

Curator's Report

September – October 2024 (10 days of A/L taken)

New Acquisitions

Donation of the radio equipment was declined after board discussion.

Photos from Colin Chisholm were scanned and will be added to our Photograph and Postcard collection.

Grants

CAF confirmed they have received the donation from Velma and Hugh Richmond; due diligence checks are underway and we are awaiting an email from CAF UK to verify our bank details.

We are still awaiting response from the private donor for the 'Whatever the Weather' programme. If funding is not forthcoming, we will need to look elsewhere for covering the £2k shortfall for the 2024/25 project period and we will not be able to offer winter lunches – the café group should be kept in the loop.

Sarah and I submitted two applications for the 2025/26 Whatever the Weather programme: One to HTSI for the fourth year of the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing fund. This has been reduced to a max. grant amount of £10k and we have applied for the full amount.

The second application was to Age Scotland for £19.5k. This amount includes acoustic improvements for the Activity Room.

Discussions were had with Blake Milteer and Eilidh around an application to Creative Scotland allowing us to set up a creative programme. There is no application deadline but we are hoping to submit an application by mid-November.

Scoring for E&O post applications has taken place and candidates have been invited to interview.

Asbestos Management Plan

I have been in touch with several museums of the MHH network as well as Penrith Museum, but could not get a conclusive answer as to whether a management report by a professional surveyor is a legal requirement. I have emailed HSE for advice, awaiting a reply.

Environmental Monitoring

We are still waiting Tyvek bags for the Poolewe Hoard case.

No concerns regarding IPM.

RH still slightly elevated in most spaces .

Events

Dr Liz Forrest's talk was very well attended with 46 in-person and 17 online participants, generating about £200 of income. The talk has been recorded and is available to view on our YouTube channel: https://youtu.be/z_SzwP7D4J4

Learning points around hosting hybrid talks taken away from this event will inform our Winter Talks programme.

Projects

I have delivered objects for 3D scanning to Ullapool Museum. These will be scanned on 10 October and will form part of a display at Inverness Castle to signpost other museums and collections across the Highlands.

Meeting with Michelle and Karen from Napier University to discuss the WOSHH Maerl display in our Natural World Gallery with input from the Interpretation Group into the accompanying panel text.

Open studios discussion with Ginevra from Inverewe Garden about how the museum and Inverewe NTS could support setting up a local Open Studios events, potentially September 2025 or 2026. We agreed that organizing it would require a paid coordinator, funded through a joint application between the Museum and NTS. We will arrange a meeting with An Talla Solais who have run an Open Studios week this September and have commissioned external evaluation for the event. They are open to collaborating on joint-marketing and share their learning.

X-po North support chat about One Drive storage: I completed a data storage review which highlights the need for consistent use of OneDrive for file storage across all staff and volunteers. The near-full Google Drive account should no longer be used. A working group was convened to start drafting a file migration strategy of data held on personal devices. This will include specifying retention periods, file-naming conventions, folder structure and rationalisation.

SSA de-mount and install of Alison Dunlop and Dr Liz Forrest's exhibitions. Nearly all SSA works have now been collected or posted.

I drafted a Financial Sustainability Strategy document as basis for Financial Sustainability group meeting.

Planning for 2025 calendar is underway.