bahá'í Council for Scotland

Presentation to commemorate 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to Edinburgh

On Thursday 27th April a major external affairs event was held at the Georgian House in Edinburgh. The event was to mark the presentation of a plaque by the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) to the Edinburgh Bahá'í community commemorating the visit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Edinburgh and to the Georgian House (in 1913).

The NTS arranged the whole event but the programme itself was put together by the Bahá'ís of Edinburgh. Many influential public figures in Edinburgh attended the event including the Deputy Lord Provost of the city. The event had a strong Scottish feel (to fit in with the prevailing ethos) but was also distinctively global in perspective including a Hidden Word sung in Gaelic, a chanted Persian prayer and a Robert Burns song. The invited guests were noticeably moved by the programme and it had a very uplifting effect on all involved.

The event was publicised in the local free newspaper the "Herald and Post".

'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed at 7 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh during the visit: this was the manse for the Rev Dr Alexander Whyte and Mrs Jane Whyte. Mrs Whyte had visited 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Akká in 1906. He wrote the letter entitled "The Seven Candles of Unity" (Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá pp29-31) in response to a letter to Him from Mrs Whyte.

Unfortunately (or fortunately depending on your point of view) the house fell into disrepair during the 1950s. It was taken over by the National Trust for Scotland and is one of their main attractions in Edinburgh as an original Georgian House. Hence by a piece of "good luck" it is being kept in pristine condition by the NTS - at considerable expense. Until recently the upper floors were the official residence of the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.



Consultations on the Twelve Month Plan

On the weekend of 20-21st May Counsellor Patrick O'Mara, the Auxiliary Board Members in Scotland, the Council for Scotland and the Training Institute Board all came together in Edinburgh to consult on the Twelve Month Plan. The weekend began with an intensive study of the guidance from the Universal House of Justice and the National Assembly followed by an analysis of the situation and needs in Scotland. The gathering was blessed by a wonderful spirit of love and cooperation which bodes well for the year ahead.

Following this the Council developed a plan for the community in Scotland, launched at the Scottish Gathering in Inverness on 10th June. A full report of the conference will appear in the September issue of Bahá'í Journal UK.