

## Stobo Kirk and Japanese Water Garden 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022

Not a hot day but chiefly bright and pleasant to be outside especially in such a scenic setting. Twenty members attended this field trip. The tiny Kirk at Stobo is still in regular use and has amalgamated with Drumelzier which was also visited in the afternoon. Julian Birchall, a church elder, spoke about the church history and its restoration in recent years and this work had benefited by a church architect living within the parish. The floor of the church is sloping towards the front and back, though the purpose seemed uncertain. Although there appears to have been a church on this site from the 6<sup>th</sup> Century signs of medieval and post reformation building remains. Some stonework dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> Century and windows and to later medieval period. Merlin was meant to have a connection with Stob Kirk. The floor of the porch is decorated with small cobbles. Leaving the church we moved on to the Water Gardens below Stobo Castle and Agnete Samdah, the present owner, showed us round the gardens which were looking particularly colourful with rhododendrons, azaleas and laburnum in flower. Toad Wort was spotted and many mosses. The bridges which criss cross the water courses have all been repaired and are in grand condition. Stepping-stones also crossed streams and an intrepid member bravely tried them out. There was a very calm and meditative atmosphere within the gardens and the group was very appreciative to our hostess who had only taken over the property 18 months before as part of the agricultural estate.

In the afternoon many members had a picnic lunch in the walled gardens of Drumelzier Manse courtesy of Mr and Mrs Birchall, our guide at the Kirk earlier. Lunch was followed by a short introduction to the development and care of the garden and then a tour in two groups. A lovely afternoon with many members buying plants. Finally a short visit to the adjacent Drumelzier Kirk closed our days activities. The Birchall's encouraged us, with an entertaining story of a medieval Crusader, to climb up to see the ruined Tinnis Castle before heading home.