

## Curator's Report 7<sup>th</sup> July 2021

### ***Building and Grounds***

LDN appear to be still working on a solution to the problem of the vents. A sketch was forwarded to Simpsons in mid-June for comment, but I have heard nothing since then. I have sent a reminder.

I am unable to make any progress on the broadband issue, as the updated FTTP provision is not showing on Zen's system. I have approached UHI about sharing their fibre to the premises connection, but they are not willing to share.

There is an ongoing issue with recycling waste. The amount of waste cardboard and plastic being generated appears to exceed even a second blue bin. We need to keep an eye on this and look for alternative ways to deal with our waste that will not generate further costs.

There are patches of weeds around the building which need ongoing attention. The patch of land across the road has also been taken over by weeds. It would be worth considering how this land will be maintained.

### ***Admin***

I have not yet received a quote for UPS protecting the data rack in the plant room, but have chased it.

We have had a considerable number of family and local history enquiries recently. Dorothy Malone is a great help with these.

From 1st January 2024, Adlib will no longer be supported or maintained by Axiell. After this date, there will be no new releases or bug fixes for Adlib, and we will no longer be able to take advantage of the favourable upgrade conditions in our maintenance contract. In order to continue being supported by Axiell, we will need to upgrade to Axiell Collections by 1st January 2024.

I have changed our annual professional Zoom subscription, which was due for renewal, to monthly as we review our online meeting and broadcast requirements.

### ***Collections***

Richard Aitken has digitised the album of Finlay Mackinnon watercolours. I will apply to the AIM Remedial Conservation Scheme for the conservation work quoted for by High Life Highland. The next deadline for applications is 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

We have loaned a 16mm reel to reel film of Crofter boy to National Library of Scotland for digitisation purposes. Thanks to Allan Templeton for couriering it to Edinburgh.

Rachael Thomas has been working on the collection during my period of leave. She has undertaken

a large number of small and fiddly tasks, such as object renumbering and documentation updating, as well as cleaning the store and display cases.

We have been approached by the Fleece to Fashion project at University of Glasgow who are seeking information on our textiles and hope to visit later in the year.

Dr Alison Sheridan of NMS has asked for information on objects within our Archaeology collection for the Highland Arch Research Framework.

### ***Interpretation and Displays***

The Raspberry Shake seismometer has been fixed and is working again.

The interpretation panels for the Outdoor Museum have now been installed. I have reported a problem with the fishing panel, on which the images are very poor. Campbell and Co. and Service Graphics are looking into this.

I have been in touch with David Campbell about a failed lighting strip in the display area and about purchasing additional, adjustable track lights for areas of the displays which are poorly lit.

Anne MacLennan and Jean Ross have created a draft text for the interpretation panel at Chapel of Sand, to which I will make some amendments before sending to the designers. We are in touch with HES and Highland Council regarding permissions.

Ally has been collating and circulating feedback from visitors on the museum displays, which will be considered at the next meeting of the interpretation team.

### ***Education and Training***

I have completed the last module of my BA Gaelic Scotland and am awaiting information on when I will graduate. After six years of part time study, I am pleased to report that I achieved an A grade in all seventeen of the modules I took. I was exempted from one module due to accredited prior learning.

Since the last board meeting, I have spoken at the following events:

- AIM national conference (session entitled 'Leadership Challenges in Small Museums), 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021
- Social Enterprise Academy (Steps to Sustainability), 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021 (speaker fee of £150 to museum)

The 'Visual Showcase' Eilidh and I recorded for the XpoNorth conference was broadcast on 17<sup>th</sup> June and is on their YouTube channel. It is a lovely reflection on our Art Fund Museum of the Year win.

The interview I recorded for the Unesco Best in Heritage conference is now live on their YouTube channel.

I attended an event organised by MGS and entitled 'Knowledge Exchange: They could be Giants - Modern Apprentices and Museums'.

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

### ***Events and Outreach***

Mark Macleod will report on the events and activities programme. A full list of events is on our website.

We completed the purchase of equipment to fit out the Activity Room for broadcasting events and Pauline submitted the claim for this equipment to MGS. Mark is working to set up the new studio.

### ***Projects***

I am working to create content for the Explore section of our website, including a trail of the previous locations of our Pictish stone. The material that Rachael Thomas created for Gypsy/Traveller month will also be included in the Explore section of our website.

As part of our MSc project, Rebecca Draus of Strathclyde University created a webpage on Kay Matheson, which brings attention to archival materials in our collection.

I assisted Art Fund with the testing of their new website.

Mark, Eilidh and I had a meeting with MGS about Modern Apprenticeships and are working through issues of capacity to decide whether this could be an avenue through which to gain help with digital marketing.

I am working with Murdo Beaton of Urran an Eilein and Iain MacIlleChiar of the Inverness Gaelic Society to organise an interpretation panel for the Gairloch Bard, William Ross, at the Gairloch Burial Ground. Gaining permission from Highland Council is the first hurdle to overcome.

I am working to create content for Art UK, but our collection does not lend itself to this well. The Finlay Mackinnon collection is one option which Mark, Pauline and I have discussed using for this purpose. We are proposing, over a period of time, to tell the story of the Poolewe artist and his work, and document the story of the recent donation and the conservation of the works.

***Karen Buchanan (Curator)***