

Comrie Development Trust

News Update 2.12.16

Subject: Steinmeyer legacy and volunteer assistance

As most local people will be aware, Heinrich Steinmeyer, who was a prisoner at Cultybraggan Camp towards the end of World War II, was moved by the unexpected way he was treated both at the camp and by people from the Comrie area. He also felt welcomed by other communities in Scotland, when he stayed to work after the war. He visited Comrie over the years, and had a long friendship with George Carson Snr. Heinrich talked to George about how grateful he was for the way he had been dealt with by people in Scotland during his imprisonment and afterwards, and that he had decided to leave all of his possessions to be used for the benefit of older people. He came to meet with representatives of Comrie Development Trust to ask and arrange that his legacy should be transferred to the Trust for this purpose in Comrie. Heinrich died in 2014, and since then there has been a lengthy process in Germany to settle his estate, and to transfer the £384,000 which was gained from the sale of his house and all his other possessions to a special bank account set up by Comrie Development Trust to hold his legacy, and keep it separate from other Trust funds.

The transfer of the Steinmeyer legacy is nearly complete, and CDT is now looking for local people with an interest in developments for older people in Comrie and the local area to join a legacy group. This group would have the responsibility for arranging a consultation process, in the Spring 2017, with older people, community groups and local health and care professionals, to identify and determine how the whole of the Steinmeyer legacy should be used for the benefit of older people in the Comrie area. There have been press enquiries about the legacy, and CDT put out the attached press release today. We hope that whatever appears in the media over the next few days is positive about Heinrich Steinmeyer's gratitude and intentions, and about how people in this village and elsewhere in Scotland welcomed him. Whatever appears in the national and local press, the main concern here is to establish a special group of volunteers from the area to consult with older people and others locally to determine how best to use the legacy fund. If you are interested in joining the legacy group, please pass your contact details (name, address, phone number and email address) to the CDT office by email or letter, or by phoning the CDT office on Tuesday or Thursday morning, and answerphone at other times, and you will be invited to a meeting to discuss how to take this important piece of work forward. Heinrich Steinmeyer has given this area a great opportunity to bring benefit to local older people and remember him in doing that.

Further information will be provided at the CDT AGM, which is now to be held on Tuesday 31 January, with an update on progress in establishing the Steinmeyer legacy group. Please let us know if you are interested and able to join the legacy group.

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**Comrie Development Trust
Media Statement
1 December 2016**

Heinrich Steinmeyer Legacy

Older people in Comrie in Perthshire are to benefit from the legacy of Heinrich Steinmeyer, a 19-year-old German soldier, who was captured in France, and was eventually held in the POW camp at Cultybraggan by Comrie. The money from that legacy has been received by Comrie Development Trust. The Trust is now looking for local volunteers as individuals or from groups of older people to make the arrangements for consulting with local people about how the legacy should be used, and then to oversee how it is spent.

Throughout his captivity, Heinrich Steinmeyer was very struck by the kindness shown to him Scottish people, which he had not expected. After the war, he visited Comrie and made lasting friendships in the village. He vowed to leave everything he owned for the benefit of older people in the place he wanted to thank.

Heinrich died in February 2013, a fortnight after the death of George Carson, his close friend in Comrie. George Carson worked to see that Heinrich's wishes were put into place, since Heinrich first spoke of his intentions in 2008. Mr Steinmeyer always maintained he was lucky to be captured by the Scots. Part of his will, reads: "Herewith, I would like to express my gratitude to the people of Scotland for the kindness and generosity that I have experienced in Scotland during my imprisonment of war and hereafter." The will, written in his own hand in German, specifically stated that what would come from his house and other possessions are to be used for "elderly people".

On one of his visits to Comrie, Heinrich met and asked the Comrie Development Trust (CDT) to manage his legacy. After Heinrich's death, a small group made up of George Carson (the son of Heinrich's friend), a Community Councillor, a Strathearn Rambler and volunteer CDT board members set up the communications with German solicitors about handling this unique responsibility and to ensure that the wishes of the will are fulfilled as Heinrich set out.

Executing the Will and the sale of property to realise funds for transfer to this country has involved a complex and very lengthy process in Germany, and with the financial transfer to this country. CDT is still working with the German Solicitors to settle outstanding debts incurred by Heinrich appointing legal advisors. It is too early to establish if further bills will require payment.

However, €457180 (euros) - £384,000 - has been transferred to a special Heinrich Steinmeyer Legacy Fund, set up by Comrie Development Trust as a separate account, and to be used exclusively to provide for local developments for older people, suggested by older people.

Comrie Development Trust is now asking older people in Comrie, and groups with a special interest in them, to contact CDT and volunteer to join the existing group in consulting in the Comrie area about the use of the legacy, and then in overseeing how the money is spent.

Heinrich Steinmeyer wanted to express his deep gratitude for the way he was treated as a prisoner and for his time working in Scotland after the war. He wanted to give thanks for his welcome back as a visitor to Comrie and Scotland. Heinrich's personal history is an amazing story of friendship and appreciation, and people in Comrie will both honour and benefit from his legacy.

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