

**President's Report**



I hope that you have heard that we have asked our volunteers and members to share their talents with us and submit paintings and crafts for an exhibition in the Museum. We have had a good response (and that includes Mrs J). We are holding a reception on 23<sup>rd</sup> August starting at 1830hrs. Please do come and support us and see the works submitted. We have generously been promised some art and craft items for display and sale made by the late Sheila McColl, former Archaeology volunteer, which her husband has kindly donated.

Our visitor numbers are up 15% on the same period last year. This is good news. In addition, we have had 1000, repeat 1000 children attending Jen's sessions which is really remarkable.

After an afternoon in the Museum, Janet reported to me:-

"Visitor numbers and visitor comments are very positive, the latter frequently referring to the friendly staff. It is great to feel the buzz of the children and families engaging with what's on offer - a sword fight observed in the dressing up area (and the wooden swords and shields make a satisfying crack on contact); a very intelligent conversation with a 9-year old (future palaeontologist) about why I put a "No!" sign across the label "Ornithosuchus" on one of our Triassic fossil reptiles which has been renamed "Dasygnathoides" following research by Argentinian palaeontologists; a family with four children, one not yet walking carried by dad, while the older siblings shared a quiz and pencils.

While we are pleased Visit Scotland has endorsed our 4-star grading, we feel perhaps the assessment qualitatively underrates the visitor experience on offer, due to the rigid scoring system."

I have just heard that Gordon Rintoul is to retire as Director of The National Museums of Scotland in March 2020. You may not have heard of him, but I had the pleasure of working with him when I was a Trustee of NMS for eight years. I mention this because our relationship with NMS has been terrific. They have supported us, and I think we have supported them. There has been a fairly constant toing and froing between us on numerous matters and I will be in touch with him to commend NMS for the strong connection we have.

Finally, No 3 High Street. We have real problems here. We are facing huge costly repairs. We must restore the building and make it work for us. But for it to generate income to support the Museum, we are looking at a six figure sum. This will only be the start of our projected 10-year plan for works to the Society estate. If you can or would like to help please speak with me.

Please do come on the 23<sup>rd</sup> August, I would much like to see you,

**Grenville S Johnston President**

### **Who's Who**

Following the AGM of the Moray Society in April, the Moray Society Board elected by the members, elected the following officers:

President: Lt Col Grenville Johnston

Vice President: Claire Herbert, archaeologist working for Aberdeenshire Council

Hon Sec & Treasurer: Graham Robertson, retired Chartered Accountant

The other members of the Board are:

Museum Convenor: Bill Dalgarno, retired retail manager

Dr Janet Trythall, retired anaesthetist

Edna Cameron, retired lecturer

Mary Shand, retired teacher

Donna Skelly, solicitor

Caroline Webster, chartered surveyor

Rebecca Russell, company director

### **Museum Management Committee**

Bill Dalgarno, Convenor

Gayle Henderson, Shop

Janet Trythall, Archaeology

Stewart Halkett, Marketing

Mary Shand, Publicity

Alison Wright, Geology

Edna Cameron, Funding

Rob Wallen, Buildings

Heather Townsend, Museum Asst.

Jen Kelshaw, Learning & Outreach

## **Learning and Outreach**

We have had a fantastic summer programme covering a different topic every week from dinosaurs to archaeology, via the Chinese zodiac and Harry Potter! Our bookable Wednesday activities filled up so quickly that we had to add extra Thursday sessions - it's been great to see so many familiar faces coming back week after week to try out the new quizzes and activities on our gallery cart.

A summer highlight was our Painting with Nature session where participants were encouraged to do a litter pick on the way to the workshop for which they were rewarded with an Elgin Museum Eco Hero pencil, supplied by Pencil Me In on Batchen Street. The focus on using natural and simple materials for the sessions, with an eye to our environmental impact, has been well received. Families have enjoyed planting 'magic beans' to grow at home while listening to fantastical fables told by Mary, used locally collected driftwood to make beautiful magic wands, created artwork with hedgerow flowers and milled oats to make their own saltdough medieval decorations.

Looking forward, we will be having a family craft session for Doors Open Day on September 21<sup>st</sup>, CSI Skelly Excavations during the Highland Archaeology Festival in October and Lantern Making with Torchlit Tour on the Winter Solstice for the Young Marvels. We've welcomed about forty new Young Marvels this year and would like to issue new cards to our existing members, so if you're still to get yours please pop in or print an application form from our website. You can also find out more about all our events via Facebook 'Elgin Museum Moray', Instagram 'Elgin Museum' or by emailing Jen at [elginmuseumlearning@gmail.com](mailto:elginmuseumlearning@gmail.com).



*Magical stories with Mystic Mary*



*Medieval Stained Glass*



*A saltdough gargoyle*



*Activity Cart in Action!*



*Magic Beans and Wands*



*Painting with Nature*

If you have any questions regarding any events please contact Jen via [elginmuseumlearning@gmail.com](mailto:elginmuseumlearning@gmail.com)

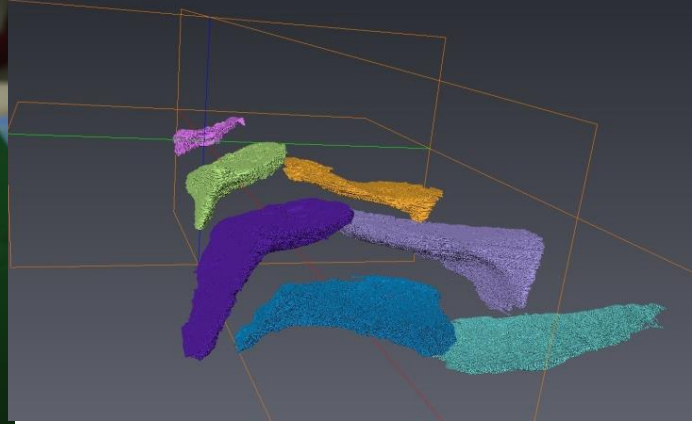
**Jen Kelshaw**  
**Learning & Access**  
**July 2019**

## **Geology Group Report - Aug 2019**

Prof. Mike Benton and a research student at the University of Bristol have completed their analysis of the 3-D scans made of the two pieces of *Stagonolepis* tail discovered by Dave in Spynie quarry last summer and this work is now being prepared for publication. The initial scans were shown to attendees at April's AGM but we look forward to seeing the data properly annotated and interpreted.



*Stagonolepis* fossil (scutes forming part of the armoured tail) from Spynie Quarry



False colour 3-D scan showing 7 tail scutes within the sandstone matrix.

Mike Benton has also written a chapter in the latest Geological Society Special Publication, *Aspects of the Life and Work of Archibald Geikie*, detailing the latter's involvement with the Elgin reptiles and the controversy around the dating of the Old and New Red Sandstones. Hamish Johnston has also contributed to this volume, detailing Geikie's friendship with Matthew Forster Heddle.

The continuation of Recognition status for the museum's local fossil collection and associated archive was reported at the AGM and the *Northern Scot* printed a photograph of Grenville, Janet, and Alison with the Recognition plaque.



'Recognition' carries on



This status is confirmed for the next 5 years and Alison completed the Annual Return for MGS which forms part of the Recognition process. Janet attended the MGS Recognised collection holders meeting in Aberdeen in May; this is the first time that the meeting has been held in NE Scotland and follows on from comments made about the difficulty of attending meetings in the Central Belt. Alison is due to give a short talk at the August meeting, which is focussing on museum storage, highlighting the impact that Recognition funding has had on improving the West Store.

The group welcomed back Sue Beardmore for a day in June, who was visiting in her new role as the John Ellerman Project Curator at National Museums Scotland. Her remit includes visiting as many Scottish museums as possible to review their palaeontological and natural history collections. This information will then be collated to provide an overview of what material is held nationally. Sue obviously has a good understanding of the Museum's fossil collection but may make a return visit while she is in post.



The Museum facilitated a visit by Struan Henderson, an Elgin resident and PhD student at the University of Birmingham; he is investigating the evolutionary physiology of ray-finned fish, in conjunction with their distribution in the Devonian rocks of Europe. He photographed some of the specimens and may request material for 3-D scanning in due course.

Information about Dr Mackie, the Rhynie Chert, and the trigonotarbid model ("Trigger") was passed to Erik Tihelka, a Masters student at Hartpury College, Gloucestershire, following an enquiry to the Museum, and Janet has been in discussion with Martin Hewitt, Professor of History with the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, re the George Gordon papers. Martin is researching the development of scientific thought following the 1859 publication of Darwin's '*On the Origin of Species*'.

Other activities have included a talk by Dave to the Bishopmill BALL (Being Active in Later Life) Group about the fossil footprints and the Moray coast. He also facilitated a visit to Clashach Quarry by researcher and author Hamish Johnston, following a chance encounter at Hopeman.

Jen successfully negotiated a loan of mineralogical specimens from Highland Gemstones and these are now on display in one of the mezzanine cabinets alongside a couple of minerals from the Museum collection. One of the larger pieces on loan was unexpectedly sold by Highland Gemstones, necessitating a rearrangement of the cabinet!

Got bits of costume jewellery you don't wear anymore?



Donate them to the museum and we'll raise funds with them.

The shop is going to have a treasure chest of "previously loved" items such as bracelets, earrings, pendants, brooches. Contact Mary Shand

If you fancy having a look for a *different* antique piece then come along!

### **Reviews from Trip Advisor from w/c 5<sup>th</sup> August**

*Having lived in Elgin for 2 years now, I am a little ashamed that I haven't ventured here before. I took my children aged 4 through to 13 and all found plenty to interest them. Staff were lovely and very knowledgeable, artefacts nicely varied, covering both local and the wider world, and there was plenty for young children to be occupied with too.*

*There really is quite a lot to see in this museum. Lots of cabinets with timelines and events. Specific periods of history were covered as well with info on Victorian Elgin. Upstairs there is the Peruvian mummy as well as an interesting space where once the museum curator lived. Staff were very welcoming and deserve a mention! If you're in Elgin it's worth popping in.*



## VISIT OF CLAN INNES OF AMERICA

On Friday 26<sup>th</sup> July, I was on hand to welcome approximately 40 members of the Clan Innes of America to the Museum. Only two of the visitors had visited the Museum before so it was good to give them a short talk about the Museum and to thank the members for their generosity through the years. Janet had prepared a story board with details of Innes's through the years in Moray and Stewart Halkett gave a short talk on the items on the board.



*Bill Dalgarno with Jeannie Olson, organiser of the tour*

The visitors then toured the Museum and this was followed by a buffet lunch which we organised but which was financed by the Clan. Other visitors to the Museum on the day were generously treated to shortbread on behalf of the Clan.

All seemed to enjoy their visit to the Museum in spite of the exceptionally hot day and our lack of air conditioning. While in the area, the members also visited Innes House, Spynie Palace, Pluscarden Abbey and the Dufftown Highland Games.

We look forward to our next visit in September when we will entertain the Clan Stewart.



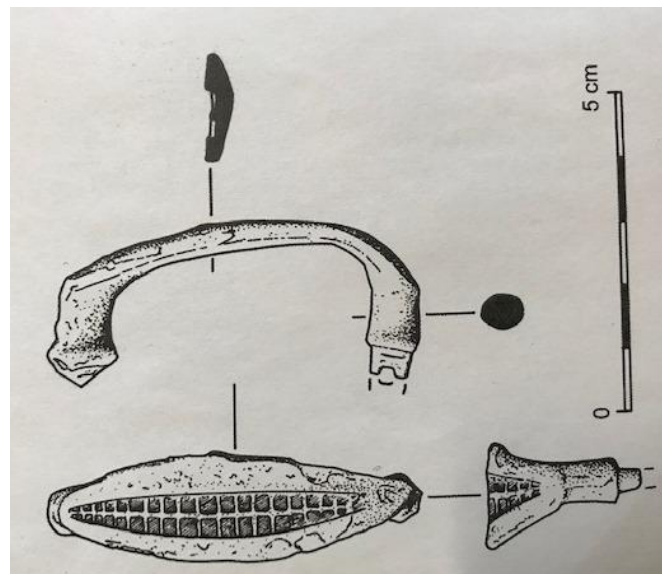
*P&J photographer trying to organise a group photograph*

**Bill Dalgarno**  
**Museum Convenor**

## Archaeology Updates

In the last round of Treasure Trove, we successfully bid for and were allocated two bronze axe heads and a fragment of a bronze age socketed spearhead, all three metal detectorist finds. One of the axe heads was actually from the Forres area but in discussion with the Falconer Museum, as it was found in "their" collecting area, we have acquired it. The National Fund for Acquisitions as usual funded 50% of the costs (the cost is payable to the finder), and we still have some money in our Acquisitions and Conservation Fund.

We still await previous allocated treasures, but there are logistical problems getting Treasure Trove to and from Edinburgh. I am particularly looking forward to having the Iron Age tankard handle, found near Pitgaveny, on display. £500 seemed a lot to pay for a piece of scrap metal, but when we heard National Museums Scotland were interested, I made further enquiries. Fraser (Hunter) then sent me what he called the gospel on tankard handles, a paper by Jonathan A. Horn in the Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society, November 2015. We already have a fragment from Clarkly Hill, but otherwise, apart from a specimen from Orkney, no others have been found north of the Central Belt. We now have access to this drawing by Alan Braby (published in *Discovery and Excavation Scotland* 2018), and a speculative drawing he has made of one in use at a trading meeting between Roman auxiliary soldiers and natives outside a Roman fort. These were stave mugs constructed in a similar way to whisky barrels.



*Drawing of tankard handle*

Elgin Museum is represented on the Scottish Government's Archaeology Strategy Museums Working Group. There came a point when the Strategy's bigger picture saw the need for involvement of museums in developing this strategy to manage Scotland's archaeological resource, not least as museums are both the usual final repository and one of the ongoing interfaces with the public. The next meeting is in Stirling next week. It is good that a museum of our scale has a voice although the challenges are much the same whatever the size of the establishment – particularly the explosion in development archaeology to be dealt with by local authorities, and the rate of metal detectorist finds that need to be processed by Treasure Trove and ultimately find storage.

**Janet Trythall**



# 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.

## Organisation of the Draw

Draw tickets are strictly limited to Moray Society members.

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 £10 each per annum and are valid for 4 draws.

Draws are held quarterly with prizes of £25, £15 and £10 respectively for the first 3 numbers drawn, in sequence, at each draw.

These prizes are based on an income of £1000 in tickets sold ie. 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 available from the Museum, or myself, on request. 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 contact me at the museum for queries about the draw or for application forms.

**Mary Shand** (Prize Draw Organiser)

Museum Tel. No. 01343 543675

Email [curator@elginmuseum.org.uk](mailto:curator@elginmuseum.org.uk)

## Moray Society Prize Draw

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

\*I enclose my payment of £ .....

\*Please forward me a standing order mandate      \*Delete as appropriate

Name .....

Address ..... Post Code .....

Email address .....

# DOORS OPENDAYS

*Get into buildings!*

As part of the local Doors Open Day, the Museum will be open for the day as usual and will, on the day, offer short tours behind the scenes, when visitors will be able to see some of the thousands of items held in our stores. Jen Kelshaw will also be organising activities in the Museum on the day to be enjoyed by our younger visitors.

Also open in Elgin is the Sherriff Court, located across the road from the Museum. Full details of all the properties open throughout Moray can be found at the website, following this link - <http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file126946.pdf>



*The Sherriff Court in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

## **Book signing**

"A – Z of Elgin: Places – People – History" by Jenny Main to be published by Amberley Press in September. Book signing in the Museum from 11 am – 1 pm, Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October.

Jenny is the author of several books of photos of old Elgin as well as being a contributor to our "Women of Moray". Please come along and meet Jenny, ask her questions - and why not buy her latest book? Christmas is not far away, and Jenny kindly donates all royalties from her books to The Moray Society (Elgin Museum). I'm looking forward to finding out how she tackled "Z"! JT

## The Volunteers and Society Members Art Exhibition



### **Something different!**

Something to help funds at the museum!!

Something showcasing the "in-house" talent!!!

Come join us for a special Art preview evening.

**Where: Elgin Museum**

**Date: August 23, 2019**

**Time: 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm**

Refreshments will be supplied

The volunteers and Society members are putting on an art exhibition, of their own work, from August 23, 2019 until October 31, 2019, at prices that will amaze and delight you.

However you can be one of the first to witness and purchase the amazing art in various mediums, by joining us on August 23, 2019 for a special Art preview evening.

Among items available to purchase will be some craft items made by the late Sheila McColl, kindly donated by her husband, George McColl.

## Diary

Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> August to Sat 3<sup>rd</sup> October

"Something Different"

Art Exhibition and sale by Volunteers and Members of the Moray Society

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September

Doors Open Day: Behind the Scenes tours of the stores and Children's activities.

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> September; 7.30pm

"200 Years of Dr Grays Hospital" A lecture by Ken Brown

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September

Highland Archaeology Festival starts

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October: 11am to 1pm

Book signing: A-Z of Elgin by Jenny Main

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October: 1pm to 3pm

"Crime Scene Investigation" - Activity for Young Marvels

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October: 10am to 12 noon

"Crime Scene Investigation" - drop in activity for children

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October; 7.30pm

"Elgin's Tanks" A talk by John Ross

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> November; Final Day of 2019 season.

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> November: 12 noon

Volunteers' End of Season get together

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November: 7.30pm

"Rock Art" - a talk by Alan Thompson

For more events, walks, family activities, and learning opportunities: keep an eye on our web site, Facebook and twitter, and in "Town and Country" under "Elgin" in The Northern Scot.



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**ELGIN MUSEUM** - Scotland's oldest independent Museum - Established 1836

**The Moray Society: Company No 106529 Charity No 017546**