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# TRUSTEES' REPORT

## 2020/21



## Summary

A challenging year!



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... but we came through!

# Highlights – our exhibitions

## The Book of Kells – some mysteries revealed

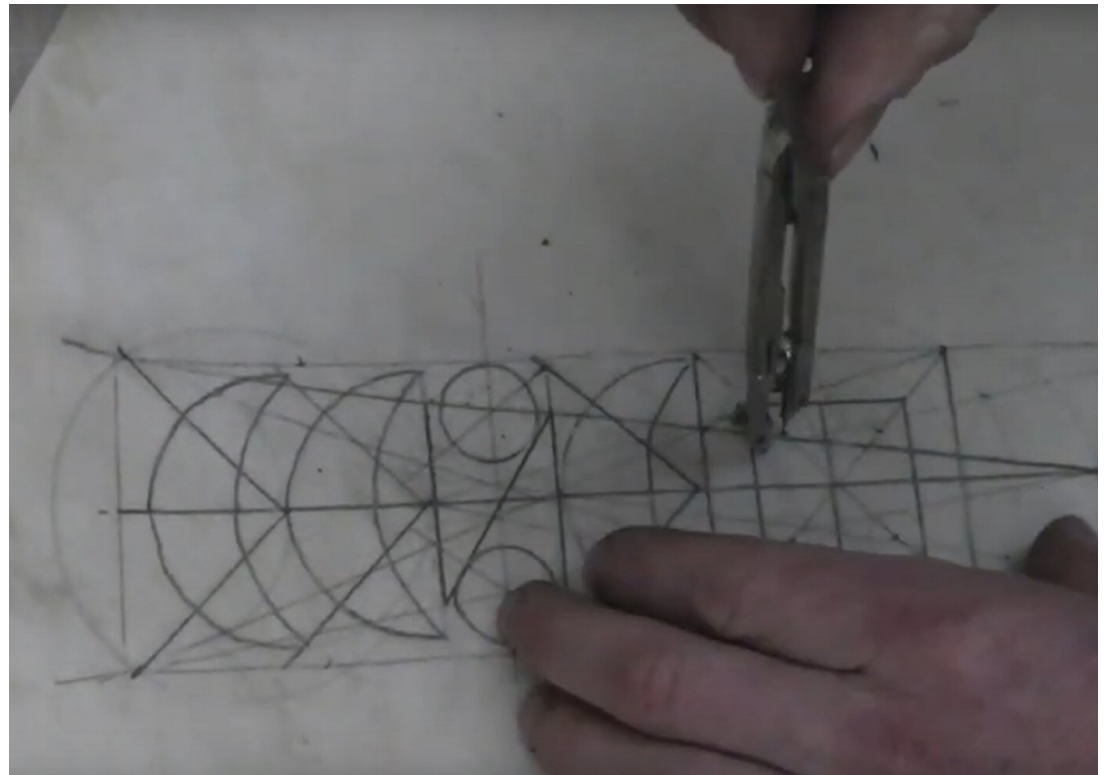
A fascinating exhibition in which Thomas Keyes reproduces what a scriptorium in the Rosemarkie monastery may have looked like, even creating his own vellum, pigments and tools – and achieves remarkable copies of pages from the Book of Kells



# Highlights – our exhibitions

Pictish sculpture – some mysteries revealed

A new take on the display of carved Pictish stones in the downstairs exhibition area, in which Thomas Keyes demonstrates the geometry behind some of the stones – including the Rosemarkie stone, which he recreates using ruler and compasses only.



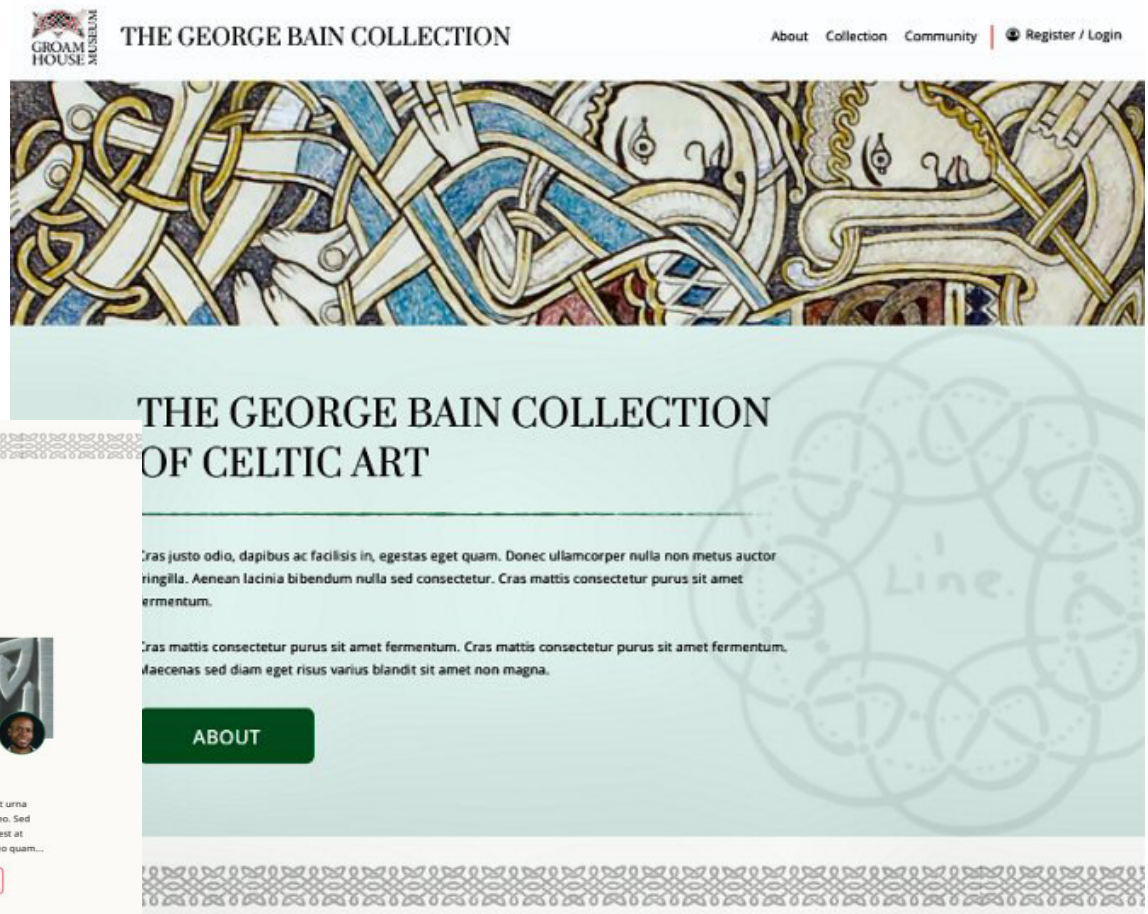
# Fund-raising

- Sadly, our normal fund-raising activity was completely obliterated by Covid – no events, lectures or even a coffee morning
- But on the other hand - £30,000 in grants as a direct result of Covid.
- But we still managed to keep engaged with the community – for example our scarecrow event which was a bit of fun that brought people together
- And our use of social media to keep our volunteers in touch with each other and involved with the museum

# Grants

- £70,000 from Creative Scotland and MGS (award in the previous year)

This year - digitisation of items in the GB collection, and an interactive website to engage with a world-wide audience

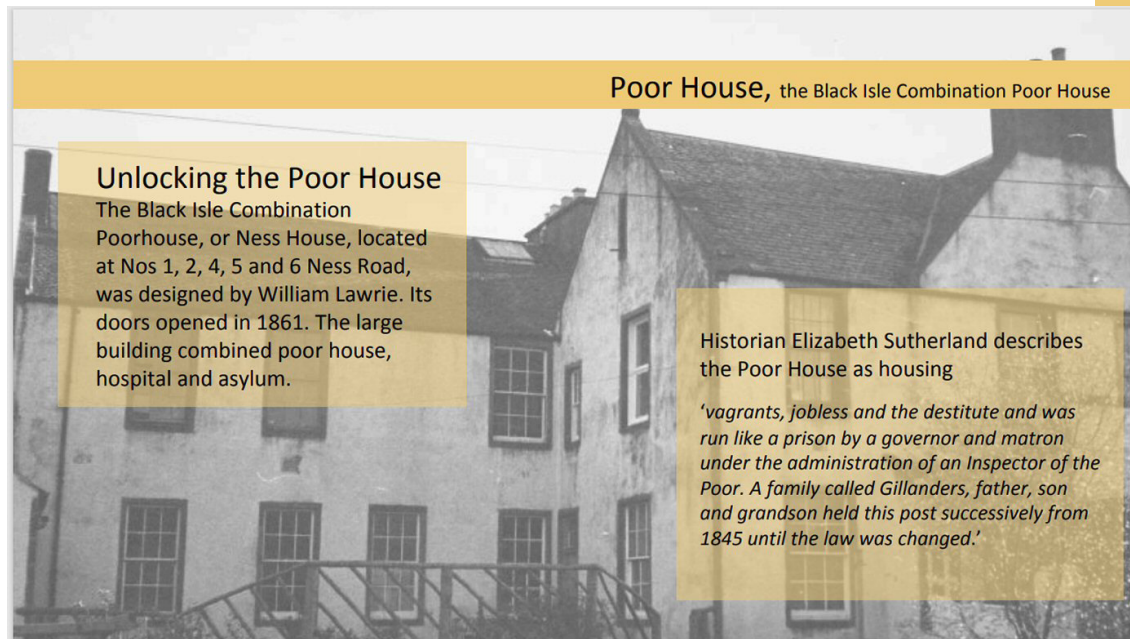




# Grants

- £8000 from National Lottery Heritage Fund for a portable local history exhibition

Including training in photography, interpretive writing, scanning equipment, creation of local history exhibitions

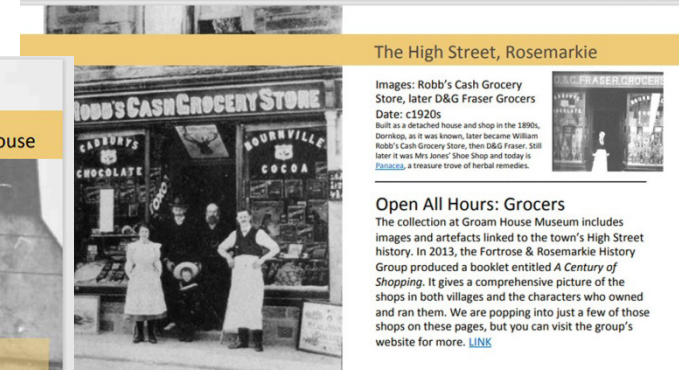


## Unlocking the Poor House

The Black Isle Combination Poorhouse, or Ness House, located at Nos 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 Ness Road, was designed by William Lawrie. Its doors opened in 1861. The large building combined poor house, hospital and asylum.

Historian Elizabeth Sutherland describes the Poor House as housing

*'vagrants, jobless and the destitute and was run like a prison by a governor and matron under the administration of an Inspector of the Poor. A family called Gillanders, father, son and grandson held this post successively from 1845 until the law was changed.'*



## The High Street, Rosemarkie

Images: Robb's Cash Grocery Store, later D&G Fraser Grocers  
Date: c1920s

Built as a detached house and shop in the 1890s, Downkop, as it was known, later became William Robb's Cash Grocery Store, then D&G Fraser. Still later it was Mrs Jinner's Shoe Shop and today is [Finches](#), a treasure trove of herbal remedies.

## Open All Hours: Grocers

The collection at Groom House Museum includes images and artefacts linked to the town's High Street history. In 2013, the Fortrose & Rosemarkie History Group produced a booklet entitled *A Century of Shopping*. It gives a comprehensive picture of the shops in both villages and the characters who owned and ran them. We are popping into just a few of those shops on these pages, but you can visit the group's website for more. [LINK](#)



# Grants

- From MGS to replace heaters, lighting, dehumidifiers and add loft insulation to make museum more sustainable in the long term
- And another from MGS to fund the PPE equipment we needed in order to open

# Trustees

## Board at April 2020

Doug Maclean (Chair)  
Paul Pritchard (Treasurer)  
Barbara Cohen  
Lynne Mackenzie  
Sylvia Macdonald  
Doug Maclean  
Alastair Morton  
Adviser: Helen Avenell

## Joining the Board

Jan Donald  
Richard Hotchkiss

Leaving: Alastair Morton

## Standing down at November 2020 AGM

Doug Maclean/Barbara Cohen  
(re-elected)

## Board at end of March 2021

Doug Maclean (Chair)  
Paul Pritchard (Treasurer)  
Barbara Cohen  
Lynne Mackenzie  
Sylvia Macdonald  
Jan Donald  
Richard Hotchkiss  
Adviser: Helen Avenell

# Volunteers

The lifeblood of our museum!

Sadly, no photos this year, because there were no events! But here is a picture of the museum all spruced up after its re-paint



# Things we don't have photographs of

- Lecture programme – which came back onstream via Zoom after the year end
- Initial business development plan – planning a sustainable future – to be carried forward this current year.
- Collections – documenting, cataloguing the hundreds of items in our collections
- Visitors – numbers dramatically reduced – only £925 in donations (usually about £7000) shop £4350 turnover (usually about £20,000)
- Support staff – Jo Clements (GB Curator) on long term sick leave, now back at work; Carola Martin-Smith (administrator), Jenny Brogden (GB project administrator) – what would we do without them?
- Jill Harden (former Trustee) – stepped in to cover for Jo's absence and has done a sterling job despite many other commitments

## Since the year end (Apr to now)

- Covid-19 – museum has been open, limited hours, limited group size
- Continued last year's exhibitions
- Art-tickets booking system used extensively to control visitor numbers
- Museums and Heritage Highland – going from strength to strength
- Pictish Trail – now complete and soft-launched. GHM developed the self-guided tour app to support it.
- Also developed self-guided tour app for the museum
- Published Groam House cook book!

## Since the year end (Apr to now)

- New website for GB collection launched
- Participated in wider events such as National Storytelling, Art Fund
- Visitor numbers increasing, income increasing, shop looking great! And doing good business.
- Just a few more days before we close for the season.



# Issues facing the museum

- Possible need for replacement for storage, office and workshop locations (Rosehaugh and Balintore)
- Collections are remote from the museum, making it difficult for volunteers and the local community to access
- Limits the extent to which we can run workshops and skills-development activities
- So.....we're looking for option to replace our storage, workshop and meeting facilities and to expand what we do

# Mill Cottage an option?

- Groam House is exploring the potential acquisition of Mill Cottage on Bridge Street
- For use as store, workshop, and area for volunteers and local people to engage with our collections and with local heritage
- Only at exploratory stage – seeking feedback on funding, and feasibility
- Proposal will be put to Members in the new year if/when the Board considers it a worthwhile venture
- In the process of community consultation – will listen to comments put forward

# And finally.....

- A huge Thank you! to
  - All of you for continuing to support us
  - Our volunteers for making us what we are
  - Our paid workers for supporting us so wholeheartedly
  - Our Trustees for achieving so much in difficult circumstances
  - Our Members, Angels, 100 Club members, visitors for the financial and other support you provide
  - Our grant providers and supporters, The Highland Council, Highlife Highland, Museums and Galleries Scotland, National Lottery Heritage Fund, ArtFund
  - Everyone who makes Groam House great!