



President's Message

Hello everyone and welcome to our November newsletter.

Our EGM is taking place online on Friday 5th December 2025 and details can be found in this newsletter. You are encouraged to take part either on the night or by submitting your proxy vote in advance.

Our big ongoing project to modernise and redevelop Elgin Museum has taken some positive steps forward. Thanks to support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Christine Pert has been appointed to the role of Redevelopment Project Manager, whilst Carenza Murray is now well established as Inventory Manager with more than 10,000 items inventoried already! We are confident that these two experienced and enthusiastic people will help us drive our aspirations forward at a faster pace than we could do otherwise.

Also in positive vein, our Archaeology Conference in September was a great success, which included online attendance for the first time, with lots of good feedback from attendees. However, as well as attending and speaking at the conference, we are especially grateful to the AOC Archaeology Group for their financial support with the event.

Another recent positive occasion was our October School Holiday LEGO™ workshop in collaboration with Historic Environment Scotland. This is a good example of the Museum working with others in central Elgin to promote increased interest and enjoyment in local heritage and culture. Some of the models created are now on display in No3 High Street, Elgin Library and the Elgin Cathedral shop.

However, the recent period has also been tinged with sadness following the deaths of museum volunteer Rod Oliver and Society member and former volunteer Linda Duncan. As we are aware, the Society and the Museum depend entirely upon volunteers, so both are sorely missed, and we acknowledge the important contributions that they made during their time. We naturally hope that their efforts will be honoured by new volunteers coming forward to fill the gaps that they leave behind.

With regards,
Nick

*Nick Brown
President, The Moray Society*

Obituaries



Linda Duncan

As most of you will know, we sadly had to inform Moray Society Members of recent death of a long-time member, Linda Duncan. Linda always showed a great interest in the happenings within the Museum and was a frequent visitor even after she gave up her volunteering role with us. Linda died in October and her funeral was attended by many fellow Members. She will be sadly missed by all of us.

Rod Oliver

We were also saddened to hear of the death of Rod Oliver, a keen member of the Learning and Outreach Team in the Museum. Rod joined as a member of the 'meet and greet' team but his outgoing demeanour quickly marked him out as a member of learning and outreach where he was very popular with old and young visitors alike. Rod died in September, and several volunteers attended his funeral at St Margaret's Episcopal Church, Lossiemouth. All of us will miss Rod's happy face and his laughter ringing out around the museum.

Convenor's Corner

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members and volunteers who have supported us over the last few months. With limited public opening over the summer, we have continued to facilitate visits by individuals, families and community groups wherever possible. Over our three open weekends during the summer, we had a total of 500 visitors, including guests from the USA, France, Australia, Mexico, the Czech Republic, Germany, Canada, New Zealand, Romania, and Hong Kong. Comments left in the Visitor Book included:

"The staff were fantastic and very enthusiastic!"

"I loved it, very interesting exhibitions, lovely staff!"

"Very interesting, thank you for the effort and time of volunteers too!"

"Beautiful space and collection! The staff were wonderful!"

More recent visitors have included distant relatives of John Shanks (from New Zealand) who were delighted that we could help fill a gap in their family history, service users from the North East Sensory Service, and occupational therapy groups from the NHS. School visits have also continued, and, since the summer, we've run Victorian themed activities for West End Primary and sessions highlighting 'Old Elgin' for Bishopmill Primary school. None of this would be possible without our Meet & Greet and Learning & Outreach teams so do consider joining us if meeting and working with people of all ages and abilities sounds like fun!

I'm also extremely grateful to the members of the Management Committee who support the day-to-day running of the Museum and who have a less visible role to play. There is nothing glamorous about emptying hoppers filled with dead leaves, ensuring that the emergency lights are fit for purpose, or that the fire exits remain clear, but such tasks ensure that we are all able to use the building safely. Work also continues to ensure that our policies and procedures are up to date and meet sector guidelines. These tasks are also less than thrilling but are necessary to ensure, for example, that we can continue to accept Treasure Trove finds. If you're organised and a stickler for detail, the Documentation Subgroup would love to hear from you!

In the past, we've had small team of volunteers working with collections, but this is largely in abeyance whilst the Inventory Project progresses. Carenza brings a wealth of experience from her time at the British Museum so

is working methodically through the vast array of objects that we hold. In the meantime, Claire is working to rebox and move archaeological material from the cellar, Edwina is reviewing storage of the costume collection (a role which she carried out in a previous job at Horsham Museum), and Louise is cataloguing a collection of WWII photographs from an Elgin airman shot down over Germany in 1943 and incarcerated in Stalag Luft 1. Having reviewed our extensive holdings of butterflies and moths, Martin is now turning his attention to stabilising the cabinets. This and other ongoing activity by the Collections Management Group will mean that we can safely move objects out of the Museum once we can start work on the building... Rationalisation is an important part the Inventory process. Off-site storage is expensive so we need to ensure that we are not spending vast sums of money to store items unnecessarily but, of course, we recognise that much of our collection will merit storage in appropriate climatically controlled conditions.

We are all working to ensure that Elgin Museum comes through what will be a challenging few months (and years) and to ensure that we have a Museum fit for purpose for the next two hundred years!

*Alison Wright
Management Committee Convenor*

Update on Peru

The Peruvian momía (mummified young woman) is still with us, discreetly behind her curtain. It was most interesting that the first thing Pat Allan wanted to do when she visited is to say hello, if not in the momía's dialect, but at least as a person of South American heritage. Pat, a Curator Emerita with Glasgow museums, has been given authority by the Moray Society Board to research on our behalf as to where and how return could happen. She has personal contacts in the relevant cultural organisations in Peru. Although the original request for return came via the Embassy in London, once again communication has ceased at that level. Elgin Museum is a member of the Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) Restitution and Repatriation Group which has been charged by the Scottish Government to address these issues in the museum sector – which is how Pat came to offer her help. There does seem to be some progress by the group to engage practically, as well as just theoretically with the ethical issues, with museums engaged in the complex legal and financial negotiations for returns.

We continue to work with Neil Curtis, Aberdeen University, now Chair of the MGS group. The other research visitor to see the momía recently, was Dr Chris Heaney, on a sabbatical from the Pennsylvanian State University. He has an interest in pre-Columbian material in museums and so also spent time with our archives looking at the context of her arrival in 1846 – and is now in contact also with Pat.

Janet Trythall, Museum Volunteer

Archaeology

Elgin Museum Archaeology Conference, Saturday 13th September 2025 Breaking New Ground: sharing archaeological discoveries from Moray

It was great to be hosting again a conference themed on one of the Museum's key collections, with speakers, leaders in their field and an audience of keen professionals and those with a broad interest in Moray's story. The Alexander Graham Bell Centre, Moray College, UHI) is an ideal venue – the catering was good, the virtual conference ran snag-free (with Claire at the keyboard) and feedback has been positive. We hope that we may be able to add the individual talks to the Museum's YouTube channel and to be producing a printed copy of the Proceedings as a record of the fascinating updates from the lectures and the discussions.

Janet Trythall, Archaeology Volunteer

Conference feedback:

"brilliant organisation, this is one of the best hybrid conferences I've attended. I feel like I'm actually in the room!"

"a fantastic conference - I've enjoyed the whole day"

"Never mind the number of archaeological conferences available in Scotland, it is the extraordinary quality of presentations, the remarkable detail, the huge range and the immense value of everything that is going on and is then presented. My congratulations go to all those involved throughout the country. I had no idea 16 years ago when we moved here, that there would be so many invaluable opportunities to learn and discover. Thank you!"



Dr Fraser Hunter and our own Nick Brown at the conference podium

Elgin Museum Big LEGO™ Build 2025 24th and 25th October 2025

During the October holidays, we were delighted to welcome Fiona Davidson, Historic Environment Scotland Learning Officer, and LEGO™ Master Builder Alistair for the Big LEGO™ Build 2025. Over two days around 90 people (of all ages!) built life-size models of a selection of objects from our collection, all out of LEGO™. All of the replica objects created are on display at No 3 High St, in Elgin Library and at the Elgin Cathedral giftshop (no entrance fee required to access the shop!). A huge thank you to all of our enthusiastic LEGO™ builders for creating such fantastic models!



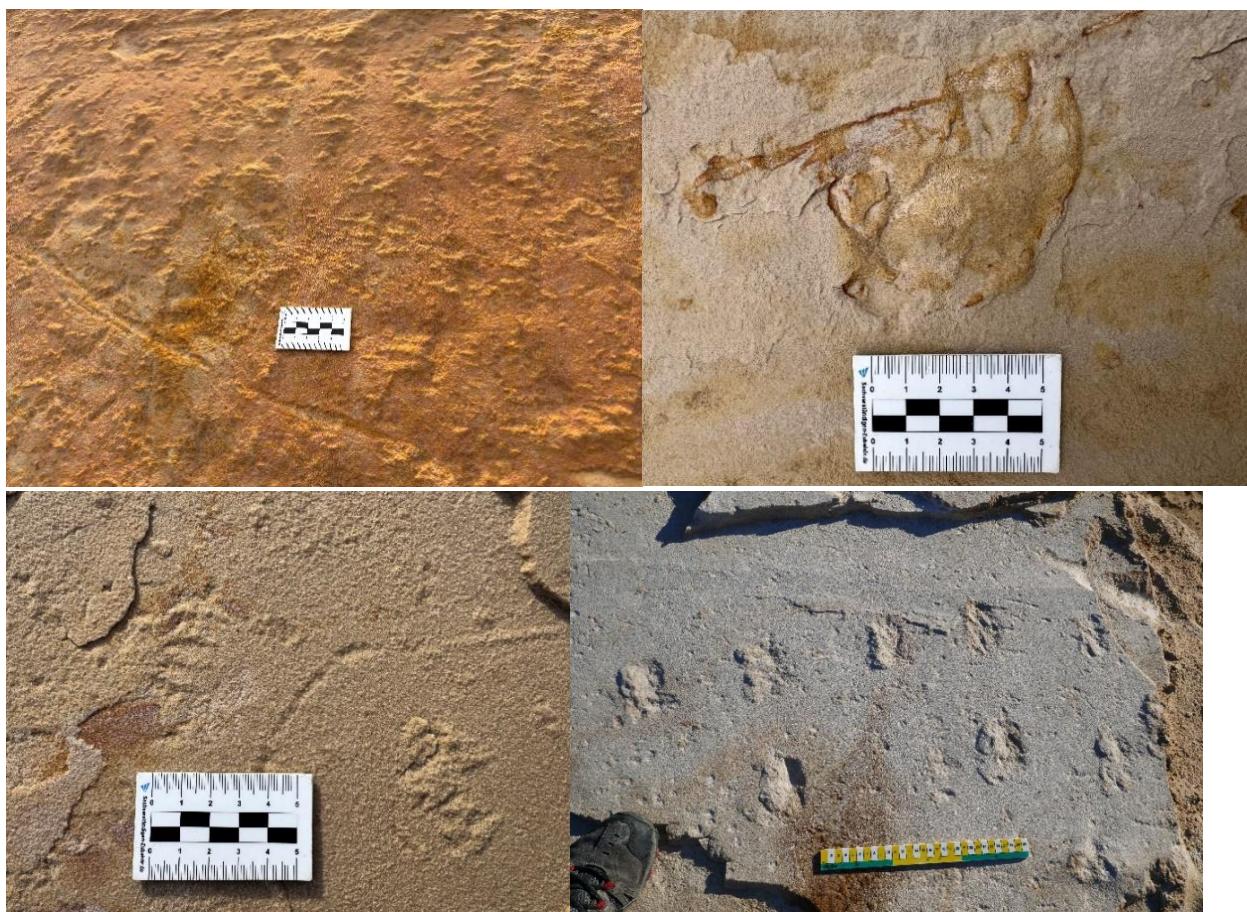
Replica objects on display at No 3 High St and Elgin Library

Geology

Clashach stone helps to construct the world's tallest church.

As Moray Society members may know sandstone from Clashach Quarry, near Hopeman, has provided building stone to help construct the Barcelona basilica, the Sagrada Familia. Recently, the basilica has been declared the world's tallest church and although Clashach is only one of around 60 types of stone used it must be quite an honour for Tennants Quarries Ltd to be involved in the project. Clashach began to be used about 15-20 years ago as the Barcelona Montjuic quarries were starting to run out of stone and after a world-wide search our local sandstone was chosen as a replacement.

This summer, Clashach Quarry was in full swing providing a large amount of stone for the project, blasting for fresh stone occurred in July, and around 120 blocks, chest freezer to garden shed sized, were collected on the quarry floor. For any Elgin Museum Geology Group members interested in fossil reptile trackways from the Permian period, around 255 million years ago, this provided a huge opportunity to photograph and record any prints coming to light. So, I was in the quarry 3-4 times a week together with rulers, brushes and bottles of water, these blocks can be very grubby and many need a good scrub before tracks are revealed! I'd estimate a good 20% of the blocks contained prints or trackways. The following photographs show just four examples of tracks found this summer with one block showed evidence of a small herd of reptiles moving through the area, top left photo.



Interestingly, only one trackway showed evidence of tail drag, something Clashach is known for, whereas there were numerous examples of small reptiles with clawed tracks and larger sized tracks were conspicuous by their absence. We'll never know exactly which creatures made these tracks apart from saying Permian creatures such as dicynodonts and reptiles were likely contenders, scientists continually change trackmaker species, ichnospecies in the case of trace fossils, and the point is that nobody really knows unless an actual body fossil is found at the end of the trackway, science meeting the dark arts!

*Dave Longstaff
Elgin Museum Geology Group*

The Moray Society Prize Draw

Moray Society members (over-18 only) have exclusive access to the Moray Society Prize Draw.

The Prize Draw has been running since April 2000 and has raised over £8000 for Elgin Museum. This helps with the day to day running costs and the Society is very grateful for this income. Sales of the Draw tickets are strictly limited to Moray Society members and income from the sale of tickets is paid directly into the Moray Society Prize Draw account. All proceeds are used for the exclusive benefit of the Moray Society.

Tickets are priced at £10 each per annum and are valid for four draws. Draws are held quarterly with prizes of £25, £15 and £10 respectively for the first three numbers drawn, in sequence, at each draw. These prizes are based on an income of £1000 in tickets sold i.e. 100 tickets.

Many members have annual standing orders with their banks, which greatly reduces our costs. Standing orders can only be amended or cancelled by the persons concerned. Mandates for standing orders are included on the application form. Cash, or cheques made payable to the Moray Society Prize Draw, are also accepted.

There is no limit imposed by the Society on the number of tickets that may be held by individual members. Please email me at the museum for queries about the draw – an application form is included below, or can be downloaded from our website: <https://elginmuseum.org.uk/membership/join/>

Tomas Christie (Prize Draw Organiser)

Email curator@elginmuseum.org.uk

Prize Draw winners 2025

March

1. Pat Smith
2. Kerstin Keiller
3. Alison Wright

June

1. Peter Austen
2. William Robertson
3. Janet Trythall

October

1. The late Oonah Grigor
2. Alison Wright
3. Stanley Mitchell

December

The last prize draw of the year will be drawn online at EGM on 5th December 2025

Moray Society Prize Draw Application

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

I enclose my payment of £ cash / cheque / standing order mandate (delete as applicable – a Standing Order mandate can be found below)

Name	
Address	
Post Code	
Email address	
Telephone No	

I understand that my data is processed (by Elgin Museum's governing body) in accordance with data protection laws, including the UK General Data Protection Regulation. The Moray Society's Privacy Notice 2018 is available to read on Elgin Museum's Website www.elginmuseum.org.uk/policies or available as a paper copy at Elgin Museum.

Standing Order Mandate: Moray Society Prize Draw

To (insert the name of your Bank)	
Address (insert your Bank's address)	

Please Pay: Virgin Money**To the credit of:** The Moray Society Prize Draw**Account No:** 40209056**Sort Code:** 82-63-07

The sum of £..... annually, until you receive further notice from me/us in writing and debit my/our account accordingly **In favour of:**

Name of Account to be debited	
Your Bank Sort Code	
Your Account Number	
Special Instructions	
Signed	
Date	

I understand that my data is processed (by Elgin Museum's governing body) in accordance with data protection laws, including the UK General Data Protection Regulation. The Moray Society's Privacy Notice 2018 is available to read on Elgin Museum's Website www.elginmuseum.org.uk/policies or available as a paper copy at Elgin Museum.

A Great Christmas Gift Idea – one that keeps on giving!

As you can see from the newsletter, there are lots of activities happening for members of the Moray Society. Why not share this by giving a gift membership for Christmas?

All you have to do is fill in a standing order (below) and send it to The Membership Secretary, Elgin Museum, 1 High Street, Elgin IV30 1EQ. Membership rates (if paid by standing order) are £25 for a single membership and £40 for a family of up to two adults and three children. Subscription for junior members and adult members (age 18 to 25) (under 18) is free. Corporate membership and Life membership are both available from £500. Visit our membership page online for full details: <https://elginmuseum.org.uk/membership/join/>

As a very special offer, we are offering membership for £15 for a single person and £25 for a family in the first year as long as a standing order for the full amount is payable from 2027. Please complete the application below with your recipient's details and the standing order mandate with your own details.

GIFT MEMBERSHIP I would like to apply for membership for the undernoted. The membership secretary will send a membership pack to the recipient after Christmas and will send an acknowledgement to the subscriber. Below are my bank details. The membership is in favour of:

Name	
Address	
Post code	
Recipient's email address	

STANDING ORDER MANDATE (Adult)

To (insert name of your Bank)	
Address (insert Bank Address)	

Please Pay: Bank of Scotland, Elgin**To the credit of:** The Moray Society**Sort code:** 80-06-66**Account No:** 00476195

One payment on 1st January 2026 of £15 and then annually thereafter until further notice, commencing 1st January 2027, the sum of £25.

In favour of:

Name of Account to be debited	
Your Bank Sort Code	
Your Account Number	
Special Instructions	
Signed	
Date	

PLEASE CANCEL ALL PREVIOUS STANDING ORDER/DIRECT DEBIT MANDATES

I understand that my data is processed (by Elgin Museum's governing body) in accordance with data protection laws, including the UK General Data Protection Regulation. The Moray Society's Privacy Notice 2018 is available to read on Elgin Museum's Website www.elginmuseum.org.uk/policies or available as a paper copy at Elgin Museum

The Moray Society Extraordinary General Meeting

The Board of The Moray Society has called an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Society, to be held online on Friday 5th December at 7pm (via MS Teams). There are five agenda items for discussion.

A flow chart explaining the process has been shared separately, and our Deaccessioning and Disposal Policy 2025 can be found on the policies page of our website: <https://elginmuseum.org.uk/policies/>

EGM Agenda

1. To deaccession items from the collection which were stolen from the museum approximately 40 years ago:

ELGNM number	Description	Reason	Proposal
1876.2	Fishing reel	Stolen from open display August 1986	N/A
1966.1	Silver pencil set with cairngorm stone	Stolen from open display August 1985	N/A

2. To deaccession items from the collection which we have agreed to transfer to other institutions/organisations:

ELGNM number	Description	Reason	Proposal
1900.3 x 16 specimens; 1901.7; 1907.12; 1912.3; 1912.4; 1920.7; 1930.10 x 38 specimens; 1939.4 x 55 specimens; 1939.9 x 4 specimens	Assorted collection of insects, moths and butterflies (mainly non-British) assessed in 2014 as of more scientific use to NMS	Material originally loaned to NMS but now wish to make transfer permanent.	Transfer to NMS
1982.20	Collection: collection of Scottish Moss and Liverworts. Collected by Roland Richter in 1975 in Moray. The collection consists of 39 sachets of Scottish moss and liverworts.	Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh recently received much larger donation of material collected by Richter so it would be sensible to keep all his material together. Material would also be digitised as part of the larger collection and made available online.	Transfer to RGE
2005.10	Key: master key, that opened doors at Bilbohall (mental hospital) c.1950's	Request from Dr Grays research group (David Evans) for objects	Transfer to Dr Grays research group
2011.2	Collection of items from the Elgin Round Table, including Chairman's chain of office,	Group reconstituted in 2024 and would like items returned to them	Transfer to Elgin Round Table

	donated when group disbanded in 2011		
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3. To deaccession items from the collection which we wish to transfer to our Learning and Outreach collection:

ELGNM number	Description	Reason	Proposal
1929.7	Wood: a piece of wood in the process of petrifaction.		Add to L&O collection
1978.38	Fossil: coral		Add to L&O collection
1978.443	Shark teeth from the Bull River, South Carolina, U.S.A.		Add to L&O collection
1978.938	Fossil: belemnite		Add to L&O collection
1978.945	Fossil: sea urchin		Add to L&O collection
1978.961	Fossil: ammonite		Add to L&O collection
1978.1025	Fossil: bivalve		Add to L&O collection
1996.33	Fossil: gryphaea (devil's toenails)		Add to L&O collection
2001.42.1	Fossil: bivalve		Add to L&O collection
2009.27	Miscellaneous fossils found in West Store – accessioned for use in handling box		Add to L&O collection
2009.30	Slate pencils (x2) one broken; ink pen; school slates (x3)		Add to L&O collection
2022.21.4	Clog: pair of small children's wooden and leather clogs;		Add to L&O collection

4. To deaccession items from the collection which no longer fit with our collection.

ELGNM number	Description	Reason	Proposal
1978.418	Bird: stuffed, Golden eye, Barrow's, male	Not relevant to collection; of no scientific value	Offer to other institutions via NESHN; possible sale
1978.769	Bird: Stuffed, pintail, male	Not relevant to collection; of no scientific value	Offer to other institutions via NESHN; possible sale
1978.777	Bird: stuffed and mounted Hooded Merganser Duck (male adult);	Not relevant to collection; of no scientific value	Offer to other institutions via NESHN; possible sale
1978.779	Bird: stuffed and mounted Red breasted merganser duck (male adult);	Not relevant to collection; of no scientific value	Offer to other institutions via NESHN; possible sale
1978.789	Bird: stuffed and mounted Buffel-headed Duck (male adult);	Not relevant to collection; of no scientific value	Offer to other institutions via NESHN; possible sale

1978.791	Bird: stuffed and mounted Long-tailed Duck (male adult)	Not relevant to collection; of no scientific value	Offer to other institutions via NESHN; possible sale
1978.792	Bird: stuffed and mounted Harlequin Duck (male adult);	Not relevant to collection; of no scientific value	Offer to other institutions via NESHN; possible sale
1978.802	Bird: stuffed and mounted, red breasted merganser	Not relevant to collection; of no scientific value	Offer to other institutions via NESHN; possible sale
2002.27	Crinoline skirt purchased in second hand shop in Edinburgh for use in resource box. Sun damaged.	Waistband and hem torn during wear and tear; skirt length means that it is not suitable for wear by children	Offer to Moray Reach Out (can use undamaged fabric for client projects)
2015.13.1	Modern Christmas decoration, wooden, from Elgin, Illinois.	Falls outside our collections policy; should not have been accessioned on receipt	Recycle
2015.13.2	DVD: Circle of Time - about Elgin and the watch company Elgin USA	Falls outside our collections policy; should not have been accessioned on receipt	Recycle
2015.13.3	Bag: plastic bag, "City of Elgin", Illinois, U.S.A.	Falls outside our collections policy; should not have been accessioned on receipt	Recycle

5. To decide the appointment of Alasdair Locke as an Honorary Patron of The Moray Society. The proposal to invite Honorary Moray Society Member Alasdair Locke to become Honorary Patron of the Society was discussed by the Moray Society Board (29th September 2025). In accordance with our constitution, more than 75% of the Board agreed that this proposal should be put to Moray Society Members (excerpt from Constitution below):

Article 14 HONORARY PATRON(S) *The Members entitled to vote in General Meeting may, on a proposal made by at least 75% of the Board, agree to the appointment of one or more Honorary Patrons of the Society, to be appointed either for such fixed period (usually of five years) as those Members determine or for an unspecified period until such appointment be terminated by them. The Honorary Patron(s) would be entitled to notice of all General Meetings and to attend and contribute to discussion but not vote thereat.*

About Alasdair Locke:

Alasdair Locke, MA (Oxon) History and Economics

Alasdair began his career in investment banking at Citigroup, before founding Abbot Group plc in 1990, which he took public in 1995. He is chairman of Motor Fuel Group, Britain's largest owner of petrol station forecourts, and in 2017, founded Well-Safe Solutions for decommissioning old oil wells in the North Sea. He is Founder and Chairman of Motor Fuel Group and Founder and Chairman of Well Safe Solutions. He was the recipient of the Grampian Industrialist of the Year (2001) award, the Scottish Business Achievement Awards Trust International Business Achievement Award (2000) and the Scottish Business Achievement Awards Entrepreneur of the year (1999). He purchased Glenrinnes estate in 1993, where he lives now with his family. In 2019, with his stepson Alex Christou, he launched Eight Lands, a gin and vodka distillery at Glenrinnes.

Please nominate us for a
Movement for Good award,
and we could win

£1,000

**It only takes
a moment**

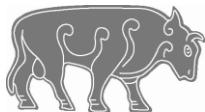
Scan the QR code or visit
movementforgood.com
and add our details



The Moray Society
Charity number
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Ecclesiastical Insurance Office is the promoter



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