

Curator's Report 8th June 2022

Building and Grounds

Willie Macrae has been keeping the grass tidy while Alison Higham has been keeping the weeds under control. Some damage has been caused to the outside surface of the building and Roy has been organising a repair to this.

An emergency telephone has been installed in the activities room for college use. It is connected to their network and should not be used by museum staff or volunteers please.

Planning approval has been obtained for the solar panels and work is likely to commence towards the end of the summer.

Collections

The audit of book locations in the library has commenced. It is two-person job and will proceed as and when volunteers are available. The process of appraising, cataloguing and boxing the backlog of archival materials continues.

The ice crusher from Laide fishing station has been delivered to Gairloch along with rock samples for the outdoor museum. A working spinning wheel has been donated to the Handling Collection for demonstration and teaching purposes.

I had a demonstration of Ehive and Vernon Museum Documentation Systems and am working to arrange a demonstration of Modes. I am working on a list of criteria for our specific needs against which systems can be measured.

Interpretation and Displays

Minutes of the Interpretation Team meeting have been circulated. Please refer to these for updates on interpretation and displays.

A new section on the three islands has been added to our website (Museum from Home). This is part of the legacy of the work that the students from University of Strathclyde undertook last year.

Professional Development and Training

I attended the 'Spoken Record Conference' organised by the Scottish Records Association which had a focus on communities and their sound archives. There was a very informative presentation on access and use of the School of Scottish Studies Archive.

Projects

Our application to BnG for a Gaelic Development Officer was successful in the second round. We are currently having the job description translated into Gaelic before advertising the post. The

appointment should start by the beginning of August. We will share the post with three other Highland museums. The Wester Ross Biosphere has also been able to appoint a Gaelic Development Officer under this scheme. The two roles will tangentially overlap and we will ensure there is collaboration.

GALE has lodged an application to the Communities Leading in Tourism initiative, which is being led by the Social Enterprise Academy and funded by the Lottery. There will only be 8 communities in Scotland that get selected. If Gairloch is fortunate enough to be selected, GALE is keen that the Museum could get involved in the project.

I had a meeting with the Scottish Council on Archives about the 'Your Scottish Archive' project to create a collective Scottish archival portal. They are keen that we should be involved in this.

Miscellaneous

We are experiencing a high number of enquiries, including genealogy and local history. These have ranged from the history of seaweed harvesting to croft boundaries, Gaelic place names and family history. Ullapool Gaelic choir sought suggestions for a song from this area for the National Mod. We have also had research enquiries from a number of academic sources. A researcher at University of Clermont Auvergne was interested in how we interpret and portray the clearances and their legacy. A request has also come from the University of Stirling who are undertaking a research project on the Stone of Destiny.

Applecross Historical Society, for whom I am Museum Mentor, has received funding to appoint an individual to work on their accreditation application. It is likely that I will be called upon to assist with this at intervals.

It has been suggested by a member of staff at Museums Galleries Scotland that I might apply to join their board. They are currently looking to appoint two new board members. This is an opportunity to help set strategic direction for the national development body for Scotland's Museums and Galleries and to contribute the view from a small, rural, independent museum – a perspective which is notably lacking amongst existing board members

<https://www.museumsgalleryscotland.org.uk/about-us/our-board-members/>. However, it would involve a time commitment. The role on the Board will include:

- Attending approximately 4 board meetings and an AGM over 12 months
- Providing support to a CEO leading an organisation that is making a real difference to Scotland's Heritage sector, setting strategic direction and acting as an ambassador for our work
- Engaging with MGS staff on specific pieces of work on an ad hoc basis if appropriate.
- Potentially joining the Board's Nominations Committee

It would be helpful to have the board's view on whether this would be a desirable position. The deadline for applications is 20th June.

Karen Buchanan (Curator)