



Editor, Morag Ross Bremner, pictured here at the Clan Ross Centre tent at the Tain Highland Gathering, held on the 2nd Thursday in August annually.



Tain & District Museum and Clan Ross Centre volunteers at a recent training day about our Tain Silver Collection



Tain & District Museum and Clan Ross Centre is a charity recognised in Scotland SC 017848

Editor's Letter

Tain & District Museum and Clan Ross Centre is very fortunate to be loyally supported by a band of dedicated and determined volunteers. On occasion I stop to ponder why we do what we do; caring for a large collection of artefacts and documents, promoting our history and culture and welcoming visitors and locals alike to the museum. Why continue to support the museum when many organisations are finding it increasingly difficult to attract volunteers? Why continue to wrestle with the knotty problems thrown up by lack of resources, ageing equipment and diminishing monies in these straitened times? The answer, I think, must be that we all care passionately for everything that the museum stands for: cataloguing and remembering all that has gone before; the successes and failures of our ancestors; the forces that shaped their actions and decisions and the transmission of the physical and the intangible results of that past into the future because we all think it is important to remember so that we can inform our future choices and decisions

We might not be a large organisation but we will be packing a lot in to the coming year. At present we are preparing the 2014 exhibition with new displays and information. We are forging ahead with our plans to hold a second Clan Ross Gathering in Tain this summer. We also have plans for talks and events which you will be able find out about from our website www.tainmuseum.org.uk or Facebook page (Tain & District Museum and Clan Ross Centre).

We appreciate your continued support and we are all looking forward to meeting those of you who can visit the museum in person this year or come along to the Clan Ross Gathering on 12th-14th August 2014. It is going to be a busy and exciting year.

Morag Ross Bremner

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Alasdair official Piper for Gathering

Clan Ross will, once again, have the valuable services of Alasdair Mearns to hand as official Clan Ross 2014 Gathering Piper. Alasdair is a multi-talented fellow, he holds a H. B.Sc, an M.A. and a Ph. D, is an alternative health practitioner, a lecturer in Gaelic and history at Scotland's National Gaelic College Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Skye, has participated in the Martial Arts for over forty years and in his spare time does a wee bit of crofting.



Alisdair Mearns with Sheila Munro, assistant manager.

The provisional programme: Tuesday 12th August, 7.30pm: registration and reception. Wednesday 13th August, 10am- 3.30pm: registration then day of activities. 7.30 - 10pm: Concert Thursday 14th August, 10.30am - 4pm Tain Highland Gathering. 7.30pm - 11.30pm Ceilidh There will be a charge of £50 (free to children under 16 accompanied by an adult). This will include lunch on Wednesday along with concert, games and ceilidh tickets Contact Morag at info@tainmuseum.org.uk if you have any questions or would like to register interest.



Honour for Ross author

Hamish Ross grew up in Tain and is a former pupil of Tain Royal Academy. He remembers watching Liberator bombers flying out of RAF Tain during the Second World War. Hamish has written three critically acclaimed non-fiction books one of which is entitled *Freedom in the Air*.

The book tells about the generation of Czech airmen who served in France and this country during WWII. It focuses on the life of Czech airman, Vaclav Robert Bozdech, and the Alsatian dog, Antis, that flew with him in Bomber Command during WWII. Field Marshall Wavell later pinned the ribbon of the PDSA's Dickin Medal, the animals' Victoria Cross, to Antis' collar for courage and outstanding service. During his time in the RAF Bozdech and his companion Antis, were stationed for a time in Easter Ross.

The award from the Czech Republic recognises Hamish's contribution in ensuring the story of these brave men is brought to the attention of the public. During the communist period nothing about them was allowed in print but today they are regarded as an outstanding example of the spirit of the country.

The citation states that by decree of the Minister of Defence of the Czech Republic Hamish has been given the Commemorative Medal to mark the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Czechoslovak Republic; and the citation's wording has it for **'his significant contribution to the preservation of the traditions of the Czechoslovak Republic.'**

The hand-over ceremony was on Friday 17 January, in the Czech Embassy in London; and the presentation of the medal was made by the Defence and the Military Attachés of the Czech Republic.

In the photo: Elisabeth Ross, Hamish Ross and Lt Col René Klapáč, Czech Military Attaché to the UK.

Heritage Lottery Fund.

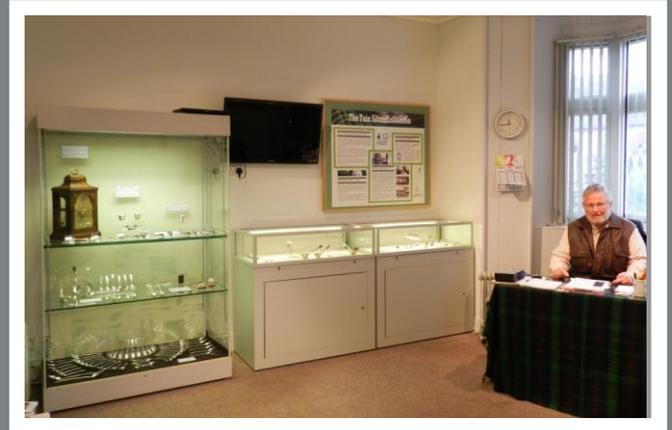
In 2008 the **Heritage Lottery Fund** launched a ground-breaking scheme allowing museums to seek out and purchase what they needed to develop and build their collections strategically. The scheme was called **Collecting Cultures** and Tain & District Museum was one of three museums in Scotland to receive funding through this exciting initiative. "**The Tain Silver Collection**" project was to develop the collection of 18th and 19th century silver made in Tain.

Over the next 5 years 40 pieces were acquired for the Collection. They can be seen on the museum website <http://www.tainmuseum.org.uk/objects.asp?intent=listbytheme&themeid=7>



Above: Hugh Ross II or III (1740-80) extremely rare nutmeg grater.

Below: Hugh Ross I (c.1680 - 1732) thistle cup, one of three known to exist, probably made between about 1700 and 1720.



Big undertaking for museum

The Heritage Lottery Fund Collecting Cultures Tain Silver Collection project has been a considerable undertaking for the volunteers at Tain & District Museum. It has been challenging, exciting and incredibly worthwhile. The project aims have been met; apart from the obvious benefits to the museum of a silver collection that can now stand comparison to any in Scotland, that has been researched, displayed and interpreted to a high standard, the skills and experience gained by the volunteers in the process of bringing this project to fruition cannot be underestimated; tackling grant applications, organising projects, purchasing silver, ordering display cases, commissioning films, designing interpretation boards, organising and publicising public events and a myriad of other little things that are no longer as daunting as they once may have seemed. Friendships and contacts made through the project have sparked possibilities for the future – an exhibition, practical workshops, inter-museum loans and loans from private collections. It has ignited other aspirations: more display cases equipped to modern standards, a space to provide workshops, a website that can cope with all the information we wish to present to the public. The most important thing the Collecting Cultures project has done for Tain & District Museum is to have provided the volunteers with the skills to find ways to make these aspirations happen.

Juniper – Clan Ross plant badge

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Patchwork Meadow.

Wildlife plant conservation charity “Plantlife” contacted us at the Clan Ross Centre asking if we would like to participate in their UK wide project to create a Bayeux Tapestry celebrating the role of wild plants and trees in British culture. Keen needlewoman, Liz Fraser, volunteered to create a square for us and her work has been published in Plantlife’s catalogue displaying some of the many patches from individuals and organisations across the UK. Visit www.wildflowereurope.org to see other participants.



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