

Elgin Museum Update



Dear Museum Volunteers, Moray Society members and other friends of Elgin Museum,

Welcome to this Elgin Museum Update: a greeting from the Museum to keep up to date with what is going on while, sadly, we are unable to be meeting and greeting each other in person.

We can however share with you, and with visitors, virtually - more on this concept later.

In this Update:

- **Staffing and Museum management – who’s doing what**
- **Our Virtual Museum**
- **The Moray Society**
- **Janet's Jokes**
- **Geology**
- **Archaeology**
- **Museum Studies**
- **Art Exhibition**
- **Message from Jenny Cook**
- **What Next?**

Staffing and Museum management – who's doing what



Claire, Bill, Graham and Janet are acting as an emergency executive committee, and would welcome any input or news from volunteers and members.

Claire has limited off-site access to the Museum emails and if possible, we'll get this access improved. She is also going in twice a week to check the buildings inside and out, to empty the dehumidifiers, check the environmental monitors and do whatever else is needed. However frustrating this is for anyone else who wants access at the moment, it does mean she has only herself touching surfaces or maintaining a distance, which speeds up the visits. She is still working from home in her day job as an archaeologist with Aberdeenshire Council.

Graham is paying the bills as usual – and trying to extract some financial help from the various grants which have been made available. We are not yet at crisis level but a significant proportion of our reserves is in restricted funds, and not intended for a bail out in the situation of an externally imposed closure limiting our income.

Our thanks also go to Stuart Huyton for so promptly updating our Emergency Plan - and to our new 'Emergency' Emergency Plan volunteers. Here's hoping we don't need to put the plan into action any time soon!

Heather and Peter are furloughed, and at the moment we have the 80% Government support towards their wages. Jen is funded through HLF and The Robertson Trust and so is working from home, although not helped by child care being closed and having no physical access to the Museum. However, she has been doing sterling work putting out activities, quizzes and news, all well worth your following on our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), whatever your age. Find more information and links to our social media channels on the [website](#), and also follow Claire's [Elgin Museum twitter](#) feed.

Claire and Janet are generally keeping eyes open for what is going on in the museum and heritage sectors. It is most important that we get the needs of the smaller, independent, volunteer run museums and heritage centres across to governments, and to umbrella organisations like Museums Galleries Scotland, Museums Association, National Museums Scotland, Visit Scotland, Scottish Community Heritage Alliance, etc so that we reinforce their case for support to ensure our survival.

Our Virtual Museum



Claire has animated some of the new displays in the Museum so that they are not completely hidden while we're in lockdown. These can be viewed on our YouTube Channel on the [2020 Display Highlights playlist](#). See the YouTube box below/right for a sample of what's on offer, and do subscribe to our Channel - the more subscribers we have the the more tools YouTube lets us have to make the Channel even better! We also have the videos made by our archaeologist friends and volunteers in 2017 of their favourite objects to remind you of some of our [Collection Highlights](#).

As mentioned already, Jen's been creating activities and quizzes which you can access on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and download from the [website](#).

In addition, several volunteers are adding to the News and the new Museum Musings blog on the website. Please contact us by email at curator@elginmuseum.org.uk if you have any ideas to contribute.

Could you take Mary Shand's lead and write a piece about a [favourite object](#) for the blog? Or put pen to paper and describe your past experience as a Volunteer and what you are now missing? How about a short piece about some aspect of the Museum itself, like Janet's piece on the

[Museum's architecture](#)? Or even follow in Alison's footsteps and write an article for our [News section](#)? Let us know!

And for all of you dissectologists out there (that's jigsaw puzzle fans to you and me!) Claire's been busy creating some [Elgin Museum online jigsaw puzzles](#). You can even make them as easy or hard as you like, by choosing how many pieces the jigsaws have! So why not follow in the footsteps of Sir Patrick Stewart, Hugh Jackman and Bill Gates and get puzzling!

Embed://<iframe width="560" height="315"
src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/videoseries?list=PLZHeOrqYko5w6Tz50SYn8_Hlfuz3kedoh"
frameborder="0" allow="accelerometer; autoplay; encrypted-media; gyroscope; picture-in-picture"
allowfullscreen></iframe>

The Moray Society



The AGM was due on 24th April 2020. In our Constitution it can be delayed by 3 months without needing to apply for any dispensation from OSCR, and so we are waiting and seeing as to what might be possible for the end of July 2020. The good news is that Grenville Johnston offered to continue as President until we can all see more clearly, an offer warmly accepted. However, we are still looking for a future President. Let us know if you have any suggestions to put forward.

We have not held a Board or Management Committee meeting since lockdown, but have kept in touch by email. If necessary, we will have to try "virtual" meetings. So far, telephone and email have worked where consultation has been required over specific management issues such as insurance, building maintenance and the environmental monitors.

Would you like to help secure the future of Elgin Museum? Then why not become a Friend of Elgin Museum by joining the Moray Society! All subscriptions received go towards the running of the Museum, helping to fund activities and exhibitions as well as ensuring the Museum can stay open. Now, more than ever, we need your support. More information, including an application form, can be found on our [website](#).

Janet's Jokes - part 1



Do you recognise these two stone circles? Answers at the end. As exemplars of social distancing, if not with such apposite names, I suggest the Stones of Stenness (good) and Loanhead of Daviot recumbent stone circle (sunbathing?).

(with thanks to Cullen, Deskford and Portnockie Heritage)

Geology



[Scottish Geology Week 2020](#) offers opportunities to "ask a geologist" – but of course save some questions for whenever we are able to hold our postponed Fossil Finders Weekend, inspired by our "[At the Water's Edge](#)" display built around the return of the tetrapod *Elginerpeton* to Moray.

Lots of interesting information from virtual field-trips to online courses and podcasts are accessible on the [Geology Association's website](#).

Angus Miller resumes his lecture programme on 18th May 2020, delivered via Zoom, on Scottish geological topics designed for the interested amateur. Although he suggests a donation of £5 per lecture (he is running this as part of his business), this is optional. Find out more online at <https://www.geowalks.co.uk/geology-courses/>

Lastly this [animation](#) by Christopher Scotese shows the shifting continents at 20 million year intervals from 540 Ma to the present day. Well worth the 6 ½ minutes of your lockdown time that it takes to run!

Archaeology



And if your interests lie in Archaeology, follow [Dig It!](#) for news and updates on archaeology across Scotland. Or for a Highlands perspective, visit the [Archaeology for Museums in the Highlands \(ARCH\) website](#). Susan Kruse puts out regular briefings of what's on and you can join the mailing list by emailing Susan at: info@archhighland.org.uk.

You can also explore the [Moray Historic Environment Record \(HER\) online](#) for information on archaeological and historic sites across the region. As this is part of Claire's day job, you can always contact her there by email at: archaeology@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

This is also a great time to be learning more about archaeology and history from the many free only resources. Future Learn has some excellent courses on offer at the moment, including:

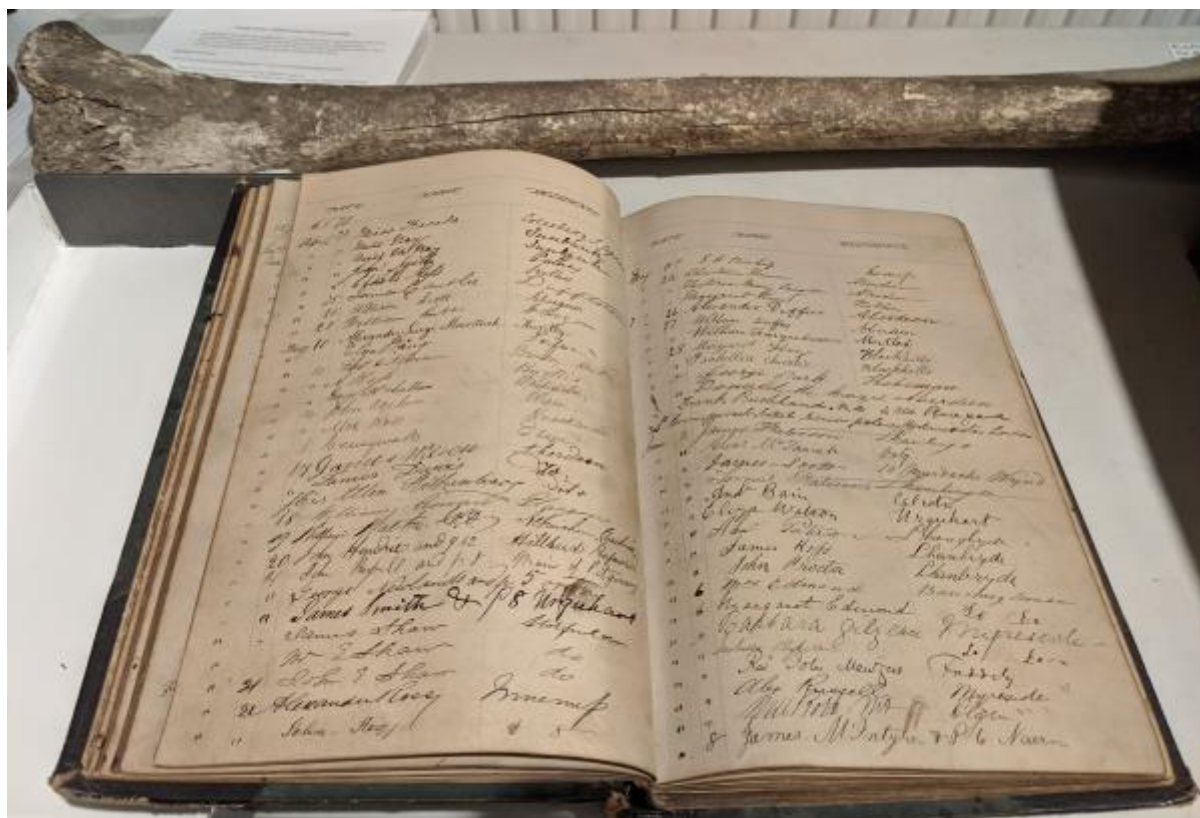
'[Archaeology: from Dig to Lab and Beyond](#)' which offers an introduction to studying archaeology

'[Forensic Archaeology and Anthropology](#)' where you can explore the fascinating world of forensics, and learn how the deceased are located, recovered and analysed using DNA and pathology.

There are also some excellent talks and lectures available on the [Society of Antiquaries of Scotland YouTube channel](#).

If you'd like more suggestions on where to learn more about archaeology, please contact us.

Museum Studies



Have you ever thought of learning a bit more about museums and how they function? Or wanted to know more about collections care, but couldn't find the time? There are umpteen opportunities out there at the moment, and if you want links or ideas, please get in contact and we can send you a list to whet your appetite.

The Museums Association is currently offering for free for employees and volunteers, their [Museum Essentials online courses](#), 'Working Ethically' and 'Working with Collections'.

Why not also explore Future Learn's free online courses, including '[The Museum as a Site and Source for Learning](#)' or '[Learning from the Past: A Guide for the Curious Researcher](#)'.

Janet's Jokes - part 2!



*"I'm annoyed because I had to work at the museum tonight moving suits of armour.
I hate knight shifts."*

"While visiting the museum, I saw my ex-girlfriend standing across the hall, but I was too self-conscious to say hello."

There was just too much history between us."

"[At the museum] My wife: Do you think we are allowed to take pictures?"

Me: No, I think they need to stay on the wall."

"Just been to the National Helium Museum.

I really can't speak highly enough of it!"

Art at Elgin Museum



We are very grateful to Irene Lukkarinen for organising very successfully the seasonal art exhibitions for the last couple of years. She has now left Moray but not without setting up the 2020 programme - now postponed. We now need a volunteer to take on this very important but potentially interesting role. If this is something you would be interested in taking on, please contact us by email.

Friends of Elgin Museum Exhibition - invitation to take part

Last year we ran a hugely successful Elgin Museum Volunteers Art Exhibition, and we're keen to make this an annual event. Whether you exhibited last year, were inspired by what you saw last year or have been honing your art and craft skills during lockdown, we'd like to hear from you.

There are no restrictions on what type of art or craft you submit: anything from painting, drawing, photography, sculpture, jewellery, textile, printing, glass work, wood work, metal work - and beyond! Ideally, any pieces submitted should be available for sale (with 20% of sales going to the Museum, to help secure the Museum's future, and an optional further 20% of sales going to the NHS), but these are not an essential criteria for submissions.

In terms of size of work, for 2D works (e.g. paintings, photographs, drawings etc) these should be framed, and no larger than 42.0 x 59.4cm. For 3D pieces, these should be no larger than 60cm in any direction.

Depending on how many people sign up to exhibit, we may limit submissions to 5 per person.

At the moment, we have no confirmed date for re-opening this season (and therefore no confirmed date for an exhibition) but we are hopeful that we will be able to open at some point in 2020. A tentative date for the exhibition would therefore be late 2020 or early 2021.

To express an interest in taking part in the next exhibition, please email Claire by the 31st May 2020 (curator@elginmuseum.org.uk).

With lockdown restrictions still in place, now seems like an ideal time for arts & crafts, creating new works or developing new skills!

A special message for our Volunteers, from Jenny Cook, our Volunteer Mentor



I hope you are keeping safe, well and busy during this time of lockdown. I know you will have some sort of project(s) on the go as it is not in the nature of a volunteer to be idle! Also, we have been

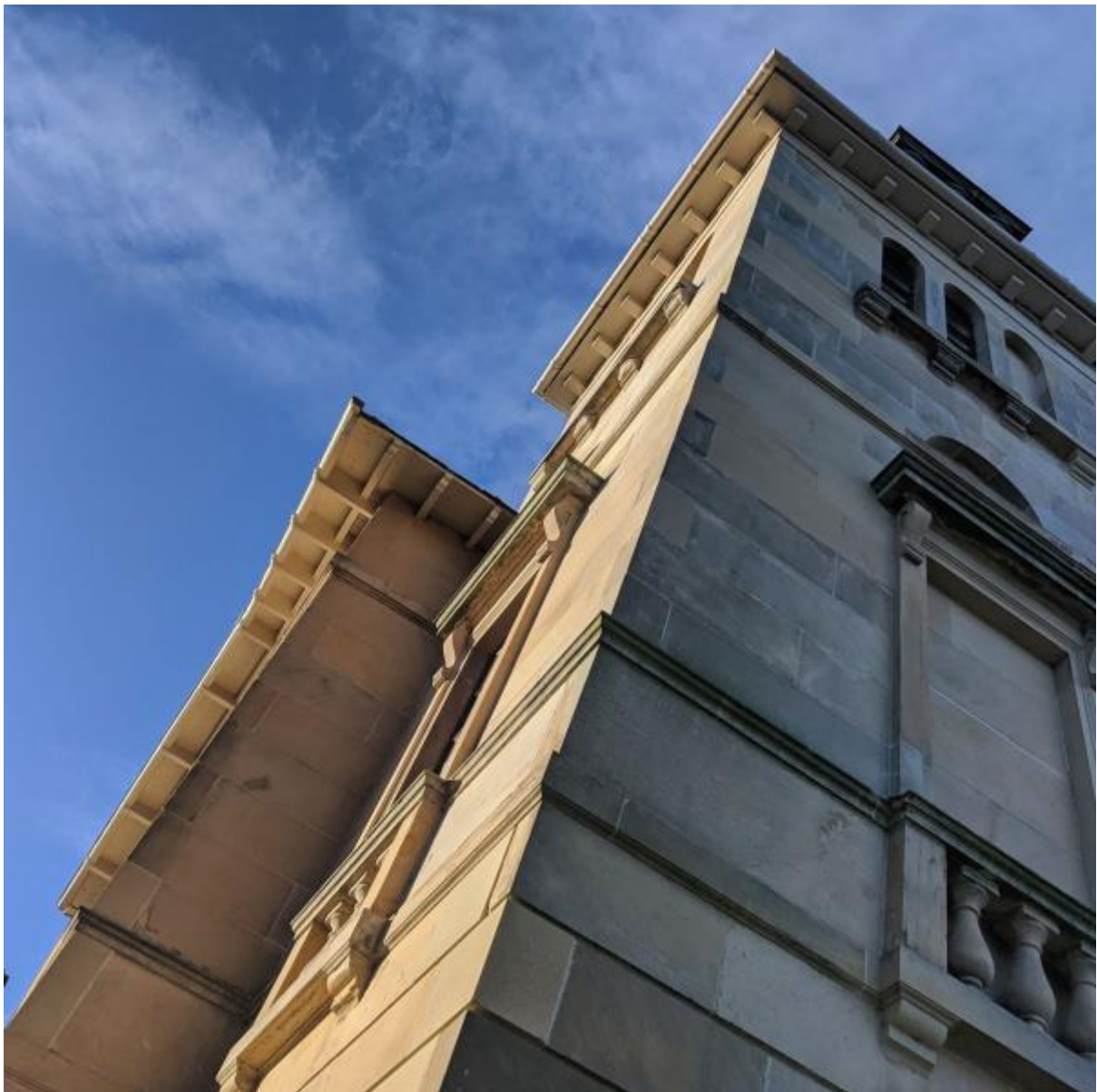
blessed with (mainly) gorgeous sunny weather so great for walking, gardening and many other outdoor pursuits.

Please remember the 'Friends of Elgin Art Exhibition' - now is the time to be creative!

You will all be missing friends and family and that has been one of the hardest aspects of this period. As we eventually get back to a more normal way of living, we will once again open Elgin Museum and meet up again.

With kindest regards, Jenny

What Next?



We obviously have to wait and see what the governments roll out with their lockdown legislation. We will also need to make our own assessments as to what is right for Elgin Museum, our staff, volunteers and visitors. There are two issues to consider.

Firstly, a strategy for re-opening, how and when. As part of the museums and heritage community, we expect there will be advice shared on best practice for this. Given the limitations for distancing in any including our museum building, it is hard to imagine a model for allowing visitors in let alone staff; we can only hope there are advances soon that will make it safe, albeit with precautions which are likely to extend far into the future. Meanwhile, we are removing events from our 'What's On' list in line with the reality of the management of the pandemic. If appropriate we would consider opening over the winter.

Secondly, there is the financial situation. Expenditure on fixed essentials continues and our main income from visitor donations, events, art exhibitions, hall hire and weddings, has ceased. In addition, we still need to spend near to a million pounds on our buildings, and finance a Museum Curator and Development post, both against inevitable increased competition for charitable funds.

It is way too early to lose heart but to reopen we will probably have to have found a new model to work in a new world.

Thinking of you all in this difficult time and hoping you and yours stay well and able to make use of this time to explore new skills and experiences, or even catch up with tasks long postponed.

All the best from the Museum Emergency Executive Committee

Stones circle answers:

The Merry Maidens – SW Cornwall, between Newlyn and Land's End

The King's Men - near Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire

That's all for this Elgin Museum Update!



Please feel free to contact us by email, and do let us know if you enjoyed this Update! Don't forget to visit the [website](#), find and follow us on social media - and why not tell a friend about Elgin Museum online?

If you have enjoyed this newsletter, any of our Virtual Museum content, or would just like to make a donation to help support Elgin Museum, please visit our [Paypal donations page](#).

Thank you!

Elgin Museum

www.elginmuseum.org.uk

Scottish Charity No: SC017546 // Company Limited by Guarantee No: 106529