



## **Newsletter – March 2018**

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2018! As our winter season draws to a close we are preparing now for returning to our summer opening times and for the influx of visitors over the Easter period.

This year, the new regulations for data protection come into force, and while they don't impact on Groam House to any large extent, the key difference is that we will need express permission from each of our contacts before we can send out emails about what's on. Over the next month or two, we will be contacting everyone on our mailing list to check that they wish to continue hearing from us - and for those who prefer not to receive emails, they can still keep up to date by looking at our website, following us on social media or exploring our newsletter.

Another change is that all emails from us will provide a means of opting out, and for correcting any incorrect personal details we may hold for you.

### **100 Club**

The Winter draw of the 100 Club was held on 8th December 2017, with five lucky winners - John Cruse (£50), Rynn Burke (£20), Mrs Kenyon-Smith, Malcolm Macalister and Eileen Brownlie (each £10).

If you are not already a member, it's not too late to join in time for the Spring draw - it costs £12 a year for four draws of five prizes - a fun way to help the museum, and you could win £50

Contact Doug Maclean for details, call in at the museum or purchase a subscription online through our website - [www.groamhouse.org.uk](http://www.groamhouse.org.uk) .

### **Urgent maintenance needed**

If you've been past the museum recently, you will probably have noticed that the building is looking rather sorry for itself - with peeling paint, and the start of rot in some of the woodwork of the doors and window frames. We are currently seeking quotes for the work to carry out essential repairs and will be looking for grants to help us fund the work, but if you can help in any way, do please get in touch.

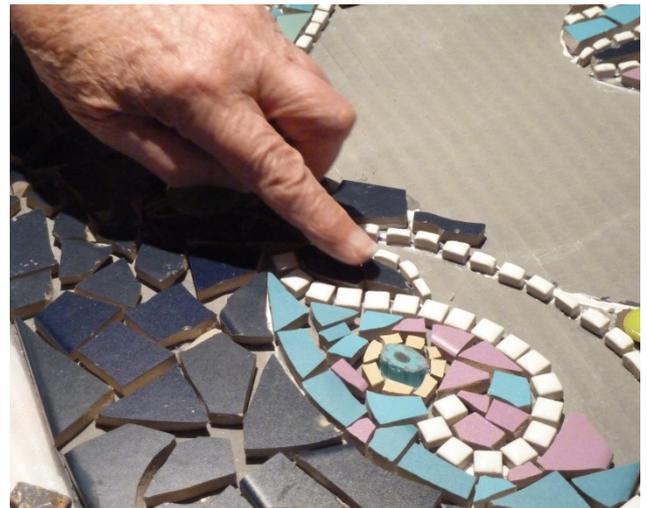
### **The courtyard**

Last year, with help from Tesco's Bags of Help, and the Council's Community Payback Team, we renovated the courtyard area outside the museum. We had the pebbles that were set in concrete taken up and replaced with gravel (much easier to walk on!), and Woodblox in Dingwall donated a seat and planter combination for us. Originally we planned to use the planter for some well-chosen shrubs, but one of our volunteers suggested crowning the planter with a new mosaic. This would add to the existing set of



The crafters working on the mosaic were our volunteers Eleanor, Tricia, Mo, Su, Rita and Margaret, led by local artist Sally Purdy. The work is just being grouted and is being installed in March.

mosaics in the courtyard and to the mosaic trail around the Black Isle. It would also provide a flat table surface for people sitting on the seats. So work started to create the new mosaic. Workshops were held at volunteer Ann Mee's house and the photos show the work in progress. Grateful thanks to Ann for letting the team work in her kitchen and for providing coffee and her delicious baking.



## **Festival of Museums 2018**

Groam House Museum laid on a busy programme of activities for last year's Festival of Museums, and we have registered with Museums Galleries Scotland to repeat the exercise this year with another varied programme of activities over the FoM weekend in May, though it now coincides with the upcoming Royal wedding. See our list of what's on later in this newsletter for details of the planned activities.

## **A change in legal form?**

The Board of Directors has recently been giving thought to changing the legal form of the museum, from a Company limited by guarantee (often referred to simply as a "non-profit") to a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (or SCIO).

In April, 2011 this new legal form for charitable organisations was introduced. It potentially presents Groam House with an exciting opportunity to modernise its structure whilst saving time on administration – precious time that can be better used to the benefit of the museum. Of course, we need the help and approval of members to convert to this different structure.

By way of background, Groam House Museum is currently both a charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee. It is governed by its Articles of Association and is subject to the legal frameworks of both the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Companies Act 2006. Consequently, we are answerable to two regulators - the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and the Registrar of Companies (Companies House).

We enjoy the benefits of being both a charity and an incorporated company but with the disadvantage of dual regulation and two legislative frameworks governing us. At a practical level this means more work and added complexity.

The SCIO has been designed with organisations like us in mind, to provide the key benefits of being both incorporated and a charity. Sounds just right for us?

We are currently drafting a brand new Constitution to replace our existing Articles of Association but, of course, we need the approval of our members to both the new Constitution and the proposal to become a SCIO. So we will be contacting all our members in the coming months when we will provide more information on the case for becoming a SCIO, including a Question and Answer Guide. We will then seek your approval to take an application to OSCR to convert to a SCIO. If we get the go-ahead, we believe it will future-proof us for the years ahead and modernise our current legal structure.

We are at the very early stages of this process but if you have any queries, suggestions or useful advice, please email Scott Lindsay ([Scott.lindsay@groamhouse.org](mailto:Scott.lindsay@groamhouse.org)) who will be delighted to chat further.

## **The local impact of WWI**

Coming soon! A new exhibition in the Museum, about the impact of World War I on the communities of Rosemarkie, Fortrose and Avoch. Based on research by local volunteers, and developed as an exhibition by those same volunteers, it brings to life the tragic, far-reaching, and occasionally amusing impacts of the war.

Comparatively little is known about wartime activity around the local area, but it was an important strategic area with a railway line to Fortrose (closed in the 1950s), a ferry crossing to Ardersier (closed in 1939), and Fort George just a short distance away, being an important military barracks and early aerodrome. The impact on local families must have been great.

A group of volunteers has been working, under the guidance of Susan Kruse, to research how WWI impacted on local people and on the area, to create an exhibition which will run through the summer. Initially, volunteer participants were provided with training in basic research techniques, and were given access to many local sources of information. The aim is to create high quality displays and resources from these research findings.

The participants have been carrying out their research in a number of ways: collaborating with other heritage groups and looking into records and archives, but most importantly of all, hearing local people sharing their family wartime memories.

The participants have been recording their findings to professional standards and have been learning how to curate an exhibition and displays for Groam House Museum, local libraries and museums and for local schools where we will also lead discovery workshops. The findings will be presented in a variety of media so that they can be made available to a wide audience in a variety of attractive and accessible formats.

## What's on for the year ahead

We have a lot planned for the rest of 2018 - a combination of fundraising events, lectures, planned activities and learning opportunities. The next fund-raising event this year is the book sale and coffee morning in March. This has grown so much over the years that it is now a major task to transport our stock of books from our store to the Gordon Hall.

Thanks to all of you who donate so many great books, and to those who come along and buy them! Maybe it's the allure of the great home baking that accompanies the event, but it all adds up to a fantastic success for the museum and a great event for those attending.

Saturday 24 March	Spring book sale and coffee morning, Gordon Memorial Hall, Rosemarkie, 10.00am to 12.30pm
Friday 18 May	Festival of Museums Members' Reception and Launch of the WWI Exhibition, 7.00pm to 9.00pm, Groam House
Saturday 19 May	Reminiscences of WWI in the Museum - derived from the research into the impact of WWI on Rosemarkie, Fortrose and Avoch
	Tea for a Royal Wedding – enjoy our own Royal Wedding tea party in the Gordon Memorial Hall, 4.00pm to 6.00pm
	Children's Archaeological dig - Rosemarkie Beach 2.00pm to 4.00pm
Sunday 20 May	Children's Archaeological dig - Rosemarkie Beach 2.00pm to 4.00pm
Thursday 31 May	Annual Academic Lecture. Dr Gordon Noble of Aberdeen University – on the development of the Pictish symbol system: inscribing identity beyond the edges of Empire. Gordon Memorial Hall, Rosemarkie, 7.30pm.
Saturday 23 June	Craft Sale and Craft demonstrations, Gordon Memorial Hall, 10.00am to 4.00pm
Thursday 28 June	Lecture, subject to be confirmed. Gordon Memorial Hall, Rosemarkie, 7.30pm.
Thursday 26 July	Lecture – Cathy McIver on Recent Excavations on Iona, Gordon Memorial Hall, Rosemarkie, 7.30pm.
Saturday 28 July	Open Gardens Day, Rosemarkie and Fortrose, 10.30am to 4.00pm
	Plant sale and coffee morning, Gordon Memorial Hall, Rosemarkie, 10.30am to 4.00pm
Thursday 30 August	Lecture, subject to be confirmed, Gordon Memorial Hall, Rosemarkie, 7.30pm.
Thursday 27 September	George Bain Memorial Lecture – Thomas Keyes, local artist, talking about his work and the inspiration of George

	Bain, Gordon Memorial Hall, Rosemarkie, 7.30pm.
Saturday 29 September	Autumn book sale and coffee morning, Gordon Memorial Hall, 10.00am to 12.30pm
Thursday 25 October	Lecture, Dr Eric Grant on Tarradale through Time, including an update on the provisional results from 2018 excavations, Gordon Memorial Hall, Rosemarkie, 7.30pm.
Tuesday 31 October	Changeover to winter hours of opening - open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, 2pm to 4.30pm

## Open Gardens

Hello Open Gardeners – time to think about whether you would like to open your garden for us again this year.

The event was such a success last year, we have decided to do it all again this year. It is planned this year for Saturday 28 July to avoid clashing with Cromarty's open gardens.

We will be having a plant sale at the Gordon Hall and of course teas/coffee and cakes will be available throughout the day for our visitors.

If you have a neighbour or friend who you think may like to open their garden also, please get them to contact us.

Please contact Diane Priday on 07788 235502

## Volunteers still needed

Some people think that volunteers just greet visitors to the museum, and have to learn lots of facts about the museum's collections. Although that can be what some volunteers choose to do, there are many tasks around the museum that our volunteers help with - everything from baking and gardening, to photography, film-making and wood-working! Here's some of the volunteer posts we currently have available:

Website designer/manager

Publicity manager – press releases, social media, leaflets

Shop manager – buying, stock control, sales

Cataloguing/collections assistant

Business development manager

Minutes secretary

Just get in touch if you would like more details of any of these posts.

Most importantly, our volunteers are a great bunch of people who enjoy the social interaction which comes with working with the museum, and sharing a laugh together.

Doug Maclean