

## **MULL MUSEUM - REPORTS TO AGM 2021**

### **Treasurer**

Notes to the accounts which will be on the screen at the AGM.

Our main income is donations from visitors to the Museum during our opening time to the public, usually April to October, and as you will be aware we were unable to open during the past year so there was virtually no income during the year.

The running expenses represents the cost of electricity, telephone and insurance for the building.

The final position was a deficit over the year.

The Lephin entry is the Museum's share of the cost of the Archaeology dig under taken in 2019.

The collection entry is the cost of binding the copies of Round and About etc. which was undertaken prior to lock down.

**Membership** At present we have 135 paid up members from all over the world.

### **Curator**

Acquisitions: Anne MacGregor has donated a large Neolithic polished stone axe, found by her father near Crannich.

Other than that, little to report.

Displays:

The OS map of Mull was getting very fingerprinted and grubby. Nicolson Maps have now produced a replacement, with all the historic sites noted, and with a laminated finish, all for a very reasonable price.

The glazed cabinet that previously held temporary displays will now house models in danger of being handled and damaged, such as the model broch. In addition, Andrew's new glazed display case will be available for further secure display of items such as the Ritchie Iona Crafts objects.

The new museum layout means that we have lost two full height double sided display panels, so several of the displays have had to be condensed and repositioned. The OS map is now on the wall next to the Baliscate display, however the large geology map has yet to find a home. All will be sorted before we open.

### **House Manager**

The Museum premises are in a fair to acceptable condition for a building of its age. Routine inspections are carried out as follows.

Fire Alarms are tested fortnightly, the smoke detectors and manual call points are close to their "replace by" dates and are to be replaced within the next month. Emergency lights are tested monthly for a period of 30 minutes, and at six-monthly intervals for a period of 3 hours. Electricity meter readings and humidity level readings are taken at fortnightly intervals and are consistent with seasonal variations. The effectiveness of the de-humidifiers in the exhibition area is currently being assessed, and the dehumidifier in the attic storage area performs satisfactorily.

Routine maintenance of external timber windows and doors is currently in progress, and maintenance and redecoration of the railings at the front street is also in progress. The Floodgate is used at exceptional high tides and strong south east winds, but may now be redundant with the new extension to the sea-wall. The bases of the lower walls below the main windows were scarified and re-rendered, and the entrance threshold was repaired before the public footpath tarmacadam was replaced by the Council.

Internal alterations to the layout and displays in the exhibition area are in progress to meet requirements for Covid protection of visitors and staff.

### **Library**

We haven't done very much in the Library this year. The current editions of Round and About are regularly checked in. They are sent free by the publisher and, being a local magazine, are a useful record of what is happening on Mull each month. Notably – just before the first Lockdown we managed to have all our stored copies of this and Am Muileach beautifully bound by Riley, Dunn and Wilson in Falkirk.

One recent donation was from an Australian author, Sue Williams who had contacted the Museum for background information. "Elizabeth & Elizabeth" is a novel based on historical events and describes a close friendship between Lachlan Macquarie's wife, Elizabeth and Elizabeth MacArthur, whose husband was opposed to Macquarie's plans for the development of Sydney and the surrounding area in the early 19th Century.

### **Archaeology**

The results and written report for our archaeological community excavation at Lephin at Glengorm, 4 miles west of Tobermory carried out September 2019 led by Dr Clare Ellis, members of the Mull Museum committee and local volunteers, have been held up due to a number of the analysis specialists working from home as their laboratory and places of work were closed due to the pandemic. We have been waiting for carbon dates for bone, identification of pottery fragments, pieces of iron charcoal, etc.

We did eventually get the carbon date for the piece of human jaw bone found within the possible chapel/church building in September last year and the date we have is around mid to late nineteenth century which is a bit of a puzzle as Lephin still had residents recorded in the 1871 and 1881 census.

As usual archaeology throws up more questions than answers!  
For the more detailed report, please go to the Projects page.

### **Archives**

Despite the pandemic, not everything ground to a halt with the archive. At times when it was allowable to come into the museum (and when I wasn't homeschooling) I continued business pretty much as usual, although there were slightly fewer enquiries and donations.

Jean spent a lot of lockdown indexing Round & About, for which I am very grateful. The results of this gargantuan task will be incredibly useful for answering archive enquiries because, up until now, the information contained in this publication has been unsearchable and I think the task of leafing through them volume by volume is off-putting for people. It should also help people be more targeted with their handling of the papers because they won't be rifling through the whole lot, just going straight to the pages they need.

One rather odd thing that cropped up last summer, that I think should be addressed, is the revelation that the MacQuarie Mausoleum is listed on a website called 'Topple the Racists'. This happened around the time that demonstrators were toppling statues of people connected with slavery. Luckily it was in lockdown and no-one was able to come and topple anything here, but it does raise the question of how prepared we are for people who are 'on a mission'. I am concerned that volunteers on the desk will be unprepared if confronted by someone looking for an argument and it might be beneficial to mention some of MacQuarie's more questionable actions in Australia in the museum display, for the sake of balance. Hopefully

this won't be an issue, but it is surely worth taking some action now to minimise any risk to the museum and its volunteers.

I am hoping that this year we will be able to embark on our project 'People at Work' with photographer, Sarah Darling, that has had to be postponed. The idea for this project came about because, at present, we don't have a great deal of material in the photo archive of people doing whatever it is that they do for a living. We have a lot of pictures of people at leisure, of special occasions and ceremonies, of buildings and landscapes etc. but not very much showing people in the workplace using their tools. I really hope we will be able to get this back on track at some point soon.