

Vice President's Report



Dear Members and Volunteers

Our President has asked me to write the introduction to the Autumn Newsletter which is a great opportunity for me to record my thanks to all who are contributing to the success of the 2013 season.

You will see from their reports the work and achievements of the various post holders, whether staff or volunteers – and to each of them my thanks. It is fun and a privilege to be working with a team to the same end: the effective running of the Museum. Don't think we all agree all of the time, but we do discuss the options and arrive amicably at a consensus! Peter Manson, our part-time janitor should also be mentioned in dispatches. Not only does he keep the Museum clean, but he is always willing to work flexibly and come in to help with an emergency or task when needed.

With free opening this season, there has never been a dull moment. We are all enjoying the buzz of a full house, and interacting with the wide range of visitors from home and abroad. It has been especially gratifying to read the comments in the Visitors' Book, and to be able to welcome local families who are, now, often paying repeat visits. It is too soon to evaluate financially how donations have compared with an entrance charge, but we dearly hope we can repeat the experiment in order to continue to have the Museum used as it should be – and to provide a valuable visitor attraction and asset in the centre of Elgin.

The volunteers who meet and greet the visitors deserve the highest praise as without them, and their reliability and response to the call at short notice, we couldn't open. It is pleasing how many visitors record specific praise for the welcome and attention they have received. Remember, we are always looking for new volunteers to join the band. Paradoxically, it is a

far more active (and rewarding) job now there are no admission fees to collect.

When you receive this Newsletter, regular opening hours will be continuing for another six weeks (until 2nd November), so there will still be time to encourage friends and family to come into the Museum. Through the winter, if you see the gate is open, please open the blue door and ring the bell, or phone or email in advance to check if the Museum is visitable. We hope any volunteers who want to work behind the scenes through the "closed" season will let Heather Townsend know. For those who work with the collections and archive all the year round, many thanks also to you.

Please read the Newsletter to find out what has been going on, what you have missed and what is planned for the future, and keep the list of Activities pinned on your notice boards: that way we hope to see you all again soon. Thank you, and onwards and upwards.

Janet Trythall
Vice-president, The Moray Society and Elgin Museum Volunteer

Moray Society Prize Draw

The list of supporters of the Prize Draw has diminished recently and I am anxious that more members offer to support this worthwhile cause. There are at present only 85 tickets in circulation.

Tickets are available for Moray Society members only and remain at £10 each.

Each ticket is valid for four draws and is renewable annually as required.

There are four draws per annum each with three prizes of £25, £15 and £10.

All income from the sale of tickets goes directly to the running of the museum after deductions of prize monies.

Tickets are available for cash, cheque, or by standing order.

Please address any questions or applications to me at the Museum (or email mabritch@keme.co.uk, or tel 01309 673597)

Please make cheques payable to The Moray Society Prize Draw

Ritchie Mabon
Prize Draw Co-Ordinator

Moray Society Prize Draw

Please allocate me tickets in the Moray Society Prize Draw @ £10 each.

*I enclose my payment of £.....

or

*Please forward me a standing order mandate

The Moray Society Lecture Series 2013/14

We are delighted to give notice of the programme of lectures for the coming season. Please note that many of the lectures are at 2pm and that many of them are on a Thursday. It has been found that the lectures are attended just as well at times other than a Friday evening. Still to be added is a talk to be given by Fraser Hunter on the finds at Clarkly Hill last year. I think you will agree that the organizers have put together a varied and interesting programme.

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|---------------------|--------|--|
| Fri 27 Sept. | 2pm | "Shetland to Yarmouth- following the Silver Darlings" - Anne Coombs |
| Thu 24 Oct | 7.30pm | "Elgin Cathedral's Glass" - Rona Walker & Robin Murdoch, Historic Scotland |
| Thu 28 Nov | 2pm | "Margaret Hasluck: a Woman of Moray in Albania"
- Margaret Woodward |
| Thu 23 Jan | 2pm | "Robert Burns in Moray" - Sandy Cooper |
| Thu 6 Feb | 2pm | Visit to Moray College Science Department for Moray Society members and Elgin Museum volunteers |
| Thu 27 Feb | 2pm | "Moray's Church Interiors" - Marion Yool, NADFAS |
| Fri 28 Mar | 7.30pm | "World War I" Lecturer:- Derek Bird |
| Fri 25 Apr | 8.00pm | "Alan Stevenson: light for the Moray Firth"
(after AGM) - Janet Trythall |

ARCHAEOLOGY REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2013

Treasure Trove

The Society was successful with its bids for three “cases”, TT.331/12, TT.001/13 and TT.002/13 at the Scottish Archaeology Finds Acquisition Panel (SAFAP) meeting held in June. All the items were found during metal detecting at Clarkly Hill, Burghead. Some of the 106 lithics included in TT.331/12 have been identified as microlithes from the Mesolithic. These are believed to be the first such objects from the Mesolithic found in Moray. The total cost of all three cases is £655.00 and the National Fund for Acquisitions has agreed to fund half this amount.

Treasure Trove at the National Museum of Scotland has advised the Society of eleven more cases that will be presented to the SAFAP in October. Nine of these cases feature material from Clarkly Hill and again illustrate the wide range of periods present in the artefacts recovered from this site. The remaining two cases offer items found by Ali MacPherson at Barmuckity, a new area of interest. The estimated total cost to acquire all of the eleven cases is £1750, so thanks to all who have contributed to the Museum’s Acquisition and Conservation Fund.

Storage Boxes

An order has been placed for 48 plastic, stackable storage boxes to accommodate the growing collection of artefacts being acquired by the Society from Treasure Trove.

Conservation of Roman Hoard coins from Clarkly Hill

The 36 coins found by metal detecting at Clarkly Hill and recently acquired by the museum have been transferred to Dr Hunter so that the work that is to be carried out by a conservation intern at NMS can commence in September.

Report on excavations carried out during a watching brief at East End School, Elgin

The Society received a copy of a report by Stuart Farrell (archaeologist based in Nairn) detailing the results of a watching brief he undertook on behalf of Moray Council at East End School.

Work during the period December 2012 to July 2013 revealed a garden soil with finds of Victorian pottery and glass with an underlying subsoil which contained a number of pieces of medieval pottery. Two prehistoric features of a hearth with fragments of pottery and another small pit were also found. No recommendations for further archaeological fieldwork are proposed.

Archaeology for All – Finds washing, residue sorting and archiving

This part of the Archaeology for All project commenced on Monday 12th August with David Anderson showing a group of interested volunteers the basic principle of finds washing, residue sorting and archiving information.

Sessions are currently being held in the Falconer Museum Store, Forres every Monday and Thursday.

The finds being washed and then laid out to dry are quantities of iron working slag excavated at Clarkly Hill in the 2012 dig. Once dried any material not slag or associated daub is removed and the finds returned to their plastic "finds" bags.

Dry residues from the Birnie excavations are being sorted to separate lithics (quartz or flint), charcoal, seeds, bone and any metal finds (principally hammer scale) from the background mineral debris.

This exercise will reduce considerably the work to be undertaken subsequently by material specialists, allowing them to concentrate on specific material and represents a considerable cost saving to the Birnie project. Albeit it's a very time consuming process that has to be carried out with meticulous care and is very trying on the eyes!

Archiving consists of entering the data from site record sheets onto prepared EXCEL spread sheets to compile a finds register, context register, drawing register, etc. This requires concentration and the ability to decipher some decidedly doggy hand writing.

David Marquardt
Archaeology Representative

In the News

It's amazing how many ways there are to put Elgin Museum out to the public. The well-known press releases, leaflets, posters and word of mouth have been joined by various electronic ways like websites, Facebook, Twitter etc. Trying to keep up with changes in methods, never mind keeping the information flowing, is exhausting!

Over the past year we have had a good amount of publicity in the local press, with special features on the mummy, the rhino heads and art exhibitions as well as the small items of news and information that are put in regularly. Facebook and Twitter are also used to inform people of events, and there have been visitors who have come because they saw the museum on Trip Advisor. All members who use the internet could put in a good word there! The website is still in the process of being adjusted but it's hoped that the problems will be solved soon.

We have had two windows in the St Giles Centre loaned as advertising space, through the good offices of Elgin BID. It's been changed round in the summer and as long as we have it we can revamp it regularly. (I have to admit that carrying the Roman soldier down the High Street to the Centre has proved beyond me so far, but his shield and helmet are there!)

We have also had use of the window in the Volunteers shop, opposite Oxfam, to advertise the Society and the museum for 2 separate fortnights. It's hoped to use this on a regular basis throughout the year.

Posters for various events have been put into libraries, shops, halls etc. Flyers went to a number of new tourist points under the BID initiative. Anyone who knows of a shop, café, community place that would take a poster can get them in the museum, or ask to have them sent electronically. It would be a great help to have more put up in the wider Moray area.

Edna Cameron and I put up a stall at the gate of the museum on Marafun Day. We sold various food items and things from the museum shop. I think it was successful for displaying the museum to a large number of people passing by, selling some things and allowing use of the hall toilets. People were grateful! Also, Frances Wardhaugh and I took a stall at the Brodie Castle Fun Day, which was worthwhile even though it poured with rain all day and the number of visitors was small. It showed that the museum was open and involved in the community.

The dig at Clarkly Hill has generated interest in the press and with the public. This is ongoing for the rest of the year, with a variety of activities, culminating in a conference in December so there should be continuing opportunities to use this for publicity.

The summer activity days have been a great success and the information went into the press at regular intervals. There will be other community things that will involve the museum and so advertise its existence. No method of publicity will be left unused!

Mary Shand, Publicity Volunteer



Museum success.

This year in the museum has seen a huge change in the number of visitors who have visited the museum. We have doubled the number of visitors from last year and already exceeded for the first time 10,000 in a season. We have to thank Baxters, Walkers and Johnstons who provided sponsorship to give us the confidence to try opening the museum to visitors at no charge. The free admission has resulted in the museum having a wonderful 'buzz' giving a much better atmosphere for visitors and for volunteers. We have also been helped by the large amount of outreach work done by Di through local schools and organisations and the programme of kids' activities during the school holidays.

Below are the reports from Di and Heather, who have done a marvellous amount of work in keeping the museum on the road during the last few months. Thanks also to Janet for the HUGE amount of work that she does in keeping all of us on the right track in spite of her large number of outside commitments. As Janet and Heather have mentioned we would not be able to do what we do without the commitment of our volunteers and I hope they have enjoyed the experience even more with our new found number of visitors.

The work, obviously, is ongoing so if any readers have a spare morning or afternoon to come and enjoy themselves please get in touch with Heather on a Monday or Tuesday at the museum and come along and join the volunteers.

Bill Dalgarno
Museum Convenor

Education and Outreach **August 2013**

It has been a busy summer holiday at the museum with drop in activities running every Thursday since July. Attendance has been really positive, with sessions taking 20-30 children and 15-20 adults and running for 3 hours. Sessions have included making Roman swords, Jacobite targes, and Viking longboats – anyone detecting a bit of a warfare theme going on?? – and the children have really enjoyed taking home something that they have made. The parents have also enjoyed the sessions as well, granted that sometimes they have done more of the cutting out and gluing than the children have but the look of concentration on their faces when cutting out the Viking longboat was well worth seeing. The sessions have also had the effect of encouraging more children to look around the museum – they are the visitors of the future after all – and it has been great to see parents and children looking at all the wonderful display cases and dropping coins in the donations box.

We have already had several schools booking visits to the Clarkly Hill dig in September. Hopefully this will generate additional visits to the museum over the Autumn term. The children will be able to have a tour of the site by an archaeologist as well as having the opportunity to sieve for finds. We may be encouraging the next 'Indiana Jones' although as long as snakes are not involved we should be fine! Brownie and Cub Scout troops have booked visits to the museum, these visits are linked to badge work that the children are working on and there have been very positive communications so far.

Another community group that are booking repeat outreach sessions are the Sheltered Housing Associations. Taking the various Handling Boxes out to these groups has been a very enjoyable experience, with the more mature members of the community having the opportunity to handle some of the interesting artefacts from the boxes.

Work on the Handling Boxes is ongoing. The WW2, Medieval and Stone Age boxes are just about complete, with accompanying booklets to support learning and further research. Once all the boxes are organised and have an information booklet in them we can consider the next stage in lending them out to schools or using them to develop further outreach sessions.

Just for information – the Local Learning Officer – Jenny Ebdy – is leaving Elgin Cathedral at the end of the month. It was hoped to arrange a partnership with Historic Scotland and the Cathedral but we will wait until the new LLO is in place to move forward with this.

Di Hannan
Education and Outreach Worker

Museum News

I would like to say a big THANK YOU to all the volunteers who have come forward and covered for me (I was recently signed off with illness for three weeks) and for Peter who has been on holiday for 3wks. Bill has of course had a hard time of it toing and froing Aberdeen every day for the past few months and Janet has dared to take a few days leave with her husband on the boat so we have been thin on the ground.

The summer holidays have seen a shortage of volunteers who have a 'regular slot' but many of you have done extra time elsewhere or have stepped in for other volunteers who have been away visiting grandchildren or soaking up the sun abroad. I know a number of you have really been extra generous with the time you have donated to the museum this year and I heartily thank you for this. We have only had to close the museum for one afternoon this year due to lack of cover so thank you all very much. The quality of customer service is often commented on by visitors because you volunteers always ensure a warm welcome and professional

service. A letter to the Northern Scot of 30th August states of the museum that "Elgin should be proud of that gem in their midst".

The large increase in visitor numbers due to free entry has been remarked upon by several volunteers who continue to enjoy their time at the museum. Not having to ask for an admission fee has created a new 'buzz', augmented by the children's activities, run by Diane Hannan, our Education/Outreach worker, assisted by volunteers.

Work behind the scenes continues with many volunteers also travelling through to Forres to help with the Moray Archaeology for All, Birnie and Clarkly Hill project. I hope you are enjoying the involvement with the finds and archiving. The Falconer Museum's staff have again been very helpful in making the lab available for the work to take place and we are grateful to them for this.

We have noted an increase in sales in the museum gift shop thanks to Tracy Metcalf's wise choice of stock and Mary Shand's efforts to provide museum related gifts for people to purchase. Sales of local crafts have also been very successful including Clare Smiths' Urquhart Pottery pieces and Gary Lowe's wood turning bowls, jewellery stands, vases and paraffin lamps. Please remember we are here when you are thinking of unusual gifts for friends and family; thanks to the artists, we are very reasonably priced.

We are now officially a satellite Visitor Information Point, having always answered tourists' general questions and directed them for example to Visit Scotland in the Public Library; this informal role has now been recognised.

This year we had a very successful humanist wedding between Lynne Gray and Ryan Mclennan and from that we have received already another booking for next year. We hope word is getting around that the museum can be hired for functions including weddings and corporate events.



**Heather Townsend
Museum Assistant**

Clarkly Hill 2014

As this reaches you, dirt will be being shifted once more at Clarkly Hill, near Burghead. The archaeologists are back for a final season at the site before it is planted out with Christmas trees (your correspondent was particularly pleased to find that archaeologically-friendly shallow-rooting trees are known as Fraser firs...). The results of digs in 2010 and 2011, and a wide range of metal-detecting finds (now in the museum) have shown that this long-lived site included important Iron Age and early Medieval settlements. Geophysical survey has shown that the settlement extends for over 400m along the former shore of the Loch of Roseisle. This year's work will move east, into a neighbouring field, where the survey has shown some tantalising traces of roundhouses, enclosures and enigmatic features. What will be revealed? Come to the Society's excursion at 3pm on Thursday 19th September to find out!

Thanks to funding from Moray LEADER and the Gordon and Ena Baxter Foundation, the dig is part of a wider range of activities designed to encourage people to get involved in their local archaeology. Volunteers are welcome on the dig, but this is only part of a range of activities running from now until December. Archive work, finds processing and sample sorting are taking place each Monday at the Falconer Museum in Forres; there will be soil sample processing at Birnie over a couple of weekends; and we plan to fieldwalk a large number of fields as they are ploughed in the autumn, seeing what finds get brought to the surface to reveal the field's hidden history. There will also be a training evening on finds identification in the museum hall on 12th September, from 7-9.

If you would like to register to take part in any of these events, please email clarklyleader@hotmail.co.uk. The results of this, and of the National Museum's work in Moray since 1998, will be presented at a day conference on Saturday 7th December – more details to follow, but keep the date free!

**Dr Fraser Hunter,
National Museums Scotland
and member, The Moray Society**



Pat & Tracy from below stairs at the very successful Heritage Coffee Morning which raised almost £1000 for Moray Society funds in June.



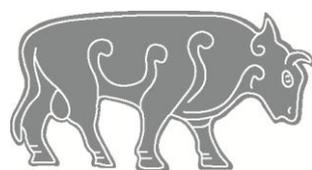
Mary Shand manning the Museum stall at Brodie Castle Fun Day.



New to our shop at the museum are these white, navy and green 100% lambswool scarves at only £10. Perfect for the coming winter. The scarves were donated by Johnstons of Elgin.

Dates for your diary.

Mon 12 th Sept	7pm	Archaeology finds training (see above)
Mon 19 th Sept	3pm	Clarkly Hill visit with Field Club
Fri 27 th Sept	2pm	Lecture - Museum Hall (details page 3)
Thu 24 th Oct	7.30pm	Lecture – Museum Hall (details page 3)
Sat 2 nd Nov		Last Museum opening 2013
Sat 9 th Nov	12noon	Craft Fair – Elgin Town Hall
Fri 15 th Nov	7pm	Quiz & Hamper supper (details tba)
Tue 19 th Nov	12.30pm	Volunteers end of season lunch
Thu 28 th Nov	2pm	Lecture – Museum Hall (details page 3)
Sat 7 th Dec	tba	Clarkly Hill Seminar – Moray College
Thu 23 rd Jan	2pm	Lecture – Museum Hall(details page 3)
Thu 6 th Feb	2pm	Visit to Moray College Science Department
Thu 27 th Feb	2pm	Lecture – Museum Hall (details page 3)
Fri 28 th Mar	7.30pm	Lecture – Museum Hall (details page 3)
Fri 25 th Apr	7pm	Moray Society AGM
	8pm	Lecture (details page 3)



**THE MORAY
SOCIETY**

**ELGIN
MUSEUM**