

This has been a year of two significant anniversaries, and much of our work has revolved around these, both reminding and informing of the history and also looking forward to how best to build on the lessons of the past. This has inevitably involved very close collaboration between ACTSA Scotland and the Nelson Mandela Scottish Memorial Foundation, although the Foundation's Trustees are very attentive to the need for clear demarcation in the raising and using of charitable funds.

Mandela Centenary: 2018 has been the centenary year of Nelson Mandela's birth, and this has informed much of what ACTSA Scotland has done. The focus of the annual ANC anniversary social in January was the launch of the centenary year, with funds raised that night going to the NMSMF. A group of Palestinian fire-fighters attended with their FBU hosts, which certainly added to the occasion.

Work had started in late 2017 with Glasgow Museums on preparation of a small display in the Kelvin Hall of historical Scottish Anti-Apartheid material, including some objects, some leaflets and a slide-show of historic photographs, under the title "Nelson Mandela and Glasgow". This opened in July, and remained on view until early November.

The key date was the centenary day itself – 18th July – in the celebration of which Kronendal Music Academy played a central role. Since Dwyn Griesel's visit in 2016, and using the contacts made here during that visit, KMA had been working hard to make it possible to accept the invitation to the Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival this year, and to perform in Glasgow on the centenary – Nelson Mandela International Day. Primarily through their own fundraising efforts, but with some invaluable help from ACTSA Scotland contacts in the form of accommodation, help with transport, some help with fundraising, and links with potential performance opportunities, the young KMA jazz band had a very successful tour. They performed several times at the Festival and then finished with a performance on the outdoor stage at the Royal Festival Hall in London. In between, they took a major part in our Mandela Day celebrations. They attended the launch event of the Kelvin Hall exhibition, and then performed in the Central Hall (the main concourse or public area) of Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum where they drew an enthusiastic crowd and had their performance live-streamed on the Gallery website. They went on to attend a centenary reception in Glasgow City Chambers, where they performed the South African National Anthem, and then gave a memorable performance at our centenary evening concert in St. George's Tron Church, which sits in Nelson Mandela Place. We are indebted, as for Mandela Day every year, both to Glasgow City Council and the Scottish Government for their practical support and financial contribution respectively.

The centenary year didn't stop in July, and in late August the NMSMF was responsible for running the biggest centenary event in Scotland – the Nelson Mandela Centenary Gala Dinner in the Hilton Hotel where Nelson Mandela had stayed during his 1993 visit. 300 people attended and had a fantastic night, raising a final total of £29,000 for the Foundation and recruiting a lot of new supporters. This was not an ACTSA Scotland event, but we did play a part as an organisation, not least by funding the visit of our long-standing friend Marah Louw to give her usual rousing and inspiring performance at the dinner. She played a major part in making the whole event so memorable for all who were there. ACTSA Scotland's members, supporters and contacts were also important to the attendance, not to mention the people actually organising the whole event. Likewise, some of the new contacts made and the links strengthened will help with other work on Southern Africa.

Mandela Visit Anniversary: The other major landmark date from Scotland's point of view was the 25th anniversary on October 9th of Nelson Mandela's visit to Glasgow in 1993 to receive the Freedoms of nine UK local authorities.

Tony Dykes had suggested that we organise a conference that day on partnerships with Southern Africa and invite all the local councils which had given Mandela their Freedom or some other honour. This was discussed with the Glasgow City Council leadership, who were enthusiastic, and the conference was duly organised by ACTSA Scotland on the 9th October anniversary itself, under the title "Celebrating Mandela's Centenary: Partnerships for Development". The target audience was widened to include the educational world, especially higher education, trade unions, arts and business bodies and other organisations. As it turned out, the response from local authorities was limited, though many sent apologies, but higher education responded strongly and became the main focus for the day. Some 40 people attended, including several universities, the Scotland-Malawi

Partnership, some local government and trade union delegates, the fairly new South African High Commissioner Thembu Tambo and the even newer Scottish Minister for International Development and External Affairs, Ben Macpherson, who had just returned from his first official visit to Malawi. Accounts were given of serious collaborative work with Southern Africa, and much of the discussion was very practical and aimed at learning from the experience and current projects of other participants. The High Commissioner took a keen interest in the projects described, and committed to returning to Scotland as soon as possible for detailed discussions about creating and strengthening links. She was also introduced to the Minister, and both addressed the conference.

On that anniversary evening, BBC 2 Scotland showed “Glasgow, Love and Apartheid”, a film created by Dhivya Chetty which included historical material and contributions from Scottish AAM people.

Banner Tales, an oral history event built round two Anti-Apartheid banners, was deliberately held in that same week. Glasgow Museums, Glasgow University, Glasgow Caledonian University and its AAM archives, the NMSMF and ACTSA Scotland collaborated in arranging this discussion of a banner from the AAM archives on the Mandela Freedom conferral of 1981, and one from the Sechaba Festival from Glasgow Museums’ collection. The attendance was not large, but the historians among the organisers were delighted with the content that emerged, of the personal recollections of participants in the events represented by the banners, much of it personal experiences which would not otherwise have been recorded. The tapes are being transcribed, and will be published. One important result of the publicity for the event was the identification of Jim Cathcart as the creator of the Mandela banner, which is a real work of art.

As well as these specific events of our own and of the NMSMF, there has been wider interest in the anniversaries and the historical links and campaigning of which they were part. Media interest has been quite substantial at times, with requests for comments, interviews and information. Carole McCallum at GCU is still working on cataloguing our archives, and responds to frequent requests for access and further information. Other people’s meetings, films and discussions, a performance season of *The Island* in Edinburgh and an associated seminar, and Zindzi Mandela’s appearance at the Edinburgh Book Festival have all had some kind of involvement by ACTSA Scotland people, most often Brian Filling and David Kenwyn.

Other Work: Although the events described above have dominated over the past year, other work has also happened. We have continued our programme of stalls, and developed our new link with ZUZA Trading. The lengthy Dundee Christmas Fair did well again in its second year, and starts all over again next week.

The Book Appeal has not restarted, and over the last few weeks we have needed to move the existing stock (about a tonne) out of the STUC’s premises because the building has been sold. We found a new home for it with Books Abroad in Aberdeenshire.

Internal discussions have continued about our future relationship with ACTSA UK under its new structure and constitution as a charity, but the UK organisation is not yet in a position to consider this in any depth. We hope to meet with the new Director in the coming months.

We made a donation of £1000 to the Denis Goldberg Legacy Foundation’s House of Hope.

One potentially very important piece of work, funded by the NMSMF but making much use of ACTSA Scotland resources, is the development by WOSDEC (West of Scotland Development Education Centre) of a course of teaching material for primary and early secondary school pupils about apartheid, the campaigns against it in South Africa and here, Mandela’s life and work and his links with Scotland, the lessons for combatting present-day racism, and developing local campaigns on issues chosen by the pupils, which has been piloted this autumn in a number of schools. The response from teachers and pupils has been enthusiastic, and we hope the finished version will be completed and ready for wider use early in 2019. It will be readily adaptable for other parts of the country.

There has been a lot of work this year on history, which has always been part of our remit, but our other main interest – in making connections between Scotland and Southern Africa – has not been forgotten, and building solidarity will remain at the heart of our work whatever our future structure.

John C. Nelson