

**Welcome** to our Annual General Meeting. All AGMs are important in the life of an organisation but this one is particularly so as we have TWO Special Resolutions on the Agenda proposing conversion of the Museum to a SCIO, a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, and an update of our constitution. More of that later .....

The Directors are pleased to report that the enthusiasm and intensive work described a year ago to refocus, recover and renew the Museum is now bearing fruit. Sadly, Scott Lindsay resigned mid-year owing to pressure of personal commitments. He was a most valuable member of the team and we thank him for his contributions.

We are delighted to report that the Museum has had a good year in all departments. Groam House Museum is clearly restored to life - financially, front of house, in the care of our collections and in the way we have forged strong new links and partnerships in our local community.

There is so much to celebrate that I must give you mainly headlines:

- Stable numbers of active Volunteers and Membership and 100 Club also remain successful;
- Good visitor numbers – one of our regular tour groups has already booked 11 visits for 2019 and local visitor numbers have greatly increased this year;
- A great year for our beautiful little shop - greater investment has led to excellent sales. Our attractive merchandise is well-chosen, Celtic-themed and largely locally sourced. Together with the book selection sales have surpassed the budget;
- Imaginative and successful fund-raising events, led by Jean Hogben and team, such as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Garden Trail, the refurbished Courtyard and mosaic table top - funded by Tesco's "Bags for Life" and a donation, book sales, coffee mornings, a gig in the Gordon Memorial Hall, craft workshops;
- Formation of the Volunteers Co-ordination group, which looks after catering, internal communication, advises and assists in museum activities, projects, advertising and PR.
- Great team spirit among all members of the museum community.
- Rising to the challenge of the threat of the Rosemarkie public toilets being closed, the Museum has teamed up with the Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Council and the Rosemarkie Amenities Association to find a way of taking over responsibility for running the public toilets to avoid their closure.

- **Exhibition:** *Impact of WW1 on the communities of Rosemarkie, Fortrose and Avoch*  
Some 30 individuals, led by Susan Kruse of ARCH, contributed to this highly successful WW1 research project. The moving exhibition and the Creative Writing inspired by our findings remains on show until 9th December. It has attracted members of many local families, brought forth additional information and corrections of omissions or mistakes for which we are grateful. The exhibition will transfer to the Community Library, Fortrose before going on tour in local libraries. The project was funded by Heritage Lottery Fund (£7,400), Highland Council (£1,000), Groam House and hundreds of hours of volunteers' time. We are grateful to all who contributed time, energy and memories to the research which will be lodged with the local Library. A great legacy of this work is the current and already successful WW2 research project being run by an enthusiastic group of last year's researchers independently of GHM.

- **Behind the scenes at Rosehaugh:**
- Following the completion of a basic list of all items in our collections the volunteer team is now cataloguing and photographing items not yet recorded in detail in both the George

Bain and Local History collections. They aim to complete this task of over 1,000 items by 2020;

- We aim to ensure all objects are stored in appropriate packing and conditions and to this end have recently received a grant of £575 from *Museums Galleries Scotland*;
- To enable difficult conservation work of a painted bowl and a leather-seated stool, in the George Bain collection, the *Association of Independent Museums (AIM)* and *The Pilgrim Trust* has made us a grant of £780;
- Dr Jo Clements has been contracted to research and develop the 2019 summer exhibition, focussing on the legacy of George Bain, 50 years after his death;
- The Museum library is now fully catalogued. Loans are open to volunteers and members;
- **Looking to the future**, we have applied to *Museums Galleries Scotland* and *Creative Scotland* for total grant aid of £72,000, over 2 years, to improve knowledge of and access to the George Bain Collection. This involves digitising the Collection and creating a new website, in tandem with a programme of related outreach projects for those wanting to learn and be involved in animation and dance inspired by Pictish art.

### Management and Governance

- A new draft constitution has been developed as a step towards recommending the change from being a Company Limited by Guarantee to being a SCIO, a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation.
- The new Data Protection regulations were implemented without too much difficulty.
- As an Accredited Museum and holder of a Recognised Collection of National Significance we are required to keep all our policies concerning management, people and collections up to date. We review and update our key policies and develop new ones as required.
- We are pleased to welcome a part-time Administrator to take over aspects of the administration of the Museum and add capacity to the business of managing the day-to-day running of Museum more efficiently and effectively.
- As the Treasurer reports we are now financially more stable and starting to build some financial reserves to help mitigate the expected loss of the running costs grant made by Highland Council.

### Future Developments

- Continuing participation in and support of the *Highland Museums Forum* and its proposed move to become a SCIO, in its own right, to better support its member organisations. This promises to be an important opportunity for the Museum to benefit from working more closely, in a structured way, with other museums. Plans are in hand to redevelop the Pictish Trail, for example, and to be part of a Highland-wide web portal for heritage bodies and museums across the region.
- Participation in the *Castle Project* which plans to redevelop Inverness Castle into a major tourism hub at the centre of a Highlands-wide heritage-based tourism initiative.

And finally, I wish to extend a heartfelt Vote of Thanks to my fellow Directors and to all the magnificent Volunteers who have worked so hard to bring Groam House Museum to life again and make it once again a good place to visit, support or come to work in in whatever capacity.

**Thank You, One and All!**