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whm

West Highland Museum



NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2016



Message from the Chairman

Five years on from our change to free admission has seen further steady growth in our activities and revenue generation. This achievement has come through hard work and dedication from Colleen, her staff and the enthusiastic army of volunteers to whom we give our thanks and appreciation. You will learn about some of these activities in the pages that follow, not least of which was the excellent and enjoyable fund-raising dinner and auction in October. I particularly want to thank Stewart Leitch of the Moorings Hotel for the initial suggestion and for his support and generosity throughout.

Sadly Isobel McGavin had to stand down from the Board of Trustees in May, but I am pleased that the Lochaber History Society has now nominated Mrs Martine Young who has had a long association with the Museum.

The Trustees and Management Committee continue to have one eye on our approaching Centenary in 2022 and are carefully assessing the possibility of extending the Museum. This is being led by Jackie Wright and we aim to make progress over the next few months and present proposals to our next AGM in May.

I do hope that you find something of interest in this excellent newsletter. We are very grateful to all contributors, especially Vanessa Martin, our Editor and Sharon Donald, our Production Editor.

To finish on a plea – we now have an established place as a specialised bookshop and have developed our own voucher scheme that should be of interest for Christmas gifts. Please consider this and also tell your friends!

With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

John C Hutchison
Chair of Trustees



Message from the Manager

Well what a year 2016 has been. This year we have had the highest number of visitors to the Museum since 1981. We have had 47,562 visitors so far and still have a couple of weeks to go to the year end. Our shop sales have

been the best ever due to increased visitor numbers and a few new successful lines which have sold well. So if you are in Fort William, pop into the shop and see what we have to offer.

We organised a Charity Auction dinner in October which was held at the Moorings Hotel. The funds raised will contribute towards the running costs of the Museum. With the boiler breaking down on week one of 2016, at a replacement cost of £5,000, it was decided we needed to undertake extra fundraising this year. I had hoped to raise the £5,000 to pay for the new boiler so you can imagine how delighted I was when we raised over £11,000 at the dinner. You will read more about this in another article in this newsletter.

On another positive note, we hope to be accepted into the VAT 33A Refund scheme which was updated in this year's budget. This allows museums with free admission to recover VAT relating to running costs. What the Government has done is to widen the criteria so the refund can apply to all museums that provide at least 30 hours free public admission a week. We submitted our application which was supported by our MSP Ian Blackford to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and it was approved by DCMS Secretary of State. We now await final approval from HM Treasury. If we receive approval, we will be able to reclaim any VAT incurred in running the Museum and looking after the collection. We can also claim back any VAT incurred for 4 years from the date we are approved into the scheme. So fingers crossed we will be accepted in the next couple of months.

We have also decided that we will no longer close the Museum in January and February. We will still carry out our winter housekeeping but will do any work required while the Museum is open.

As this newsletter goes to print we are planning a Volunteers' day trip to Culloden Visitor Centre and Battlefield. We had a visit from the Culloden volunteers earlier this year which gave me the idea to arrange a return outing. The NTS staff at Culloden are going to give us a guided tour of the battlefields and the centre. We will have lunch and take a look at their gift shop as Sonja and I are always looking for new ideas for our shop. It will be an interesting and enjoyable day out, which I am sure our volunteers will appreciate.

Best Wishes
Colleen Barker
Museum Manager

whm
West Highland Museum

A Parachutist's bicycle drops in!

A new exhibit in the Commando room was recently donated by the family of John Forest, Postmaster of Killin.

It is a folding World War II paratroopers' bicycle which was manufactured in some numbers by BSA and designed for paratroopers dropped into France. In practice, it was used more extensively by commandos on the Normandy beaches on D-Day.



Special features are two butterfly screws on the top and down tubes of the frame which allow it to be collapsed and special sliding pedals for ease of storage when folded.

This bicycle was acquired by John Forest after the war, prompted by a close friendship with one Vincent Osborne of No.3 Commando, who was billeted with the Forest family early in World War II after training at Achnacarry.



Vincent took part in the abortive raid on Dieppe and was then in North Africa, Sicily and Italy, before returning in preparation for the D-Day landing on Sword beach on June 6th 1944. He landed with a collapsible bicycle and cycled with No.3 Commando seven miles to Amberville where they engaged with the enemy and he was wounded.

The bicycle will be suspended from the ceiling of the Commando Room.

Thanks are due to Mrs. Judy Forest and her family of Killin for donating the bicycle to the Museum. Her late husband John used it for many years after the war cycling around Killin.

Chris Robinson

Commando Raid Ensign

Another addition to the Commando exhibition is the Ensign flown by HMS Cleveland, a Type 1 Hunt-class destroyer which took part in the St. Nazaire raid (Operation Chariot) on 20 March 1942. This became known as "The Greatest Raid of All" in military circles.

It comprised of an amphibious attack on the heavily defended Normandy dry dock in German occupied France. It was especially targeted because of its importance as the only dry dock available for large German warships in need of repair.

An obsolete destroyer, HMS Campbeltown, was rammed into the dry dock and packed with delayed action explosives. Alongside this action, 611 commandos landed and attacked adjacent installations. Many commandos were killed and even more captured, but the operation was nevertheless deemed a success. 89 decorations were awarded including, 5 Victoria crosses.

The ensign was donated to the Museum by Major Bill Boucher-Myers of No.4 Commando in 1984. He took part in the Lofoten Island and Dieppe raids.

Chris Robinson



HMS Cleveland in 1942

'A few days in Fort William' - October 2016

I've visited this museum a couple of times in the past and it seems to get better with each visit. If memory serves me right, the building has been updated since my last visit. There are a wide range of exhibits/displays on different aspects of local history/nature etc. I really enjoyed the Commando exhibits. The staff were really helpful. Thanks Again West Highland Museum.

Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK



Found on the doorstep!

Unsolicited, anonymous, disassociated or undocumented material gifted to the Museum is generally highly undesirable. However this is not always the case as the tales below reveal.

In July a padded envelope arrived addressed to the Curator and postmarked Preston, Lancashire. It had heft to it and, when opened, a rusty object, possibly an iron teapot handle, fell out. Accompanying it, written on a piece of torn paper was: "FROM SUMMIT OBSERVATORY, BEN NEVIS". There was nothing else - no name, no address, no date and no story. Other than the vague find site, there was no information at all and the object itself, being unexceptional, did not excite speculation. It is hard to understand the need for secrecy in this case at all. As an anonymous donation, it produced something else for the Disposals Board to consider.

It is not always so. In 1924 a pot still and worm, unfortunately perforated by the excise men, was found deposited on the steps of the Museum. As with the possible teapot handle it was unaccompanied by any information at all. Unlike the handle this was perfectly understandable given the illegal nature of private whisky distilling. Here was a lovely thing to have, with a story to tell even if it arrived without one. As an anonymous and undocumented donation, it was very welcome indeed. The still has been on permanent exhibition since it arrived.

When it comes to soliciting anonymous donations, should anyone from the back country of Morar across to the Cameron lands of Loch Arkaig, have a barrel of Louis d'Or they have been wondering what to do with for the last 250 years, the Museum would be happy to give it home should it be found on the doorstep. What a story that would be in the telling!

Fiona Marwick, Curator



The whisky still on display in the Museum.

Boudicca in Town

The visit of the cruise liner MS Boudicca in late September was much anticipated. It was the first visit by a large ship since pontoons were installed to facilitate passenger landings.

The "Town Team" did a fine job in preparing the town for the visit, stationing helpers to assist up to 800 passengers throughout the town. Visitors were encouraged to see the Highland dancing and hear the music playing in Cameron Square.

The wave of passengers walking towards the High Street was reminiscent of the crowds who descended upon the High Street in 1997 for "The Longest Strip the Willow in the West" to commemorate the Museum's 75th anniversary.

The weather however did not match that of a May evening, but nevertheless many folk said that Fort William had offered a welcome in excess of any other received at other ports of call.

We at the Museum did our bit showing the 1911 film of Henry Alexander on Ben Nevis with his Model T Ford. This complemented Iain Blyth's 1911 Model T in Cameron Square which steered many into the Museum – as we expect to happen when "The Bronze Ford" is installed.

A good day for the town and the Museum which attracted about 100 passengers from MS Boudicca.

Chris Robinson

*Passengers arrive at Fort William from MS Boudicca
(Photograph courtesy of Iain Ferguson)*



Rare Commando Knife Donated

The Museum received an interesting donation in January of a rare and valuable 1st pattern F-S Fighting Knife (Commando Dagger). The dagger had been handed in to a police station in the south of Scotland as part of a knife amnesty and was scheduled for destruction. By chance, a serving police officer with an interest in Commando history spotted the knife and recognised its historic importance. It was an original knife, in good condition and with the original scabbard still intact.

The original owner of the knife was contacted and advised of the knife's monetary and historical significance. However, they did not want the knife returned as the original owner had passed away. They agreed with the Police suggestion that the knife be donated to the West Highland Museum. On Friday 15th January, the finders travelled to Fort William to present Museum Manager, Colleen Barker and Ron Cameron from the Management Committee with the knife which will be included in the Commando Collection.

An original copy of Fairbairn's "All in Fighting" was donated on loan to the Museum too. The items are now on display in the Commando Exhibition.



Police hand over Commando memorabilia to Colleen Barker and Ron Cameron



The 1st pattern F-S Fighting Knife

Vanessa Martin

Bag Pack

The Museum held a bag pack at Morrison's supermarket on Saturday 23rd July 2016 to raise funds for the Museum. £610 was raised, which is a good result, especially as there were fewer bag packers this year because our allocated slot was in the summer holidays.



'Interesting Museum, well worth visiting'

- November 2016

Tucked away in a corner of the town square you will find the West Highland Museum. It's not a large building but it houses a great treasure trove of exhibits. I was especially interested in the Commando Exhibition and the Jacobite history. The staff are wonderful, warm and attentive.

Geoffrey



Volunteer Tours

In the autumn, volunteers were treated to a tour around the Museum by Betty Bruce. Pictured here are: (L-R) Jim Lee, Eleanor Hamill, Betty Bruce and Martine Young admiring the Jacobite Collection in Room 6.



'Oozing with history' - September 2016

I highly recommend a visit to this small but fascinating and interesting museum in Fort William. For anyone like myself who is interested in history, this place is a must if in the area.

Germany



Education Update

During the academic year the geographic range of school visits to the Museum was greatly extended from Raasay to Taynuilt, from Inverness Royal Academy to Kinlochleven Secondary School. We also had a visit from Fort William Army Cadet Force, three visits at the local college and in the Museum from a class researching the history of Lochaber district.

What happens during these visits? Primary school visits are dependent on the current year's curriculum. The subjects may vary from early man to World War II in Lochaber. With the Vikings, Jacobites, Victorians and old Fort William in between. These are dealt with by using a mixture of handling boxes, role playing and a tour of the Museum with work sheets to look for artefacts relating to their subject and questions to answer.

The more sophisticated secondary pupils have a talk with a question and answer session on their chosen subject, then a museum tour with a guide for special objects to look for. Many of the secondary pupils are happy to shed their blasé pose to wear the Feileadh Mor (the Big Kilt), or try a gas mask to take them back to 1941 school.

Judging from continuing visits, this approach seems to work. The Museum has been congratulated on presenting very accurate history in an interesting, very entertaining way. We owe thanks to Colleen and Sonja, who are always happy to open up early to set up for schools. Jo, Donald and Chris Oram always seem to be on hand to cheerfully set out seating. We are grateful to all of them.

Now we come to "Fun with local history" which is the Saturday Club, now in its twentieth year. Numbers vary depending on what alternative Saturday entertainment is available. This is truly meant to be fun combined with a little learning, while young people begin to understand what a museum is all about. Activities range from making butter and grinding corn, to running a Victorian workshop complete with bowler hats, cloth caps and wooden clogs. A quiz will take them around the Museum, made more interesting because the clues are in Morse code, or Viking runes. There is a lot of laughter and some minor horseplay, but they do learn about the Museum. Some of them have gone on to be valued volunteers at Reception. The Youth programme continues to grow and we are happy to have had a successful year.

Betty Bruce



West Highland Museum Gala Dinner

Saturday 29th October 2016



And what a night it was! After months of planning, the gala dinner for the West Highland Museum at the Moorings Hotel, Fort William, was held on October 29th. 'Smart casual' ranged from our Chair, handsome in his kilt, to Richard Sidgwick dashing in a dinner jacket and corduroys, the women glamorous all.



The Top Table: (L-R) Sandra Henderson, John Hutchison (Chair of Trustees), Isabel MacFarlane, Donald Cameron of Lochiel (President), Mairi Hedderwick (Author), Tearlach MacFarlane (former Trustee), Christine Hutchison (Volunteer), Cllr. Allan Henderson and Colleen Barker (Museum Manager).

The chat was loud and much cheer made it a struggle for our MC, Allan Henderson to calm the crowd and introduce the 'cuddly' Chairman of the WHM, John Hutchison. John, in turn, introduced us to the top table and asked Lochiel for a few words. Lochiel thanked all and was thoroughly impressed by the evident enthusiasm for the event and the willingness to support the cause - after all Colleen had to find £5,000 to purchase a boiler! Reminding us again that money raising was why we were present, our MC launched into our Heads and Tails round. Each table had crammed their envelope with £5 notes to allow them to participate. Based on infernal local historical questions crafted by Dr Chris Robinson and the MC himself, the game was enjoyed by all. One final victor won £100 and WHM had £670 in the bag.

After a delicious meal, served graciously by Stewart Leitch's delightful team, our guest of honour, ex-local lass, Mairi Hedderwick recounted her extraordinary life, from life on Coll and heading to the mainland to school the children and how she ended up in Lochaber with her small printing business employing nine folk in Fort William and living in High Bridge. She then explained how she was currently following in the footsteps of John T Reid's 'Art rambles in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland from 1878. She was taking the same journeys and illustrating the same scenes today. The audience were completely charmed.

Entertainment over for the time being, now to the serious business of making money in the form of the auction. Auctioneer's Lyon & Turnbull's local enthusiast and committee member, Ian Peter (Peeps) MacDonald took the floor, distinct in Keppoch trews. So many local businesses and supporters had given so generously and the audience was held in rapt attention as each was competed for. Our local MSP, Kate Forbes supported with fierce bidding for Mairi Hedderwick's pictures to hang on her office wall in Holyrood and all manner

of folk fought for a trip in the cab on the Caledonian Sleeper, for fishing on the Ulbster, weekend breaks in cottages in Ardtornish and Roshven, a valuable bottle of Glenlochry Whisky, hind stalking at Glenfinnan to name a few of the treasures on offer. An extraordinary final total of £4,315 broadened the beam on Colleen's face.

And then the MacFarlane and Henderson magic took to the floor. The Glenfinnan trio, with Iain and Tearlach's extraordinary playing fiddle in tight unison and Allan Henderson's piano elegant counterpoint entertained us all. The jigs and strathspeys flew and then Tearlach stepped out to explain the background to the music. The audience wept with pleasure as Tearlach, clad familiarly, demonstrated the movements of the wee hen that inspired the jig. His rendition delicious of 'The Night MacAllister met the Queen' - 'Where were you MacAllister the night I married him?' Brought the house down. And finally, the 'SS Politician', Tearlach word perfect over 34 stanzas and delivered exquisitely. The ceilidhs and the pleasures, och the joys in Castlebay' reflected our own enjoyment of this Lochaber evening. It was an honour and privilege to witness this performance.

MC Allan Henderson had wisely kept the raffle to the end. Seeing the number and the quality of the raffle prizes encouraged participation with well over £10 a head spent on raffle tickets. Prizes from hampers worth hundreds to a blue kettle and an extraordinarily large cuddly bunny were all up for grabs. Despite the hour, not a soul had left the party as Allan Henderson wound up. The joint was still jumping as he announced that well over £11,000 had been raised on that single night. Colleen had her boiler, Colleen's father's face beamed with pride and 123 Lochaber folk heading into the dark night much looking forward to the next great West Highland Museum gala dinner.

Ian Peter MacDonald



The Organising Committee: (L-R) Dr. Chris Robinson, Ian Skinner, Janet Sidgwick, Colleen Barker and Ian Peter MacDonald.



(L-R) John Hutchison, Christine Hutchison, Donald Cameron of Lochiel and Ron Cameron (Management Committee).



(L-R) Cllr. Allan Henderson, Pauline Robinson, Mairi Weir and Sandra Henderson.



(L-R) Maurin MacDonald Scott Donald, Mairi Hedderwick, Sharon Donald and Brian Donald.



Chris Robinson delivering a thank you address.



(L-R) Geoff Wright, Jackie Wright (Management Committee Chair), Charlotte MacNee-Bell (Member), Dr. Catherine Harkin and Caroline Gooch (Trustee).



(L-R) Kathleen Leitch (Moorings Hotel), Paula Halas, Frances MacTavish, Gerry Halas and Iain MacTavish.



Above: Chris Robinson
Left: Tearlach MacFarlane



Sonja McLachlan (Volunteer Co-ordinator), Ian Skinner (Management Committee), Stevie Morgan and Alan Morgan (former volunteer).

Management Committee update

Well it's certainly been a very busy and positive year for us thus far. Having welcomed in a very cold January with a broken boiler, and therefore a big dent in our funds, we approach the end of the year with increased shop sales and donations. We were able to increase shop displays a little at the beginning of the year and, with thanks to Sonja and Helen who carried out a relentless stock check programme, we kept our shelves filled with what customers want. I also believe that the decision to install a card payment machine has helped to increase sales.

The recent news that we will be included in the HMRC VAT scheme is very positive. This will allow us to recoup the VAT we spend on running costs, which is very positive. It does however, only replace the discretionary rates relief we lost last year because we had managed to increase shop sales over time. It's a frustrating process!

Excitingly we have also moved forward with expansion plans for the Museum. Thanks to funding from HIE and Highland Council, we have engaged a design team and we will see their first thoughts on an expanded museum at the Trustees meeting in November. It's a long process though, and we hope to make a Stage One application to the Heritage Lottery Fund in the Spring /Summer of next year.

As always my thanks to our army of volunteers who are the mainstay of the Museum, ably guided and organised by Colleen and Sonja. And thanks also to Fiona and Sally who continue to work hard on the Collection. Your Management Committee also put in a lot of time keeping the show on the road and I am grateful to their input.

Jackie Wright
Chair of the Management Committee

'Excellent Museum' - October 2016

This museum tucked away in Fort William gives a good insight into the history of the West Scottish Highlands.

The displays are well set out and easy to read. I enjoyed the many artefacts and wished I had just more time.

*Well worth a visit
Edinburgh, Scotland*



Can you help us?



The West Highland Museum's unique collections tell the story of the region and its history. The Museum is free to enter and has a very small income. Our future as a Museum depends on financial support from visitors, donors, members and sponsors. This support is vital in enabling the Museum to fulfil its mission.

There are a number of ways that you can help support the Museum:

Adopt a Showcase: For £30.00 a year you can sponsor the upkeep of your very own adopted display. This will provide a much needed contribution towards the Museum's running costs in a most practical and, we think, invitingly novel way for less than 60p a week. A custom display card with your name, or company information, will be displayed in the case you adopt.

Legacies: If you would like future generations to enjoy the West Highland Museum as you have, please consider making a bequest in your will. Leaving a bequest to the Museum could help to reduce the tax burden on your estate. If the gross value of your estate on death is over the Inheritance Tax threshold, your estate will be liable for Inheritance Tax. A gift in your will to the Museum may reduce that excess and thereby reduce or eliminate the tax bill.

Donations: Give a one-off gift or make a regular donation to support the work of the West Highland Museum. Choose to gift-aid your donation and the Museum will benefit even more. By supporting the West Highland Museum you ensure the display, care and preservation of the collection for future generations.

Membership: If you are not already a member and have a special interest in the history and culture of the West Highlands, join us and help support the Museum's efforts to preserve and promote this unique heritage. Membership of the Museum costs only £15 per year for an individual, and £25 for a whole family, and comes with a range of benefits. Businesses and organisations can apply for corporate membership for only £100 per annum.

For more information, please contact the Museum Manager on 01397 702169, or email, colleen@westhighlandmuseum.org.uk

'Wonderful place!' - October 2016

Such an interesting museum, lots of historical information. Friendly and knowledgeable volunteers. Really worth a visit!

Petropolis



The Bronze Bulletin

The installation of “The Bronze Ford” in Cameron Square to commemorate the 1911 ascent of Ben Nevis is in sight!



After three years of fundraising, £45,000 has been banked and there are further pledges for £12,000. Together with an anticipated grant, this will take us to the full sum of £89,000, which will allow tendering of the project through the Highland Council.

The Museum was there at the embryonic stage of the project, when Jayne Garbutt, an environmental architect, visited the Museum when she was commissioned by Highland Council to redesign Cameron Square. She saw the 2011 “carry car”, which was on display in the Museum at the time, and this sparked the idea of a Model T sculpture in Cameron Square.

The Project team have been busy this year attending car rallies at Fraserburgh, Scone Palace, Glamis Castle and Oban to publicise the project. The Bronze Ford stand at the Glamis festival won the “Pirtek Shield” for the best display stand at the show.

There's been much support for this project from members of the Model T register of Great Britain and local support from the High Street. While other businesses, such as Nevis Range helped us raise £2,000, with a day on the High Wire challenge last year.

Once installed, the Bronze Model T Ford will attract attention in the High Street and it is important that we lay a pathway from the Bronze to the front door of the Museum, to tell the story of the 1911 ascent in full.

We will be able to show the five-minute film clip from 1911, showing Henry Alexander ascending the mountain, and perhaps one day with an extension to the Museum, we'll be able to offer a permanent home to the 2011 “carry car” which was elevated to the summit of Ben Nevis by those 77 stalwarts!



Chris Robinson

[WISH] [MIANN] Exhibition

Artists Jen Deschenes and Ali Berardelli launched their [Wish] [Miann] - Stories from the Glen - art exhibition at the Museum on Friday 18th March.



Above: A guest looks around on opening night

Right: Ali Berardelli and Jen Deschenes

(Photographs courtesy of Alex Gillespie)



[Wish] [Miann] brought together the work of two Lochaber based artists, Jen Deschenes and Ali Berardelli who created a series of ten images and accompanying text in response to time spent in Glen Nevis at the artist's tree house, Outlandia. Exploring local folklore and examining historical objects synonymous with the area, Jen and Ali created a pictorial epitaph representing people and their stories alongside charms and votives used in the past as methods of protection.

Jen and Ali are both graduates from Glasgow School of Art and for the two friends this was their first formal collaboration. Jen creates sculptural work based on her origins as a textile artist using screen printing, embroidery, and drawing. Storytelling has been at the core of her work and she has a love of exploring new materials and resolving her designs with a variety of mediums. Ali has always lived in Fort William and she is greatly influenced by the community around her and nature and the stories embedded within it. Ali has been coordinating art projects for many years within Lochaber and alongside this has continued her practice in drawing, collage, photography and typography.

The exhibition was very popular with the public and ran at the Museum until the end of May.

Ardnish Was Home Book Launch

A book launch was held on 17 November at the Museum to celebrate the release of Angus MacDonald's first novel,

'Ardnish Was Home'. A good crowd gathered to listen to Angus's interesting discourse relating to how the local aspects of his novel was inspired by his childhood experiences of Highland life and some of the characters developed from colourful locals he had encountered over the years.



Chris Robinson welcomes the author.

Ardnish Was Home is the story of a young Lovat Scout wounded in the Great War and who falls in love with the Welsh nurse who cares for him in the field hospital. It is a passionate tale about their long and treacherous journey home across enemy territory.

After the launch a book signing followed and the opportunity to ask questions of the author. Signed copies of Angus's book are available in the Museum shop.



Author Angus MacDonald being interviewed by his sister Mairi.

Landownership in Lochaber. 1745-2000.

It is now five years since Chris Robinson, one of our Trustees and former Chair of the Management Committee, asked me to give a talk to the Lochaber Historical Society as part of their 2011 winter programme. The choice of subject was entirely mine and it didn't take much thought to arrive at the above title, partly because it had occupied my working life for more than 40 years, and partly because land, its ownership, occupation and use has been as central to the history of this area as clan warfare, national politics or the varying fortunes of ordinary folk - indeed some would say that it is the continuous thread that connects rural life today with times past.

My generation of professionals is probably the last which enjoyed the luxury of having time, in the normal course of a day's work, to get to know people from all walks of life without worrying too much - if at all - if the process was profitable. It would be an unreceptive mind which, given that opportunity, didn't collect a wealth of gleanings and it was with these that I tried to infuse my talks; the alternative would have been a catalogue of detail which, although of interest to those with a purely scholarly interest, would have made for dry reading or listening.

My first talk included the estates surrounding Fort William - those owned in 1745 by the Duke of Gordon, the Camerons of Lochiel and the Mackintosh; subsequently my attention swung to north east, north and west to review the lands of the Macdonells of Glengarry and the Macdonalds of Clanranald, as far south as the bounds of Moidart.

Broadly to the east and south of these lands, I then looked at the clan lands of the MacLeans of Ardgour and Kingairloch and the vast Sunart and Ardnamurchan property owned in 1745 by the Murrays of Stanhope. The tour was completed with a study of the estates of Morvern, The Small Isles and those parts of Glencoe which have been part of Lochaber since 1974.

Throughout this process, with the exception of the final instalment, Andrew Bootman, who died in July 2015, prepared a PowerPoint presentation each year without which my talks would have lacked visual aid which contributed so much to their appeal. Perhaps the area in which he helped most was in the preparation of maps - a digital skill which is far beyond me - and his passing has left a gap in my resources as well as in my friends.

Charles Kennedy, whom I have known for many years, was a regular attendee and after the second talk, he approached me to say that the knowledge which I had accumulated over the years must not be lost and should be recorded in writing, and I have started this process. Martin Briscoe has stepped ably into Andrew's shoes to provide PowerPoint presentations, but I am still at a loss to find someone to help with maps, a role which Charles thought might be attractive to a post graduate student at Glasgow University. Sadly, there was not time to take this idea any further, but if anyone is interested, please step forward.

Richard Sidgwick

'Lovely' - October 2016

We were met at the door by a lovely lady, who immediately gave us a quick run down about the museum and a little map, yep worth a visit, no admission fee just a donation.

Well done west highland museum!

Cardiff, UK



A Jacobite Jaunt

The National Trust for Scotland's Culloden battlefield, has a large and committed set of volunteers from all walks of life, who donate their time to help tell some of the stories surrounding the fateful battle of Culloden. Without their help, we would not be able to provide half the wonderful activities we offer at Culloden to our visitors from all over the world. As a thank you to the volunteers, the Learning team at Culloden organise a yearly day trip out, our "Jacobite jaunt"; this year to the West Highland Museum and the NTS Glenfinnan visitor centre. The Jaunts also helps to forge connections with other museums in the Highlands and to develop volunteer knowledge of Highland history.

We set off at 8:00am on Wednesday 6th July and travelled along the Strathnairn to Fort Augustus, roughly following the escape route of Prince Charles Edward after the defeat of his Jacobite army at Culloden. A quick chat about the Prince's meeting with Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, as we passed through Gothleck where the two met. And, of course a stop at the beautiful view point at Suidhe, on one of General Wade military roads gave us an appreciation of the engineering involved in building these roads in the early 18th century.

On arrival at Fort William and a quick walk to the West Highland Museum, we were given a warm and welcoming welcome by Colleen and her staff. Having two of the trustees (Betty Bruce and Chris Robinson) to guide us around and answer all of our questions was a privilege, and then having a quick look behind the scenes "what a treat!" Having never visited this museum before I was truly amazed by its wonderful collection and highly knowledgeable staff, most of whom are volunteers. We all agreed it's one of the best wee museums in Scotland. In fact, we spent so much time there we had to cut our final planned visit of the day, which should have been to the Princes cairn. A big thank you to the staff and volunteers at the West Highland Museum for their time and hospitality.

"It was a super outing and the venues chosen were both informative and very interesting and we could have spent longer at any of the venues. I know some of the "jaunters" wish to go back" - John Easson, Volunteer at NTS Culloden.

The West Highland Museum are planning a reciprocal visit to Culloden later this year.

Jon Wartnaby, NTS Learning Officer



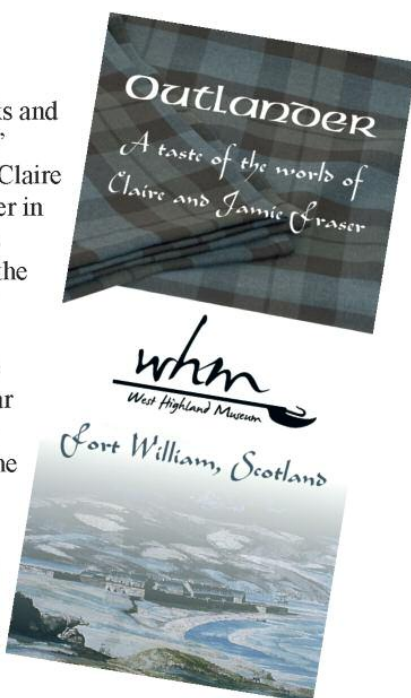
Colleen entertaining NTS volunteers.



Chris Robinson shows volunteers around the library.

Outlander

We are finding that fans of the Outlander books and TV series are making our museum a 'must see' destination to learn more about the world that Claire Randall found herself sharing with Jamie Fraser in 1743. Betty Bruce has entertained four groups from the United States, showing them around the Museum on private tours linking the world of Outlander with the exhibits at the Museum. Room 2, where the Governor's office from the Old Fort has been reconstructed, is of particular interest to fans, as one of the locations for key scenes in the first book. We are pleased that the Museum is attracting more visitors and this year we produced a guide aimed at Outlander fans which will give them an excellent insight into life in 1743. The guide is available free of charge to visitors at the Museum and can be downloaded from our website.



'Full of Treasures' -

September 2016

I saw my share of Jacobite regalia during my visit to Scotland, but the exhibits at the West Highland Museum were for sure the most authentic, impressive and original. Run by friendly staff.

Amsterdam



LOOKING FOR SOME ORIGINAL CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS?

Why not visit our shop and support your local museum!

We have a fantastic selection of books, jewellery,
glassware and children's gifts for sale.

And, if you're really stuck for ideas why not
purchase a West Highland
Museum gift voucher!



Volunteering at the



We're looking for new volunteers to support our work. Entry to the Museum is free to the public and we therefore depend on visitor donations, shop sales and the support of our team of enthusiastic volunteers.

The Museum covers a wide range of topics such as Commando training, the Old Fort, wildlife, archaeology, Victorian costume, the Jacobites and Highland life in the 18th and 19th centuries. If you are interested in any of these areas, or just generally helping your local museum, we would like to hear from you. We are currently looking for volunteers to provide a warm welcome to visitors at reception/gift shop.

If you would like to help us please contact Sonja for an informal chat on 01397 702169 or by email sonja@westhighlandmuseum.org.uk

Coffee Morning

On Thursday 9 June a coffee morning was held in Room 1. Volunteers donated delicious home-baking and helped serve tea and coffee. The morning was a great success, helping to raise the profile of the Museum with locals and raising valuable funds for the Museum.



Dates for your diary

- **Friday 9th December 2016:**
Volunteers Christmas Night Out
- **Thursday 25th May 2017:**
AGM, St. Andrew's Church Hall, 5pm

'An amazing collection' - November 2016

As an ex Commando my main reason for visiting this museum was to see the Commando Room exhibition. (The first commandos were trained nearby during the war) It was very interesting but I was amazed at the rest of the museum. Real genuine artifacts from the history of the region. Some examples are a copper plate to print money ordered by Bonny Prince Charlie, a suit of Highland clothes given by Queen Victoria to her alleged lover (some say secret husband) John Brown and thousands of other items. Learn about the massacre of Glencoe in 1692 when the British army massacred the McDonald clan and all sorts of historical facts. It really was an amazing visit. PS the 2 ladies on duty when we went on 10th Nov were the nicest, politest most helpful ladies you could ever wish to meet. Oh and I forgot, it's FREE. If you're in the area I would rate it as a must see. Oh and the Queen has been to see it.

UK



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