

# OCTOBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

## RECORD SEPTEMBER FOR THE MUSEUM!

Despite the continuing uncertainty surrounding the Covid pandemic, we have been totally overwhelmed by the response since reopening the Museum on April 26th.

With all our Covid measures still in place (including the one-way system), after a steady start in May things started to get busier in June and increased again in July and August, to the point where we were regularly having to put the 'red light' on outside the door as we had reached our self-imposed safe capacity for visitors inside the Museum!

Fortunately our visitors have been very understanding of the situation and many have taken the opportunity to enjoy the exhibits outside in the garden whilst waiting for their turn to come inside. Once in the Museum, we have experienced a big increase in spend per head on gift items (including books) and also a huge increase in visitors donating their admission fees via the Gift Aid scheme.

As a result, despite visitor numbers being down approximately 15% on our record year of 2018, **our earned income at the Museum in September was the highest ever for the month!** This is very much a team effort on the part of all our staff, volunteers and you, the Members.

**Thank you for your continued support.**



## WINTER OPENING

**In light of our strong visitor numbers over the summer, and with no sign that they are tailing off, we have decided to keep the Museum open to members and visitors until the end of the year.**

From November 1<sup>st</sup> Historylinks Museum will be open from 10:30 am until 4.00 pm, 5 days a week from Wednesday through to Sunday (closed on Mondays & Tuesdays).

There will still be an option for visitors to pre-book a visit on Mondays & Tuesdays online via our website, the only restriction being that bookings have to be made at least 48 hours in advance of their visit.

**As ever, our members enjoy free access to the Museum and we are always delighted when members pop in to see the latest exhibits, bring us items they have found or just for a chat!**

## TREASURE TROVE

As further indication of the high regard in which Historylinks Museum is held, our Curator has recently been approached by the National Museums of Scotland (NMS) - Treasure Trove department to ask if we will become a repository for local metal detecting finds.

The National Museum has struggled to keep up with its work of processing finds since the start of the pandemic, and for Historylinks it will mean taking in small finds and looking after them until they can be picked up by an NMS representative.

**As you know, we are always on the look out for new volunteers.** One recent recruit is a local detectorist who has expressed an interest in volunteering at the museum, and in particular is keen to be involved with the processing of any TT that comes to the museum as part of this scheme!

**Serendipity!**

# YOUNG CURATORS CLUB UPDATE

The Young Curators' work in the Dig for Dornoch/Victory vegetable garden has continued successfully over the summer, with many delighted museum visitors taking away produce, from lettuce, kale, spinach, broccoli and cauliflower to beetroots, cucumbers, runner beans and tomatoes.



However, although the Young Curators enjoyed working outside (even in the cold and damp!) it has been a great relief to be able to meet at the Social Club once again now that Covid regulations permit, rather than having to rely on reasonable weather in order to meet outdoors.

Whilst work in the vegetable garden is ongoing and the Young Curators have plans to process some of their produce into products for sale at a YCC Fair on 18<sup>th</sup> December (watch this space!) in order to raise money for the Museum extension, our theme of *Our Environment, Our Heritage* has continued with a look at our native woodlands and trees.

Trish Matthews, Sutherland Adult Learning Coordinator (literacies), has joined us for four Wednesday sessions and, with her expert guidance, the youngsters are learning about the trees, and writing and illustrating new myths and legends to accompany them. Their stories will form part of a concertina book which each child is producing as a record of all their activities connected to the current theme.



One of the YCC Wednesday sessions took the form of a trip to Camore Woods where the youngsters gathered leaves, berries and pine cones, as well as lichen from the forest floor for dyeing wool. And this week Trish introduced the technique of dry point etching.

The youngsters began to work on creating a tree illustration, each beginning by making a line drawing of the tree on which their story focusses. They then began to etch their drawing onto a Perspex plate which will eventually be inked up and used in Trish's printing press to print the tree designs in their books.

Some of the youngsters also had time to begin creating beautiful covers for their books; using some of the leaves they had gathered, they printed colourful designs onto cotton squares. It is a work in progress: there are many more plans for filling the pages of their books, as well as the Wednesday sessions, so these young people look set to be busy for a good few weeks to come.



# EXTENSION PROJECT UPDATE

As we reported in the last newsletter our planning permission for the new extension was granted on 14th April 2021.

The next step in the Design process (Phase 2 of our four-phase project) was for Blueprint Architects (Tain) to submit a building warrant application detailing the exact building specification. We were delighted to receive this permission on 26th August.

This has paved the way to proceed to the Quantity Surveying part of the project, where an updated cost estimate for the approved design is currently being prepared by Torrance Partnership, who will then create the necessary documents to request tenders from suitable contractors.



## FUND RAISING

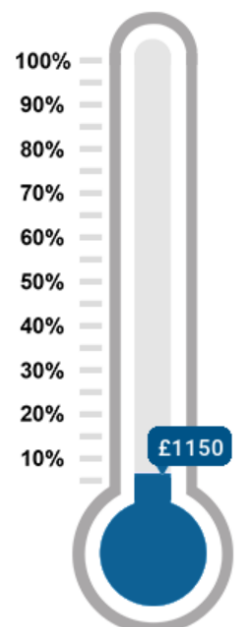
As previously reported, we have had discussions with a number of potential capital funding sources for the anticipated £300k+ construction phase of the extension. However, all grant funders are now looking for applicants to demonstrate an element of local fund-raising.

**For this reason, the Trustees have set an ambitious target of raising £30,000 for the extension project by April 2022, and we have opened a new bank account to be used specifically for the extension project.**

Over the next few months we will be unveiling a series of events and initiatives designed to reach this goal, but there are a number of ways you can help us right now.

- Overleaf is a program of events already confirmed. All proceeds from these events will be added to the Extension Fund so, if you can, please come along and lend your support.
- If you are not already a member of the charity, then please consider joining. It costs just £10 per year and for this you get unlimited access to the Museum, regular newsletters by email or post and priority notice of social events. **If you are already a member, why not get a friend or relative to join up too?** Applications can be made at [www.historylinks.org.uk/join-us](http://www.historylinks.org.uk/join-us) or in writing via a form available from the Museum.
- We have recently received a very generous donation of £250 from a regular visitor to Dornoch from overseas, which has been added to the Extension Fund along with other money already raised. **If you would like to make your own donation to the fund** you can do this online at [www.historylinks.org.uk/donate](http://www.historylinks.org.uk/donate), by post or in person at the Museum.
- If you are making a donation and are a UK tax payer, please consider signing a **Gift Aid** form. This allows us to claim an additional 25% on your donation at no extra cost to you.
- Finally, if you are looking for Christmas gifts then we have a range of items in the Museum shop which make ideal presents. With Historylinks tea-towels at £6, Christmas card packs at £3, books, traditional children's toys, etc. there is something for everyone and all proceeds will help us reach our target. You can buy in person or online at [www.historylinks.org.uk/shop](http://www.historylinks.org.uk/shop)

**Target  
£30,000!**



**Extension Fund at  
1st October 2021**

# EVENTS CALENDAR 2021/22

<b>Thursday October 14th</b>	<b>Talk</b>	<b>Royal Dornoch Golf Club</b>	<b>7.30 pm</b>
<b>Lairds in Waiting</b> by Anne-Mary Paterson Highland Railway private stations and waiting rooms and the families who used them. <b>Free Entry - raffle in aid of Museum Extension Fund.</b>			
<b>Saturday November 6th</b>	<b>Coffee Morning</b>	<b>Dornoch Social Club</b>	<b>10 am - Noon</b>
It's back! Our first Coffee morning for two years!! Baking, preserves and all the usual sales tables plus Christmas Gifts on sale. <b>Entry £2 per person - all proceeds to the Museum Extension Fund.</b>			
<b>Thursday November 11th</b>	<b>Talk</b>	<b>Royal Dornoch Golf Club</b>	<b>7.30 pm</b>
<b>'Wick Heritage Centre'</b> by Ian Leith An introduction to its many treasures. <b>Free Entry - raffle in aid of Museum Extension Fund.</b>			
<b>Thursday November 18th</b>	<b>AGM</b>	<b>Royal Dornoch Golf Club</b>	<b>7.00 pm</b>
Annual General Meeting of the Dornoch Heritage SCIO (aka Historylinks Museum). Includes reports from the Trustees, Heritage Society & Museum sub-committees, adoption of accounts and election of Trustees. <b>Finishes by 8 pm latest!</b>			
<b>Friday December 17th</b>	<b>Festive Heritage Film Night</b>	<b>Dornoch Social Club</b>	<b>7.30 pm</b>
A selection of new and old films from the Historylinks archives, mysteries and a chance for the audience to reminisce whilst enjoying seasonal refreshments. <b>Entry £3 - all proceeds to the Museum Extension Fund.</b>			
<b>Saturday December 18th</b>	<b>Christmas Fair</b>	<b>Dornoch Social Club</b>	<b>11 am - 1 pm</b>
<b>A CHRISTMAS FAIR WITH A DIFFERENCE!</b> Continuing their <b>Dig for Dornoch (Victory)</b> program, our Young Curators Club members will be holding a 1940's themed Fair when they will be dressed as Land Girls and Farm Workers to sell jams, chutney, mincemeat, fruit crumbles, etc. - all made with produce they have grown, picked or foraged themselves. In addition there will be home-made Christmas decorations, willow bird feeders, cards, gift tags, wrapping paper and other gifts available. <b>All proceeds go to the Museum Extension Fund.</b>			
<b>Friday January 28th</b>	<b>A Taste of Burns</b>	<b>Dornoch Social Club</b>	<b>7.30 pm</b>
Our traditional entertainment and dinner. <b>Tickets £17.50 - but they're limited so book early!</b> Contact the Museum on (01862) 811275 to check availability.			

Thanks to our funders for their continued support.

