

## **President's Message**



Notwithstanding the dire threats and warnings, I admit that I crept into the museum some weeks ago on a legitimate errand of goodness. So, there you have an admission of guilt and a plea in mitigation in one sentence!

The Board hope you are all well. We have been heartened by your ongoing support, particularly financially, which has really helped us. You will read in this newsletter about first openings of the Museum but I fear that we will not be seeing the public until next spring.....and even I have my doubts about that.

However we are positive. We have a great "emergency team" who are clearly looking after our museum, watching all the rules and also using this extraordinary time to good effect within and without the building.

The Board are looking seriously at No 3 High Street and how we might best utilise it. The aim is to integrate improved use of all the "building stock" while carrying out essential repairs. While exciting, this is a major project, as you can imagine requiring major funding. We have had some grant funding towards preliminary development of the basis of a plan, and will keep you informed as and when we are able to make more progress, which is dependent on finding that funding. However, you will soon see scaffolding up again as the temporary roof on No 3 needs to be replaced.

There are plans to ask our volunteers to help with what I might describe as the "house-keeping" of our Museum objects. Please do watch out for a call from Bill Dalgarno. All will be socially distanced we assure you.

I am sure you will have enjoyed the Museum Updates as much as I have. I have been a failure on the questions but a great enjoyment has come from the jokes. And all the articles have been very interesting. How I envy the editor her IT skills!

Finally we do need someone to take my place next April. Please do not be shy. It is only for three years.....which is what they told me about 15 years ago! But to be serious if you felt you might be willing to help The Moray Society in this role please do have a private chat with me. It is very rewarding.

The Board send you all our best wishes and stay safe.

**Grenville Johnston**

**Hon President**

## **Moray Society AGM.**

Because of COVID restrictions, the AGM of the Society had to be postponed from its normal end of April date. Our constitution stated that it had to be held by the end of July, so the meeting was held, virtually, on the 17<sup>th</sup> July. Below are the minutes of the meeting.

### **Minutes of The Moray Society Annual General Meeting 2020**

**17th July 2020, 7.00pm, via MS Teams Platform**

1. **Welcome:** *The President, Grenville Johnston (GSJ) welcomed those present*

2. **Apologies for absence**

*12 virtual attendees, 23 apologies, 27 proxy votes*

3. **Minutes of AGM 2019** – *accepted nem com*

4. **Matters arising from above** - *none*

5. **President's written report on the activities of the Society** (Grenville Johnston)

*On file*

6. **Vice-president's verbal report on Elgin Museum during Covid-19** (Claire Herbert)

*See end of report for written version of VP's report*

7. **Financial Report**, including draft Accounts (Treasurer and Company Secretary, Graham Robertson)

*Not much to add – the accounts are in draft form and are currently with Accountants. Difficult at this time but they should have them ready soon. Grants for Geology project, Teens & Tweens. Main expenditure is on buildings, inc scaffold/roof works to no3. Investments on way back up, after having dropped off.*

8. **Appointment of Ritsons**, Chartered Accountants, Elgin as independent financial examiner for 2020

*Accepted*

9. **Board Membership - Annual Election**

The following existing Trustees are resigning and standing for re-election having been duly proposed by two Ordinary Members. See notes for the Agenda:

**Edna Cameron**            1. Mabel Rennie 2. Shirley Jackson

**Bill Dalgarno** *ex officio*

**Claire Herbert**            1. Ritchie Mabon 2. Alison Wright

**Stuart Huyton** (new, co-opted on 30th October 2019) 1. Rob Wallen 2. Alison Wright

**Grenville Johnston**    1. Angela Monro 2. Edna Cameron

**Graham Robertson**    1. Christine Clerk 2. John Barrett

**Rebecca Russell**            1. Gayle Henderson 2. Mary Byatt

**Mary Shand**                1. Jenny Cook 2. Frances Wardhaugh

**Donna Skelly**

1. Marion Yool 2. Claire Herbert

**Janet Trythall**

1. Mary Byatt 2. Kerstin Keillar

**Caroline Webster**

1. John Trythall 2. Grenville Johnston

*Accepted*

#### **10. Membership report**

Fixing of annual subscriptions. The Board recommends:

Ordinary member not paid by Standing Order, £30 (otherwise £25) - unchanged

Family member not paid by Standing Order, £50 (otherwise £40) – unchanged

Student/unwaged – £10

Junior (Young Marvel) – Free

*Bill Dalgarno - 3 or 4 new members, 3 or 4 members lost. Noted with sadness the recent death of former Museum volunteer and Moray Society Member Brian Chandler.*

*Membership subscriptions: Accepted*

**11. Disposal** by transfer of ownership to another heritage organisation, Alness Heritage Centre, of a mangle ELGNM 1976.106

*Accepted*

#### **12. AOCB**

1. *Moray Society Prize Draw – numbers drawn: £20 no48 (J. H.); £30 no108 (D. C.); £50 no28 (K. K.)*
2. *Board meeting to be scheduled in near future to agree posts.*
3. *Donations have been received, we are very grateful for these*

**13. Close**

*G SJ offered a vote of thanks to all who help the Museum keep going. Reopening – most likely 2021, in line with other museums in Moray and beyond.*

## **Museum Convenor**

The museum continues to be closed to the public, although Heather and Peter are now back at work with Heather catching up on paperwork and Peter having changed his hours to come in on days when work is being done in the museum giving a thorough clean at the end of each day.

Our main project for the winter is an inventory of the artefacts within the museum. I have begun the task by myself for the moment but look forward to seeing volunteers back and able to give a hand. I will be in touch shortly with those who have offered to help but am still happy to accept more volunteers if anyone is willing to help.

If you have any queries in the meantime, see the website for more details or send an email to [curator@elginmuseum.org.uk](mailto:curator@elginmuseum.org.uk). For anything **urgent** contact me via the museum email address.

Thanks are due to Claire who, with the help of others, has been working hard within the museum to take advantage of the grants available to us. We were fortunate to apply for and subsequently receive business relief funding, a grant to help us with digitisation of our activities, a grant to help purchase PPE and money to enable us to furlough employees while we were unable to operate.

We have also been very fortunate to receive several very generous donations during the last few months while we have been closed - several of our members have been working to raise money to help us and others have sent a cheque.

During the last few months, we have been delighted to receive money from subscriptions which members have thankfully carried on. Those who receive a reminder by post, I have not written to but will send a reminder in the next few weeks. If you normally receive a postal reminder, I would be grateful if you could renew your membership by post to the museum in order to save me having to write.

Later in the newsletter, you will see mention of two ongoing activities which you might have missed. Firstly, I would urge you to go to the Museum website to view our online Members' Art Exhibition, where you can view and / or buy items which have been worked on by Moray Society members. The exhibition has been curated by Claire and is a marvellous innovation while we are unable to make use of our gallery space. Secondly, you should be sure to go to You Tube to see a rerun of the first of our "In Conversation" series which will replace our normal winter series of lectures in the museum hall. The first is a conversation with Neil Curtis, Head of Museums and Special Collections for University of Aberdeen, who has a long standing relationship with Elgin Museum.

Do keep looking on our website if you can to keep up to date with the latest happenings, including virtual visits to the inside of the Museum.

Bill Dalgarno

## Geology Group Report – Mar 2020

### Elgin Museum Geology Group Autumn report.

As with other groups within the Museum the geology group has had a quiet year.

Our proposed *Elginerpeton* exhibition “At the Water’s Edge” was cancelled of course and, hopefully, we will be able to show the public our display next year.

An article mentioning the theft of fossil footprints from the Hopeman foreshore in 1997 did elicit a response from a Hopeman resident implying that the culprits, who we thought were foreign paleontologists, may well have come from the aforementioned village...very interesting!

With the understandable lack of Geology Group projects, we thought it would be interesting to give a more detailed description of Dr Elsa Panciroli’s activities following on from the brief article which appeared in the September Museum update.

### Dr Elsa Panciroli and the Eigg Stegosaur...StEiggosaurus

Members of the Moray Society who are interested in geology and paleontology may remember that in November 2017 members of Elgin Museum Geology Group met up with Drs Nick Fraser and Elsa Panciroli from the National Museum of Scotland, Bob Davidson MBE, Jennifer Heatley from SNH and Gavin Tennant of Tennants Quarries Ltd. The intention was to tour Spynie and Clashach quarries and to discuss how to manage the fact that two active quarries in the area also happen to be SSSIs for their geological and paleontological importance. This is when we had the first chance to meet up with Elsa who comes from the West Highlands and who began her studies with the UHI gaining her PhD at the University of Edinburgh.



*Dr Elsa Panciroli, 2<sup>nd</sup> from left, at Spynie quarry trackway in the museum*



*Elsa studying a Permian reptile*

Elsa then came to the Museum in Feb 2018 to have a look at, and measure, some of our Permian Dicynodont trackways with a view to comparing them with similar trackways found in Permian sandstone quarries in SW Scotland. She often travels north to visit Scottish fossil localities and, indeed, after many field trips to Skye produced an academic paper on a Middle Jurassic mammal fossil found on Skye. The tooth she described was about 1cm long and belonged to a mammal named *Boreolestes serendipitus*. These small fossils are often found embedded in large boulders on a remote section of Skye coastline and needing rock cutting equipment to extract them; not exactly casual fossil collecting!

Readers of this newsletter will surely have noticed that Elsa was in the headlines a few weeks ago with the publication of a discovery she made on the Isle of Eigg in 2017. The newspaper headlines came out about 3-4 days before the agreed date and she was on a long hike in the Highlands when the media started knocking on her door. This discovery of a dinosaur fossil, later thought to be a fragmented fibula (lower leg) bone, on Eigg was most remarkable. She stumbled past the block while running and the block was on

the opposite side of Eigg from where one might have expected to find vertebrate fossils. Coming from a type of Stegosaur the animal quickly acquired the nickname StEiggosaurus...indeed...

The story is told here on Elsa's blog:

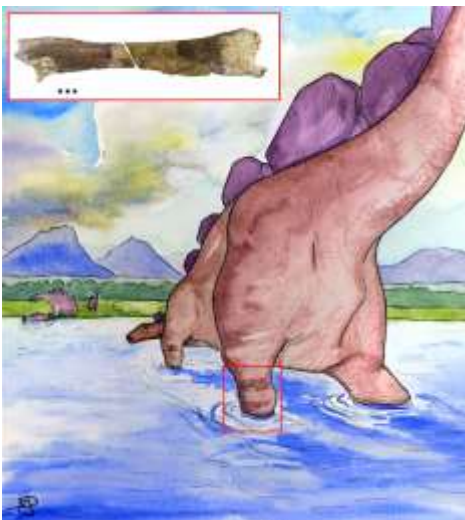
<https://giantsciencelady.blogspot.com/2020/09/on-finding-fossils.html>

It is a bit ironic that Elsa specialises in early mammals and one of her most famous finds happens to be of a dinosaur, as you may know the interaction of dinosaurs and early mammals is one of great scientific debate.



*Dugald Ross, from Staffin Ecomuseum, extracting the leg bone, Laig Bay, Eigg.*

As you can imagine, with her links to Elgin Museum, we follow her academic journey with interest and indeed, recently Elsa has announced that she has just started a 3 year project as a Leverhulme Research Fellow at Oxford University Museum of Natural History investigating the origins and growth patterns of early mammals. In addition, a book written by Elsa, "Beasts Before Us" should be published in June 2021 and we wish her well with the book and future studies



*Photograph of the leg bone and Elsa Panciroli's drawing of the creature.*

Dave Longstaff

Elgin Museum Geology Group

## Jen Kelshaw

In view of the COVID restrictions, a very small presentation was held to thank Jen for her work at the museum. Museum Convenor Bill Dalgarno, Treasure Graham Robertson and Moray Society Board Member Edna Cameron presented Jen with a photo collage of some of her museum highlights along with an Elgin BID gift card on behalf of the Society and Museum. Jen has been a great asset to Elgin Museum, having built up a variety of items which we will be able to use in the future. We're sure you will all join us in wishing her every success with her future endeavours in her future work as a primary school teacher.



*Jen with gift*



*Photo collage and gift card*

## Museum Assistant Report

Dear All,

It's been a strange 6-7 months to say the least as I was itching to get on with some Museum work. I am extremely grateful to the Society who opted to put me on the furlough scheme. I've been back at the Museum for just 4 weeks now. Strict cleanliness, distancing and hygiene precautions have been put in place with clear guidelines provided in a manual by Claire, and whilst enforced, feels like a safe, welcome environment to come back to. I am testing out the new routines with Peter, working our hours around each other, to avoid double cleaning areas, maintaining safe distancing etc.

I happily have my head deep in paperwork and filing, mainly trying to tie up accessioning backlog and clear my desk - the past few weeks being extremely productive. I hope it won't be too long before we return to some normality, but before then, I look forward to chatting to those of you who are willing and able to return, including those who have volunteered to help Bill with the collection inventory - 9 months is a long time not to see friends!

Speaking of friends - I was very much in denial when Di Hannan had to leave us - but recently I had to say another fond "fairwell" to our Jen Kelshaw at the end of August. I did so at Jen's invitation over coffee and cake at Johnstons (cake always helps soften the blow), with friend and volunteer Kristy. Jen and I have met up a few times since, though she is at full throttle into University study at Moray UHI, retraining to be a teacher. Jen loved her work in Museums education and outreach, and it was a real shame to lose her, especially before the end of her contract- but I completely understand the need for better job security and support, particularly now that Museums, culture and learning are under threat due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Good luck Jen!

Best wishes,

Heather

## **Obituary**

We were very sorry to hear of the passing of Stuart Mackenzie recently, a former volunteer and a Moray Society member. He was an excellent meeter and greeter with a profound knowledge of the history of Moray which he would willingly share with our visitors, skills which add so much to their experience. One of his speciality subjects was the Old Tolbooth and Jail on Elgin Plainstones. A former lecturer at Moray College and a Church of Scotland reader. he only retired from front of house volunteering when mobility problems restricted his ability to get about the Museum. Always a gentleman, he will be sadly missed.

Janet Trythall

## **Moray Society Prize Draw**

The Prize Draw has been running since April 2000 and has raised many thousands of pounds 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 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)

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## **Moray Society Prize Draw**

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 .....

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## **Latest prize draw results**

### October

1st Dr Janet Trythall

2nd Mrs Juliet Stewart

3rd Mr Donald Clerk

### November

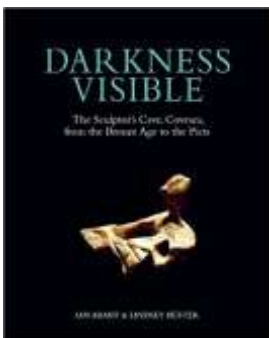
1<sup>st</sup> Mrs Alison Wright

2<sup>nd</sup> Dr Janet Trythall

3<sup>rd</sup> Mrs Linda Duncan

## **Sculptor's Cave, Covesea**

At last, a re-evaluation of the Cave's story is seeing the light of day as "Darkness Visible: The Sculptor's Cave, Covesea, from the Bronze Age to the Picts" by Ian Armit & Lindsey Büster. Apart from adding to our understanding of the significance of the Covesea Caves both locally and in a broader European context, the project undertaken by Ian and Lindsay involved a new study of the known artefacts. This included those on display in Elgin Museum where we have three of the cut-marked vertebrae, with Late Bronze Age and other Roman/Iron Age objects from Miss Benton's excavations. Of course this has all been very exciting for your former Vice-President and Covesea resident who has been involved since taking Ian on his first visit to the Sculptor's Cave nearly 10 years ago.



You can order copies of the book (Collection or local delivery free, postage at cost, if necessary) at the very favourable price of £25 with a small profit to the Museum.  
(From Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, £30 + P&P £3.95).

Orders should be made via email to [curator@elginmuseum.org.uk](mailto:curator@elginmuseum.org.uk) with subject "Darkness Visible order". Payment method will be advised when your request is confirmed.

Janet

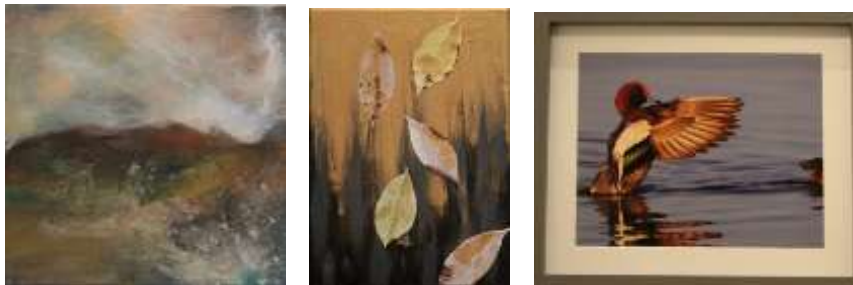


Welcome to the 2020 Friends of Elgin Museum Art Exhibition!

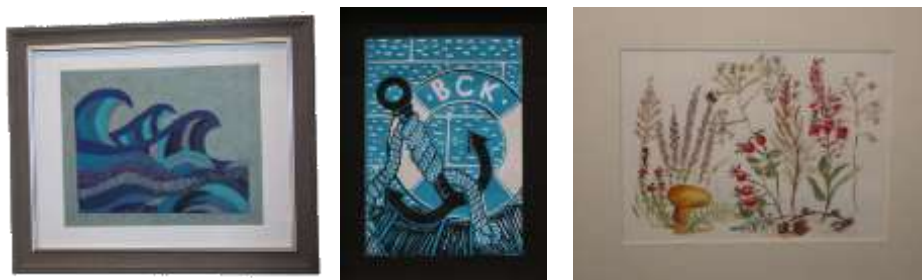
This year, we can't welcome you to the Museum in person, so we've made the exhibition available online. This means you can still explore and enjoy the wonderful arts and crafts of our very talented Volunteers and Moray Society Members, but from the comfort of your own home!



This year's exhibition features photography, oil, acrylic and watercolour paintings, textile art, jewellery and relief prints. All of the items in the exhibition are available to purchase with a percentage of sales donated to both Elgin Museum and the NHS. So, whether you're shopping for yourself or looking for Christmas presents for friends and family, there's something for everyone here and you can help support local charities at the same time!



To purchase any item in the exhibition, please email [elginmuseumevents@gmail.com](mailto:elginmuseumevents@gmail.com) stating the name of item(s) which you would like to buy. Items can be collected from the Museum, by arrangement, or we can arrange delivery of purchased items – P&P will be calculated and advised at the time of purchase.



To visit the Exhibition, go to the Elgin Museum website and click on the Art Exhibition tab, then follow the instructions – or visit <https://elginmuseum.org.uk/art-exhibition>

## Winter Lecture Series

Instead of our usual Winter Lecture Series, held in the Side Hall, we've taken the decision to go "online". The first episode of "Elgin Museum: In Conversation" can now be viewed on our You Tube channel (<https://youtube.com/watch?v=lxm5HADGNeU>). This episode features Neil Curtis, Head of Museums and Special Collections at the University of Aberdeen. The video is free to watch but please consider making a donation through our PayPal donate page if you enjoy it.

### Part of the new welcome!



[www.elginmuseum.org.uk](http://www.elginmuseum.org.uk)

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