

## THE HISTORY OF STOBO, THE CASTLE & THE WINYARD FAMILY

The Manor of Stobo has a long and proud history, dating back over a thousand years and is said to be the property of the church in the lifetime of Saint Mungo, who died in AD603.

In 1223, **Jordan** of Currokes produced title deeds purporting that he, and not the Bishop of Glasgow, was the lawful laird of Stobo. The case was submitted to the Pope and the dispute was settled by the payment to Jordan of £100 – a considerable sum in those days.



*James Douglas, 4th Earl of Morton*

At the Reformation in 1560, Stobo came along with other Church domains into the hands of the Regent Earl of **Morton**.

In 1581, he was condemned for his involvement in the murder of Henry Stuart, Lord **Darnley** and beheaded in the Grassmarket, Edinburgh.

James VI, to whom Morton's estates were forfeited, assigned Stobo in 1587 to his Chancellor, Sir John **Maitland** of Thirlestane. Maitland died in 1595, and in 1603 James IV gave Stobo to his kinsman Ludovic Stewart, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of **Lennox**, and in 1608 to the Archbishop of Glasgow once again.

In 1613, the Church was going through a difficult time and the Archbishop granted a Charter for the lands and barony of Stobo to be passed to James **Tweedie** of **Dreva**.

In 1619, the Tweedies sold the barony to John **Murray** of Halmyre. He was succeeded by his son David in 1625 who, in 1634, was knighted by King Charles I. The lands of Stobo were again erected into a free barony by Charter to Sir David Murray in 1698. The Murray family resided at the principle farm, Hillhouse, where the castle now stands. The names Stobo and Hillhouse seem to be interchangeable, as during the 18<sup>th</sup> century the property appears on maps variously as Hillhouse, Stobo and Stobo House.



*Lord Darnley, National Galleries of Scotland*



*'Hillhouse': William Edgar & Richard Cooper, 1741*

In 1743, the Estate was assigned to a nephew, another Sir David Murray, the 4<sup>th</sup> Baronet who fought for Prince Charles at Culloden in 1746. He escaped but was later caught and condemned to death. However, the sentence was commuted to banishment for life and he found refuge in France where he died in 1770.

Twenty years after Culloden in 1766, the confiscated properties of Sir David Murray were

put up for sale and **Stanhope**, Menzion and Stobo were purchased by Sir James **Montgomery**, Baronet of Stanhope, for the sum of £40,500. He had quite a remarkable career having been appointed the first Sheriff of Peeblesshire at the age of 27, a Member of Parliament for 9 years, Solicitor General at the age of 39 and in 1776, became the Lord Advocate. After the purchase of the Stobo Estates, he was appointed the Lord Chief Baron of the Court of Exchequer and a prominent Peeblesshire figure, known for 'thundering down the road from **Venlaw** to Peebles in his four-horse carriage.' He died in 1803 and is buried in Stobo Kirk graveyard.

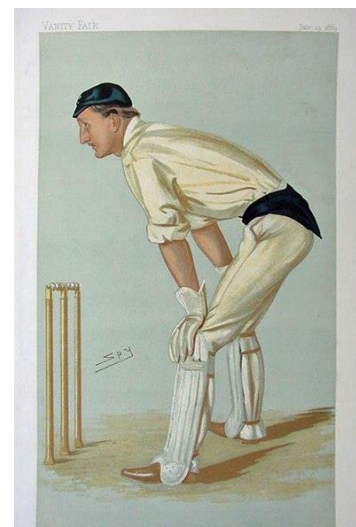
He was succeeded by his second son, also Sir James, who was Laird of Stobo from 1803 until 1839. He was responsible for building a mansion, inspired by Inveraray Castle, on the site of the old Hill House. Work began in 1805 and completed in 1811 and the architects were Archibald and James **Elliot** whose original plans dated 1803/4 and are framed and hanging within the Castle. When the building was finished with its turrets and battlements in baronial style it received the name of Stobo Castle.

Sir James Montgomery, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baronet of Stobo Castle, Stanhope, was married twice, in 1804 to Elizabeth, the daughter of **Dunbar**, the fourth Earl of **Selkirk**, and in 1816 to Helen, daughter and Heiress to Thomas **Graham** of **Kinross**. He represented Peeblesshire in Parliament for 31 years.

His successor was Graham Graham-Montgomery. His mother died when he was 5 years old and his father when he was 16, so that when he came of age, he was master not only to the wide domains in Peeblesshire but also of the historic house and estates of Kinross, comprising Loch Leven and Castle, which he inherited from his mother and for who sake his surname was enlarged to Graham-Montgomery. In the original design of the north-east front, the central feature was more exposed and the relatively plain entrance doorway at the first-floor level was approached by a wide ramped perron. Sir Graham added a porte-cochere in about 1849, which was designed by an Edinburgh architect, John **Lessels**. Sir Graham died in 1901 and the following year his eldest son, James, fell from a night express train to London and was killed.

The Estate, over-taxed by two death duties in quick succession, was sold by the 5<sup>th</sup> baronet, Sir Basil **Templer** Graham-Montgomery to Mr **Hylton** Philipson in 1902 for £90,000. Mr Philipson – one of the greatest sportsmen of 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain - was born in 1866, educated at Eton and Oxford, won the Amateur Championship of Rackets and was one of the best cricketers in England, playing against Australia both in 1891-2 and 1894-5.

In 1896, he married the Hon. Nina, the 4<sup>th</sup> daughter of the 10<sup>th</sup> Lord Elibank and by whom he had two sons and a daughter who took the name **Murray-Philipson**. A keen gardener, his gifts to the village of Stobo included a bowling green, tennis lawn and recreation hall with electric light. He modernised the Castle interior, extended the south terraces and constructed on Stobo burn two beautiful lochs, teaming with Loch Leven trout. From



*Hylton Philipson as caricatured by Spy (Leslie Ward) in Vanity Fair, June 1889*



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the lower loch, a waterfall, 22ft high, descends to a rock and water garden with numerous cascades. The Japanese-style water garden is replete with rare plants, shrubs and trees.

In 1924, the Estate was conveyed to his son, Hylton Ralph Murray-Philipson. He represented Twickenham, Surrey as a Member of Parliament until his ultimately death in 1934, at the age of 31. He was also an aviator and flew with the 603 squadron from Turnhouse, Edinburgh. His bi-plane landed at the Harrow on Stobo Estate and cut-outs were made in the sandstone of the archway outside Spa Reception, to allow the wings of the aeroplane to be folded to enter the garage inside the courtyard.

Wenefryde Agatha **Scott**, the 10<sup>th</sup> Countess of **Dysart** and her husband Sir James Grieves purchased the Castle in 1939. With the advent of the war and the loss of her husband, the Countess lived mainly in London and eventually sold the estate to Mr and Mrs Leopold **Seymour** in 1971, with the contents of the house auctioned by Sotheby's in April 1972.

Having fallen into disrepair, the Winyard family purchased the Castle and policies in 1975 and set about restoring and converting the building to its present use. The building by this time had been empty for at least a decade and in consequence rampant with dry rot and woodworm. Former RAF pilot instructor Robert Winyard and his wife Gaynor, a beauty therapist, along with their son, Stephen, oversaw a visionary refurbishment to officially open Stobo Castle Health Spa in August 1978 - one of the first health farms of its kind.



Peeblesshire News, 14<sup>th</sup> May 1976



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## Stobo health spa to open in July

JULY sees the opening of one of Britain's most luxurious health and beauty spas . . . at Stobo Castle, near Peebles!

Work started on the former country home of the Countess of Dysart in May, 1976, and a team of therapists and hair stylists hope to open for business at the beginning of July.

Taking charge of the therapists will be Mrs Gaynor Winyard, F.S.H.Bth., M.A.B.T., M.L.C.S.P., A.R.S.H., past chairman of the Society of Health and Beauty Therapists and examiner for the International Health and Beauty Council.

She has practised throughout Europe and Asia and sees her venture at Stobo as the realisation of her life's ambition.



PEEBLESHIRE NEWS - Friday, March 3, 1978

Stobo Castle.

All the conversion work on the castle has been carried out by local firms, under the direction of Mrs Winyard and her son, Stephen (28).

Private suites and spacious rooms have been re-created, with turreted bathrooms. All rooms are centrally heated, and electric over-blankets, telephones, radio and colour T.V. are provided in all bed-

rooms.

And, of course, all rooms have breathtaking views over the superb Border countryside.

Prices are inclusive of limousines from Edinburgh airport to Stobo, and include any one, or all, of some 20-odd treatments offered at the castle.

The centre will take a maximum of 26 guests in

its six single rooms, nine doubles and one luxury suite.

Alcohol and smoking are discouraged to maintain the high ideals and standards of good health which have been set.

"But we are not a carrot juice establishment," says Stephen Winyard, "Fish and meat will be available, although everything will be

strictly controlled according to the individual's diet and the amount of calories they are allowed."

The centre will include a gymnasium, sauna baths, a hairdressing salon, a solarium and an indoor swimming pool.

And the cost of all the restorations, a mere £300,000. But the prices range from £295 to £1000 per week. . .

Peebleshire News, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1978



The main staircase in the castle.

## Stobo stops the rot

Story: WILLIAM CHISHOLM

Pictures: DENIS STRAUGHAN

A FULL-SCALE rescue operation and conversion scheme costing in the region of £250,000 has started at Stobo Castle in Peeblesshire, where the fabric of the Category A listed building has suffered outbreaks of dry rot and woodworm.

It was confirmed yesterday that financial assistance has been made available by the Historic Buildings Council of Scotland and the Scottish Tourist Board to help the owners of the 40-room castle to put the roof, woodwork and masonry in order before the building is developed as a health farm and 16-bedroom hotel.

Scotland's leading amenity bodies have been concerned

about the deteriorating condition of Stobo Castle - it dates from 1805 - since the early 1970s and little has been done to maintain the property during the last 15 years.

Experts are already working to eradicate the dry rot and planning permission has been obtained for conversion proposals and structural alterations. Mr Robert Winyard and his wife Gaynor, who bought the castle recently from Mr Leopold Seymour, yesterday talked of their plans for Stobo.

Mr Winyard said: "Initially we will have 16 bedrooms and we will be able to offer accommodation to 26 people. There is scope

for further expansion but that would be a long term possibility."

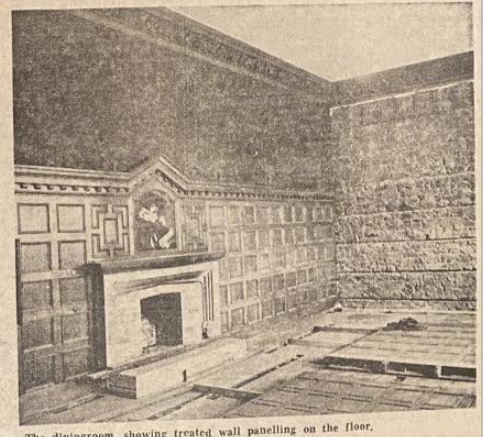
Other parts of the castle will provide public rooms for the guests and the Winyards hope to provide facilities for fishing, golf, pony-trekking, tennis and croquet. If everything goes according to plan Stobo Castle will open for business in August.

"This major scheme has started just in time," said Mr Winyard. "If the building had been allowed to stand neglected for much longer there would have been an extremely serious deterioration in its condition."

The estimated cost of the entire operation is put at about £250,000, but that figure does not include furnishings.



Stobo Castle, which dates from 1805.



The diningroom, showing treated wall panelling on the floor.

Glasgow Herald, 16<sup>th</sup> September 1978



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## STOBO CASTLE OFFICIALLY OPENED

Officially opened recently... the luxurious Stobo Castle Health and Beauty Spa, near Peebles, under the personal supervision of Gaynor Winyard.

Photographs: David Liddle

*Left:* Cutting the ribbon — the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres. Behind (left to right) Directors Mr. Tom Convy and Mr. John C. Hughes, Gaynor Winyard, Mr. Stephen Winyard and Mr. Robert Winyard (Chairman).

*Scottish Tatler, October 1978*

Daily Mail, Wednesday, March 22, 1978

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# Here's health! If you can spare up to £1,000 a week



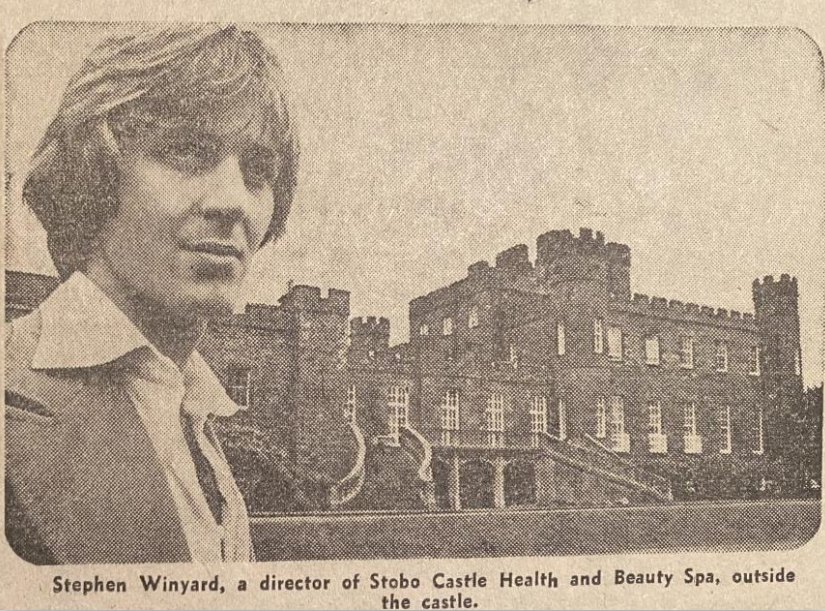
The new 'laird of the manor', Steve Winyard, in the grounds of his mother's dream castle. 'We'll provide nothing but the best'

*Daily Mail, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1978*



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Stephen Winyard, a director of Stobo Castle Health and Beauty Spa, outside the castle.

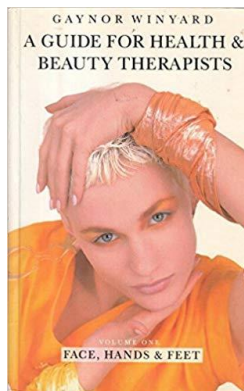
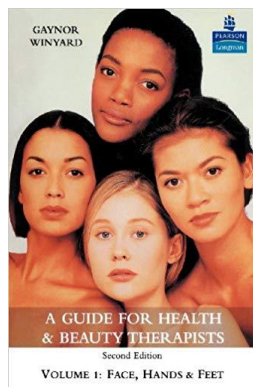
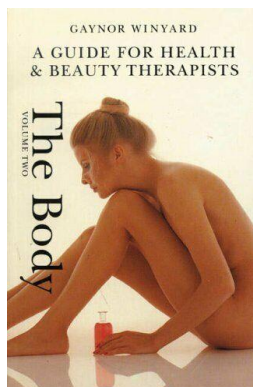
Glasgow Herald, September 1978



Daily Record, 19<sup>th</sup> July 1978

Brought up in South and West London, Gaynor Winyard's passion for Stobo Castle was probably founded when staying with her grandparents, who lived in Windsor Castle while in royal service. During the war she trained as a nurse and worked at Hammersmith and Middlesex hospitals before marrying Robert Winyard, who was a pilot instructor during the war, in 1945. Bob was based at Errol and Gaynor's love of Scotland originated from the time she spent visiting him there. On leaving the RAF after the war, Bob joined the BEA as station manager at Prestwick Airport. While based there, their two sons Clive and Stephen were born.

In the early 1950s, Bob transferred from BEA to BOAC and began a decade of overseas postings. Whilst in the Middle East and India, Gaynor began her training in beauty therapy. By the 1960s, Bob was based at Heathrow and Gaynor continued with her interest while in London, culminating in her chairmanship of the Society of Health and Beauty Therapists. At the end of the sixties, Bob returned to Scotland with BOAC and Gaynor helped out in beauty salons locally before becoming a lecturer, teacher and examiner for the National Health and Beauty



Council, marking theory papers from students throughout the UK taking the International Beauty Therapist's Diploma. Her commitment to the education of a new generation of beauty therapists led to the publication of her *Guide for Health & Beauty Therapists*, a



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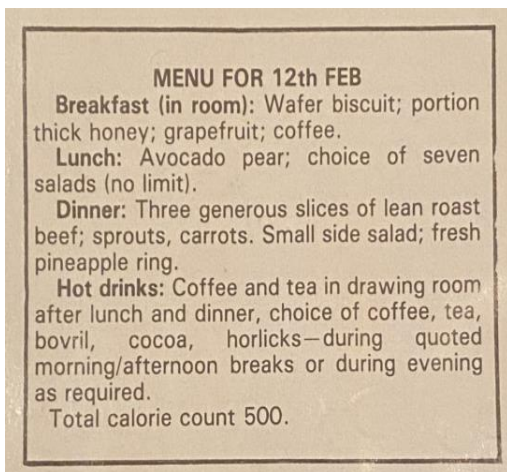
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widely acclaimed and best-selling work in two volumes which has been adopted as an authoritative reference in teaching establishments throughout the world.

Her desire to run a business in the field of beauty therapy and her search for the ideal property in which to base such a venture finally led to the purchase of Stobo Castle in 1975 – the 13<sup>th</sup> property she looked at – lucky it was. For Mrs Gaynor Winyard, *F.S.H.Bth., M.A.B.T., M.L.C.S.P., A.R.S.H.*, the purchase of the castle was the realisation of a life-long dream. As his mother searched Scotland for a suitable site, Stephen was in the Bahamas, working in the casino industry. However, the lure of being part of her health farm revolution proved too much to resist, admitting, *“I don’t think too many people have ever bought a one-way ticket from Nassau to Peebles.”*



Gaynor Winyard



Sample Menu, 1978

In 1978, the cost of a week’s stay at Stobo varied from £295 to £750, with guests having a minimum of five hours treatment a day. These included four different types of massage, steam and sauna baths, gymnasium, solarium, yoga, reflexology, faradism, aromatherapy, skin-care lessons, chiropody, manicure and a variety of other health-promoting activities. On arrival, guests would be subjected to a ‘figure diagnosis’ – their medical history measured, and a diet agreed. Mrs Winyard’s aim was for every guest to leave Stobo *“utterly relaxed, looking trim, feeling vibrantly alive and superbly fit and radiating good health”* (Status, July 1978).



A Stobo brochure, circa 1980



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In 1983, at the age of 16, Mandy Huntly started her career at Stobo as a Spa Assistant, before fully qualifying as a Beauty Therapist and Hairdresser in 1986. At Stobo she met Gaynor and Bob's youngest son, Stephen, and they married in December 1988 at Stobo Kirk. Three children followed – a daughter and two sons – Taylor in 1992, Elliott in 1994, and Mitchell in 1998.



'The Great Hall'



The former Exercise Pool – the present 'Cashmere Suite'



Lady Dysart's bedroom – the present 'Drawing Room'



The former 'Drawing Room' – now 'The Library' (Dining Room)



Gaynor and Stephen Winyard, IIP, 1996

From day one, Stobo Castle's ethos has been to constantly reinvest in its facilities, its infrastructure and its people. September 18<sup>th</sup>, 1996 marked a significant date in Stobo's history - the day we became the first and only health resort in the UK to receive the prestigious *Investors in People* Award which links business improvements to staff development and training.





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Yvonne Cowan (Stobo's Accounts Director) and First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, IIP 'Platinum', 2019

Today, the business is both *Investors in People* 'Platinum' accredited – the first employer in Scotland's hotel sector to achieve this – and *Investors in Young People* 'Gold' accredited. The IIP 'Platinum' accreditation is the highest accolade that can be achieved and is currently held by one percent of all IIP accredited organisations. First Minister Sturgeon said: *"Achieving this is testament to the excellent work of the staff and management, and their commitment to the development of their workforce. An organisation's employees are its most valuable asset, and I would encourage all businesses to*

*work towards these extremely high standards."* Bonnie Clark, from IIP in Scotland added: *"We have supported Stobo Castle since 1996 and we're delighted to see their ongoing dedication recognised with this Platinum award."*

The year 2000 was a difficult time at Stobo Castle with the devastating loss of both Bob and Gaynor Winyard in January. Stobo was Gaynor's life and she devoted herself to it wholeheartedly. Her warmth, generosity and professionalism are sorely missed by guests, staff and of course, her family. Undoubtedly, Stobo Castle Health Spa will remain her legacy and now stands as a marvellous testament to her memory – a restored landmark, a luxurious spa with an international reputation for tranquillity and a positive approach to health and wellbeing.



Bob, Gaynor and Stephen Winyard, Spa Courtyard Opening, 1998

Since the passing of his parents, Stephen has continued to grow the family business. Evolving from 16 bedrooms with shared avocado bathroom suites, medical checks and calorie-controlled meals; it has adapted its offering in line with changing consumer expectations.

Our policy over the years has been to continually upgrade the facilities but at the same time ensuring the integrity of the building is compromised as little as possible. Expansion projects and significant investment over the past 40 years has seen the number of bedrooms increase from 16 to 52, the addition of 2 lodges and most notably, the completion of a £5 million state-of-the-art spa extension in September 2003 – opened by the Rt Hon Lord Steel of Aikwood KBE PC DL. Designed by architect, Ron **Cameron**, the expansion included 40 treatment rooms, a fully equipped Gym and Exercise Studio, Laconium, Crystal Steam Room, Aromatic Steam Room, Experience Showers, Hydrospa and a 25-metre infinity Swimming Pool.



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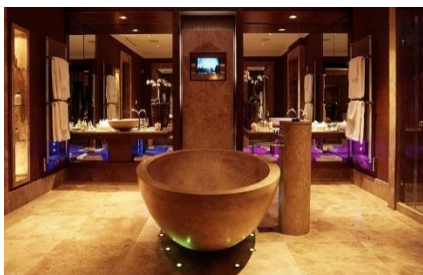
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*Interior and exterior photographs of the 2003 Spa extension*

The person given the task of designing and refurbishing interior spaces at Stobo Castle is Lizzie Bell, an expert and highly acclaimed interior designer, originally from **Drysdale's** in Edinburgh. Lizzie approaches every bedroom individually as a separate project, choosing unique, fresh and bright colour schemes to suit its character, size and architectural style. She has, as an example, transformed Baronial features like the corner turrets, into delightful compact bathrooms.

In 2004, Lizzie's imaginative vision surpassed all expectations when the Cashmere Suite, Stobo's most luxurious and opulent bedroom, was unveiled. Once the former swimming pool,



the suite pays homage to one of Scotland's oldest industries – cashmere – and sets out to depict the uses this opulent fabric can have in interior design. The bedroom walls are dressed in rich claret coloured cashmere, sourced from Holland & Sherry in Peebles, while camel coloured cashmere adorns the living room walls and ceiling. On the walls hang paintings by Scottish based artist Deidre Edwards – taken from her exhibition in the Scottish Gallery. The artwork, which features portraits set in a Chinese landscape, exhibits a style that is felt to be a break away from the traditional Scottish landscapes which one expects in such situations. 'His and her' four-poster beds are decorated with the finest Italian marquetry, while a handcrafted limestone bath is the focal point of the luxurious bathroom.



*The 'Cashmere Suite'*



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More recent interior projects – all styled by Lizzie – include the new Ladies' Restroom; a dedicated Relaxation Suite; Cocktail Lounge, and a refurbishment of the Coffee Shop. The addition of the new Ladies' facility made the headlines in 2015 as *'Scotland's Most Luxurious Restroom.'* The opulent new space features a wash and blow-dry function and includes a seating area adorned with linen velvet embroidered fabric on the walls and stylish textured soft furnishings.



*The renowned 'Ladies' Restroom'*



In November 2017, the former manicure and pedicure room, located in the area overlooking the pool and Peeblesshire countryside beyond, was dramatically transformed into a tropical-themed Cocktail Lounge. 2018 saw the addition of the Relaxation Suite – a dedicated 'silent room,' and a serene environment to nestle down and relax pre or post-treatment. The Coffee Shop was refurbished in November 2019, with a brand-new layout including banquettes and comfortable seating, and décor using subtle lighting, smoked mirrors, plush fabrics and designer wallpapers.



*The refurbished 'Coffee Shop'*



*The 'Relaxation Suite'*



*The 'Cocktail Lounge'*

Although the role of Stobo Castle Health Spa has adapted its offering over the years – gone are the calorie-controlled diets and strict regimes of the health farm days – the facility is still fully committed to providing an environment in which guests can find all the elements of a healthy and fulfilling lifestyle. All over the world, the culture of exercise is evolving, and technology has increasingly found a place within people’s fitness routines.

In 2019, the gym and fitness studio were refurbished with the latest strength and cardiovascular equipment on the market, *Precor* - one of the world’s leading gym equipment



*The refurbished fitness studio*

suppliers.

The makeover

was designed to suit a wide variety of guest and spa member needs. With up-to-date technology and motivational wall-decals, the modernised training space has everything beginners, seasoned gym-goers, functional fitness enthusiasts, elite lifters, and even boxers could want to keep up fitness routines during their stay.



In the wake of eco-awareness, Stobo Castle is a very proud member of Visit Scotland’s *Green Tourism Business Scheme* and has taken a sense of purpose to awaken its staff and residents to how fragile our earth is. Our policy is to ensure that our team members can voice their opinion towards a greener



*Solar panels on the spa roof*



*Electric vehicle charging station*

vision and put into action the green requirements expected to save our environment. As an example, in 2013, a biomass boiler was installed along with 460 solar panels on our spa roof. February 2016 saw the successful installation of a Rolec 7kW dual-headed electric vehicle charging station by BMM-ltd, allowing guests with electric cars to fully charge their vehicle, free of charge, while they relax at Stobo.

As part of our on-going commitment to environmental sustainability, Stobo launched a new product range in 2018. Using glass bottles and recyclable packaging, the eco-friendly label is beautifully fragranced and uses botanically-sourced ingredients from a carefully selected blend of herbs, plants and flowers – all paraben free and not tested on animals. In addition, we are actively working to phase out single-use plastic by replacing the use of disposable plastic cups with water bottles.



In 2018, to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the family business, a ‘So Stobo’ tartan was registered, and a limited-edition scarf created, made from 100% lambswool. Designed by Lizzie, the colours chosen represent our landscape: blue for the sky; green for the countryside; yellow for the Spring daffodils, and bright pink to symbolise our brand colour and annual association with Ladies Day at Musselburgh Racecourse.



*Stephen Winyard, 2015*

In January 2019, after 40 years at the helm, Stephen Winyard announced that he would step aside from his Managing Director role to become Chairman of the business. Stephen still oversees the business with the same vigour and passion as he always has done, but since retirement, has set aside more time to engage in voluntary work and is set to write his own ‘life’ book. Stephen has always had a deep sense of social responsibility and exceptional commitment to charity. Most recently, he joined volunteers at ‘Blaze Aid’ on Kangaroo Island in a major recovery mission following the devastating Australian Bush Fires. During his 32-day stint, each morning Stephen would play traditional Scottish music to lift the spirit of volunteers and admits it was a truly humbling experience.



*Blaze Aid Volunteer, January-March 2020*



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Today, Stobo Castle will continue to grow under his guidance, but remains firmly in the hands of his wife, Mandy, and their three children, **Taylor**, **Elliott** and **Mitchell**. While Mandy will continue her role as Director of the company; the third generation has been primed for succession. Elliott has taken on the leading role of Managing Director; Mitchell as Projects Director; and Taylor, also a Director, the latest member of the Winyard family to join the business.



*The third generation: Mitchell, Taylor and Elliott Winyard*



*World Luxury Spa Awards, 2019: Mitchell, Taylor, Mandy and Elliott Winyard*

In July 2019, at the prestigious World Luxury Spa Awards in St Petersburg, Russia, Stobo Castle Health Spa was globally recognised as the *Best Countryside Spa in the World* and *Best Destination Spa in the UK*. The World Luxury Spa Awards are acknowledged as the pinnacle of achievement for luxury spas worldwide, with voting cast by spa guests and service excellence.

Today, Stobo Castle Health Spa stands proud and is the perfect amalgam between history and health - a magnificent example of Scottish Baronial architecture and an oasis of hospitality for all our guests and staff.



*\*As seen above, many of the names from the Castles' history, eg. **Philipson** and **Hylton** (highlighted in bold), have been used when naming the bedrooms at Stobo.*