

15 May 2024

## **MALLENY GARDEN GLASSHOUSES SAVED FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**

- **Popular glasshouses date back at least to pre-1893 and feature in Victorian local maps**
- **National Trust for Scotland conservation project has been supported by Historic Environment Scotland grants**

Gardeners and buildings teams at the National Trust for Scotland are celebrating the completion of a complex project to repair, maintain, conserve and redecorate two historic glasshouses at Malleny Garden. The project, involving specialist work to repair their brick plinth walls, replace decayed timber and renew glazing, has been made possible by support from Historic Environment Scotland through its Partnership Fund Grant and the earlier Organisational Support Fund.

The A-listed Malleny glasshouses, which are still vital working buildings as well as part of the visited garden, are thought likely to date back to 1883-93, with both featuring in an 1893 Ordnance Survey map of Malleny. The Large Glasshouse is known to be designed by MacKenzie & Moncur and still has the M&M brass plaque above the door, while the Small Glasshouse is also thought to be a MacKenzie & Moncur glasshouse, based on its style and similar designs in the 1892 catalogue.

James Bell, the National Trust for Scotland's Head Gardener at Malleny Garden, says: "As any gardener will know, the usefulness of a greenhouse is limited only by your imagination. Even a small greenhouse helps make a garden more productive, and the National Trust for Scotland's heritage greenhouses do the same thing. They are a bit older, a bit bigger, a bit harder to maintain, but essentially do the same thing. Without them, Malleny Garden would not be where it is.

"But like most exterior wood, the wood in our greenhouses at Malleny eventually needed repaired or replaced. While MacKenzie & Moncur will likely have offered some sort of guarantee on their work, it is unlikely they would have guaranteed the timber for 130 years of outdoor use!"

Given the extent of the work involved, the National Trust for Scotland split the project into two distinct phases, with work on Malleny's Large Glasshouse taking place during the first half of 2023 and supported by the HES Organisational Support Fund, and work on the Small Glasshouse, completed this year, thanks to the HES Partnership Fund Grant. The conservation charity engaged specialist surveyors Adams Napier Partnership to manage the works which were undertaken by heritage contractors, Crown Traditional Craftsmen.

Ashley Turner, Regional Buildings Surveyor at the National Trust for Scotland, said: “We’re grateful to the team that delivered both projects, and the complex plan of work that included stripping out intrusive vegetation from the brick walling, raking out and repointing open joints, replacing decayed timber rafters, cills and glazing bars, replacing glazing, and finally redecorating. Care was taken to record the condition of each timber element and to faithfully replicate moulded profiles for replacement timber, and all metal elements were carefully taken back to bare metal to be repaired and eventually reinstated in their original position and redecorated. Only where considered necessary and to improve the performance and longevity of the glasshouse were small adjustments made.”

Ashley continued: “Glasshouses are key features within the gardens the National Trust for Scotland cares for, supporting the activities of the gardeners as well as being a focal point within the landscape. Often traditionally constructed from timber, they are particularly vulnerable to decay, therefore it is important that we look after them and undertake regular maintenance and implement regular programmes of repair, restoration and conservation to ensure that they survive for the enjoyment of future generations. In doing so, we’re contributing to the Trust’s objective, outlined in our 10-year Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone strategy, to stabilise and improve the condition of our heritage buildings and structures, ensuring their future and that of our collections and gardens.”

With the projects on the glasshouses completed successfully, the gardeners at Malleny are excited to have full use of them again. James Bell explains: “Today, we use the Small Glasshouse for mostly the same purposes as they would have done 130 years ago – propagating new plants for the garden and for display in the Large Glasshouse, growing on ornamental plants and a few vegetables, and over-wintering tender plants. It’s a vital support for the rest of the garden, and without it, managing Malleny Garden and its plant collection would certainly be much harder, and in some cases not possible.”

James continues: “We think the Large Glasshouse was built more for display purposes, to show off a little, rather than being a purely practical or productive greenhouse. Today too, we use the Large Glasshouse for the display of tender plants, as authentically as we can to how it would have been 130 years ago.

“Our newly bought *Pelargoniums*, *Auriculas* and *Salvias* for the Large Glasshouse are made possible by a kind donation from our Edinburgh Members Centre to help restock the greenhouse with new and interesting plants, so we’re very grateful to them for their generosity, as well as to Historic Environment Scotland for supporting this important project to protect the greenhouses and their heritage for future generations of Malleny visitors.”

**ENDS**

**Editor’s Notes:**

Images available at: <https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740@N04/52bVk5912A>

1. Malleny Garden is open daily, from 10.00-17.00, from 1 April to 30 September. Entry is free for National Trust for Scotland members, £3 for adults, and £1 for Young Scot cardholders. For more information about the garden, see <https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/malleny-garden>
2. In 2023, the National Trust for Scotland was awarded a three-year grant, totalling £1,062,000 of funding support, from Historic Environment Scotland's (HES) Partnership Fund to allow it to conduct vital conservation work across its built heritage properties while gaining a deeper understanding of the structures and their requirements. The charity will undertake a programme of conservation maintenance at numerous sites around the country, utilise technology to delve more deeply into its built structures, and invest in further training and skills development. For further information on the HES Partnership Fund, visit: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/grants-and-funding/our-grants/partnership-fund>

### **About the National Trust for Scotland**

Established in 1931, the National Trust for Scotland is Scotland's largest conservation charity and cares for, shares and speaks up for Scotland's magnificent heritage.

Over the last 90 years the Trust has pioneered public access to and shared ownership of some of the most magnificent buildings, collections and landscapes in Scotland. It cares for more than 100 sites, from ancient houses to battlefields, castles, mills, gardens, coastlines, islands, mountain ranges and the plants and animals which depend upon them.

In March 2022 the National Trust for Scotland launched *Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone*, its ten-year strategy which sets out the ambitions of the charity over the coming decade. From speaking up for Scotland's heritage which doesn't have a voice, to improving the lives and wellbeing of people across the country, and responding to the climate and biodiversity crisis, the Trust will build on its work in recent years to grow its impact and conserve and restore more of Scotland's heritage, as it moves towards its centenary in 2031.

Scotland's largest membership organisation, the National Trust for Scotland relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work.

For more information on the National Trust for Scotland visit [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk).

The National Trust for Scotland is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number SC 007410.