

Curator's Report 8 December 2021

Building and Grounds

There is still no news about the parking request to MOD but I am told the building is not being used at present.

Collections

The hard drive and catalogue files have been received from NLS, bring the Unlocking Scotland's Sounds project to a close.

We have had a number of donations including postcards, children's boots, homeware and a chart of good fishing locations on Loch Gairloch from the 1970s.

Our funding application to conserve the Finlay Mackinnon album was successful. We received £1700 for this from AIM. Richard Aitken at Highland Archive Centre has been requested to commence the work.

Our collection of old bibles has been appraised and a number have been disposed of, mainly due to a lack of local provenance or historic interest. Some have found new homes with other museums and Commun Eachraidh.

I am pleased to report that Dorothy Malone is back in good health and able to assist with archive enquiries, of which we are receiving a remarkable number.

A team of Fran, Anne and Rachael will commence winter tasks this week and continue through the period of closure until mid-February.

Interpretation and Displays

There is an electrical fault in one of the vitrines in the lower gallery. I have requested help with this from a local electrician.

I have sent a reminder to David Fingland (Service Graphics) about the top of the fishing panel from the outdoor museum, which needs to be recovered.

Roy is working on a design for a plinth at Chapel of Sand of Udrigle. The design will need to be cleared with Historic Environment Scotland.

Education and Training

I have attended the following training and professional development events since the last board meeting:

Designing Meaningful Experiences: The Story-First Museum (XpoNorth)

Highland Communities Health and Wellbeing Fund – Top Tips Session (Highland Third Sector Interface)

Pathways to Action: A series of climate conversations (MHH)

Culduthel: An Iron Age Craftworking Centre in North-East Scotland (Society of Antiquaries of Scotland)

I was interviewed with Esther Rutter for an XpoNorth Christmas Market 'Digital Short'.

I continue to attend the Museums Heritage Highland organised Heritage Cafes on behalf of the Museum.

Events and Outreach

I have applied for Scottish Government Funding for a two day per week events post that would support the provision of regular activities for adults living with long term disabilities in Gairloch and the surrounding area. GAMS and West Highland College are supporting this application, which also includes a small amount of financial support for the café to stay open as a location to hold events during the very quiet winter months as well as funds for tutors and materials for classes.

Mark and I met last week with four students from Gairloch High School and their teacher. They will undertake a Foundation Apprenticeship in Creative Digital Media and we will be their work placement as part of this. This will run from now until May 2022.

I would like to discuss with the board how much of the £35,000 we have received from Mark Feeny can be offered to Museums Heritage Highland as match funding for the Highland Stories project (see attachment).

Projects

The Trustees of Commun Gàidhlig Inbhir-nis and Urras an Eilein have 'unanimously and enthusiastically' endorsed our proposals concerning the Uilleam Ros project and look forward to progressing along the lines that we have suggested. They have confirmed that they will shoulder the costs of the project. The next stage is to get a design for the work and submit an application to Highland Council.

I had a meeting with the Director of National Museums Liverpool about setting up a Gaelic language section of the House of Memories app. I have arranged a meeting with Ian Blackford MP in early January to discuss support for this project from the Scottish Government. Mark Feeny will also attend.

Karen Buchanan (Curator)