

Summary of minutes of the Board Meeting of the John Rae Society  
Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2017 at the Pomona Inn, Finstown  
Starting at 7.30pm

**Present:**

Andrew Appleby – President  
Norman Shearer – in the Chair  
Anna Elmy – Hon. Secretary  
Fiona Lettice – Hon. Treasurer

Colin Bullen  
Denise Bullen  
Jim Chalmers  
Alan Clouston  
Mark Newton  
Xandra Shearer  
Rachel Boak – Minute Secretary

The John Rae Society (JRS) is grateful to its local members who are very important because of their valuable support and potential as volunteers to help at events. However, we are keen to increase the number of members from Canada and will investigate ways of doing this, especially now that the Hall of Clestrain has been purchased. The membership year starts again in April and the fee will be going up slightly. There are four new members since the last Board meeting in October and a total of 166 members.

We hope to introduce more membership benefits, including more regular events open to members and non-members, and to raise the profile of the JRS at local events, such as the Dounby and County Shows. We are also planning a mini-John Rae festival in early May to celebrate the visit of Professor Russell Potter of Rhode Island College and Jane Hamilton from Canada. Professor Potter is the author of *Finding Franklin: The Untold Story of a 165-Year Search* (2016) and Jane Hamilton will be launching her novel, *Finding John Rae*.

Conservation-accredited engineer, Steve Wood, of David Narro Associates, Edinburgh, carried out a survey of the Hall of Clestrain earlier in January to assess the state of the building and list essential stabilisation work. The Society will be discussing its vision for the Hall of Clestrain at a workshop later this month and hopes to hold a public open day in the spring. Meanwhile, we will be setting up a dedicated Hall of Clestrain blog on the website so that we can keep members updated with our progress.

Before Christmas, we reported on the JRS Facebook page that the Hudson's Bay Company's 2016 charity teddy bear was named after John Rae (see <http://www.thebay.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/en/thebay/home/collectible-toys/john-rae-heritage-charity-bear-0600088486084--24>). We are hoping that we can ship some of the bears over here and sell them at around £30.00 each.

Rachel Boak has been appointed as Administrative and Membership Secretary for the JRS. She will take minutes at meetings, manage correspondence and membership, and provide admin support for the Hall project. In addition, Rachel has begun to draw together a list of historic material relating to John Rae and the Hall of Clestrain in public collections which can be used as a basis for future research. Please get in touch if you have anything you'd like to contribute.

The next Board meeting will take place in March.