

Curator's Report 9th March 2022

Building and Grounds

An application was submitted to MGS under their Capital Resilience Fund to place solar panels on the roof of the Museum.

Collections

We have been working on the library, accessioning some new additions to the collection, labelling, cleaning and reshelving, and creating safer storage for the rare books in the library collection.

I attended a meeting of the Industrial Museums Scotland collective about switching to Axiell collections. The consensus is that we can continue to use Adlib without support for a while, so there is no need to make a snap decision on a new Museum Documentation System. There is still research taking place on alternatives and I am waiting for a quote from Axiell on how much it will cost to transfer our existing data.

I have collected two woven items from Kirk Hand Weave which were found for sale on Ebay. We also received as a donation an apron made at Achtercairn School in the 1950s.

The Finlay Mackinnon album has returned from the Highland Archive Centre and they have done a great job repairing and stabilising the album. Boxes have been created to store the album and the loose artwork. I am working on a report to the funders AIM.

Interpretation and Displays

The electrical fault in the downstairs display area was repaired, but the lighting is too bright and needs replaced.

There is a fault with the circuit breaker in the Natural World gallery and I am waiting for an electrician to fix this.

The fishing panel from the outdoor museum has been returned to Service Graphics to be re-covered with high resolution images. We hope to have it back before the Easter break.

Neil Lebeter, Senior Curator: Modern & Contemporary Art at National Museums Wales has recently moved to the area and is willing to sit on the Interpretation Team. He will be a willing addition to replace Nevis.

I am working on the Bards booklet, with advice from Nevis.

Daisy Cunnyngame visited from the Royal College of Physicians Edinburgh. We had a useful meeting about their forthcoming exhibition and possibly contributing a panel about local medicine from the period covered by the exhibition. Dorothy has been doing some research in the archive for this.

I had a meeting with Ruairidh MacIlfhinnein More, who is the Gaelic Development Officer in Ross-shire for Commun na Gàidhlig. He is keen to work with us to promote involvement in heritage activities among the Gaelic speaking students in the school. Barbara will work with him to get a Gaelic language quiz rolled out for World Gaelic Week, which is coming up later in March.

Education and Training

I was a speaker at the Arts Fair (careers event) held by Glasgow University on 16th Feb.

Events and Outreach

Jen Shaw started as our new Events Coordinator on 1st March.

We are working on website material on the Finlay Mackinnon album to contribute to the BBC 'The Art that Made Us' festival.

The Foundation Apprenticeship students are doing really well with their projects. They spent some time working in the museum recently recording and filming and we should be able to see the result of their labours soon.

An application is being worked up by myself and Jen for a storytelling festival in September, which would use the downstairs exhibition space as a Story Exchange for ten days. We are also looking at holding some events outside and in the evenings.

I have restarted doing a biweekly slot at Two Lochs Radio to publicise museum events. We were pleased to invite TLR to cover our recent exhibition preview. Interviews with Jen, the artist and some of those attending were aired on Saturday morning on TLR.

Projects

I submitted an application to BnG for a Gaelic Development Officer for four Highland Museums (Applecross, Fortwilliam, Highland Museum of Childhood and Gairloch Museum).

Misc

Gairloch Museum was represented on the BBC Scotland programme 'The Mystery of Anthrax Island'.

We had a visit from a team from the Isles of Scilly Museum who are undertaking a redevelopment project. They were very impressed with what we have achieved and grateful for the opportunity to discuss our experiences.

Liz Forrest donated some archaeology equipment to the museum for use in our digs.

Karen Buchanan (Curator)