

Last year's description of a "year of steady work for ACTSA Scotland, with nothing terribly spectacular" could just as well apply to these past 12 months, with a similar mix of keeping history alive through information and education with some promotion of solidarity with Southern Africa.

Stalls: These are a good example of the mixture just mentioned. The craft goods we sell are all supporting useful community producers in Southern Africa on a modest scale, but also bring people to the stall where we have information material and conversation about the work of ourselves and of our sister organisations ACTSA UK and the Nelson Mandela Scottish Memorial Foundation. As usual we have had an emphasis on trade union events, especially the STUC's full Congress, and its Women's and Black Workers' conferences. These help to strengthen and build our longstanding strong links with the Scottish trade unions. We have not been doing the more public street events recently, but intend to be at Ocean Terminal in Leith in December.

Events: As trailed in advance last year, 5th December saw the 10th anniversary of Nelson Mandela's death, and we were pleased that the new South African High Commissioner Kingsley Mamabolo agreed to mark the date here in Scotland by delivering our Mandela-Tambo lecture in St. George's-Tron church in Nelson Mandela Place. The lecture looked at the difficulties and achievements of the 30 years since the first Freedom election, and was well received. We published it as a pamphlet which we display on the stalls and via the NMSMF ebay site. The video is on the NMSMF's main website.

10th May was the 30th anniversary of Mandela's inauguration as President, and we marked it with a reception in Glasgow City Chambers at which the Lord Provost spoke extensively as well as our own speakers. As we were the hosts this time rather than the Council we paid the catering costs, but that was well worthwhile.

On 18th July the annual Nelson Mandela International Day reception was hosted by Glasgow City Council, and the good attendance included quite a number of new contacts who seemed keen to keep in touch. As hinted at last year, no funding materialised from the Scottish Government this time so we paid the musicians, but the past help given in all the years since the inception of the Day in Scotland has been much appreciated. The text of Brian Filling's speech, read out in his absence, is on the NMSMF website.

The other event of the year was not our own but we were represented at the 16th July Westminster Abbey service of thanksgiving for 30 years of freedom in South Africa. Glasgow's long history of links with Nelson Mandela was very clearly presented there by the first main speaker, Christine McAnea, General Secretary of UNISON, who spoke of her pride in this record of her native city.

Other anniversaries were marked online, including the Mandela visit in 1993, the anniversary of the 1994 election and of Glasgow's role as a polling place for South African exiles, and the June 16th anniversaries of the 1976 Soweto shootings and the 1986 renaming of Nelson Mandela Place.

History: Our close working with the Nelson Mandela Scottish Memorial Foundation continues. The situation regarding the planned Mandela statue looks superficially unchanged in the last 12 months, but there has in fact been some progress with the problem of underground utilities thanks to new expertise becoming involved, and we are hopeful of being able to move forward with a minor change of location, with which the Planners appear to be content. Funds currently stand at £172,000.

ACTSA UK: We share a vice-chair with the UK organisation as well as a common history. An aspect of their work we have taken up is the campaign to force Anglo-American (again) to take responsibility for putting right the disastrous health effects of their lead-mining history on the community of Kabwe in Zambia. We have signed an open letter to the company, have promoted this and expect to join in inviting Scottish MPs and MSPs among others to sign also.

Our thanks, as always, go to all who have helped in any way over the past 12 months.

John C. Nelson