

Curator Update

Time mainly spent on Roundhouse project and policy review; 1 week working remotely in Germany.

Roundhouse Project Update

All funding is now confirmed, permission to start has been given, and we have moved into the procurement phase. Procurement routes have been approved for both the architects and craftspeople.

ARC Architects have been asked to provide a revised fee proposal and programme for the next phase of work, including building warrant submission and construction-stage support.

The specialist craft tender process has now begun. Tender invitations have been issued for the four main craft packages: <https://www.gairlochmuseum.org/recruitment> and shared through our contacts, funders and craft networks. We've already had three expressions of interest.

I am planning a two-day site meeting in September with the architects, engineers, Tom Gardner, Tanja Romankiewicz, craftspeople and the Museum to begin the design process for the building warrant.

The Licence to Occupy for the roundhouse site is still with Gairloch Estate for signature. Funders have allowed the project to proceed in the meantime, but have added a risk note. We are also following up on site welfare and storage options.

We prepared a press release announcing the final funding awards, and pupils from the primary school attended a photo call.

I also visited the Crannog Centre to meet Mike Benson, the project manager, and craftspeople involved in the build, to learn from their project. A report is attached.

Archaeology

We are awaiting Tom's update on sample processing and the DSRs.

Tom has fed into the archaeology note that has gone out with the craft tenders.

Schools Engagement

The SMART group cancelled their last visit at short notice. We are hoping to contact the new group convener, who has taken over from Emma, to engage the group with the roundhouse build.

Health and Wellbeing Programme

We have run the first outreach sessions in Isle View and Strathburn with Andi. WWW is currently on a summer break, but I have arranged the programme for September, up until Andi's start.

We have had many volunteer facilitators contributing, including Pat Gulliver, Katie Grant, Poppy from Beinn Eighe, and Cheryl, our new WWW volunteer, who has attended several sessions. We are grateful for all their support.

We are also taking part in an external evaluation of our wellbeing work through the Rural Health Equity project, led by Dr Sara Bradley, University of South Wales, with Dr Katie Murray, University of the Highlands and Islands. This is fully funded through the AHRC/UKRI Mobilising Community Assets programme, with no cost to us.

The evaluation will look at the impact of our programme and what is needed to support longer-term sustainability. The museum has provided a letter of support and will act as a gatekeeper. The final report is expected in early 2027 and should be useful for future funding bids.

Digital Interpretation

The image kiosk is now installed and well used by visitors. We have agreed to commission Craig to carry out the bulk upload of image and text sets for the database, as manual upload would take a very long time.

We are also taking part in ARCH's free Historic Map Scanning project in August. ARCH will have access to a large A0 flatbed scanner at the Highland Archive Centre from 17–28 August 2026, to digitise historic maps and plans relating to the Highlands. We have prepared a list of suitable maps from the collection and will deliver these for scanning in August. We will receive high-resolution digital files, which will reduce the need to handle the original maps and which will be shared to the NLS maps website.

Acquisitions

Dr Charles Robertson items

We have accessioned a small group of items relating to Dr Charles Robertson, surgeon and farmer at Achtercairn steading, the former museum building. Robertson was one of the earliest doctors serving the Gairloch area and appears in local sources as both a medical practitioner and tenant farmer at Achtercairn during the mid–late nineteenth century.

The donation comes from a descendant of Robertson's brother, Peter Robertson, and includes Charles Robertson's medical qualification certificate, a set of surgical instruments, a quaich said to have been presented in thanks for medical treatment, and an ornamented animal leg bone connected with a family story about an operation following an animal attack. Also, a day book and other personal papers.

Geology Timeline

Our Ward Discretionary Fund application for £1,000 was successful. The North Highland Initiative application was unsuccessful. We are publishing a fundraising appeal with the next newsletter for the outstanding amount of £1,060.40, including contingency.

We have further updated the interpretation text in line with funder comments.