

## CELM Chairman's Report 2016

This has been a very busy year for our Heritage Centre with some challenges but an overwhelming number of positives.

Last Summer saw a wonderful exhibition of Women's Role in Lismore, highlighting many of the Characters who have shaped Island life over many Decades. There was an active Weaving Week with a lot of Participation which was followed by the Culmination of the Graveslab Project weekend when the carefully preserved, fascinating and unusual Graveslabs were displayed outside the Graveyard. The Weekend was a huge success beginning with a fantastic play by Jennifer Baker realistically enacted by Bob Hay and Sebastian Toombs and the rest of the cast intermingled with the lively audience. The Saturday was highlighted by a fascinating talk by David Carswell, formerly Keeper of Scotland in Europe, on the Archaeology of Acauin Castle. After Duncan MacGregor unveiled the Graveslabs, Douglas Breinghan gave an excellent talk on the History of the Cathedral/ Church. A sumptuous banquet followed provided by Kiki and her Serving Wenches with Murray Willis as the Musical Jester. The Weekend was rounded off with some Heritage Walks. All a great credit to Bob Hay and his Team.

In the background, the hard work of renewing the Museum Accreditation and renewing the Tourist Board Ratings was successfully achieved. The 100 Club is helping to stabilise the Finances of CELM and several very generous donations and bequests have been received with grateful thanks-nearly all from outwith the Island. This continuing stream of Generosity is vital to our future.

The Development Plans of Iris Piers and James Hilder have been pursued to bring the Café into the whole Centre especially as the Leasee had repeatedly expressed a desire to finish the Contract early-an Official Request was accepted by TAIC in September. TAIC developed a Credible Plan and arranged Funding for the necessary renovations. Unfortunately the smooth transition anticipated did not take place instead becoming quite unsavoury before being finally successful due to the Tenacity of TAIC, supported by CELM.

A very negative aspect was that a member of CELM tried to stop the generous Grant that John Lewis Partnership had offered specifically to fund the amalgamation of the Shop and the Café. The same member then made a complaint to Companies House and thereafter OSCR. The Companies House Complaint was answered to their satisfaction whilst the OSCR one is being addressed. Repeated questioning by Official Regulations is wearisome for Volunteer Committees and discourages further people from volunteering to serve on the Board. We have been very gratified for the many messages of support for the Centre.

This Summer there is an exciting programme of events; The WW1 display in the Museum is the Centre Piece, then there is an Archaeological Dig week at the Nave on the 12<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> August to which all are welcome to get involved. The Weekend of 13/14<sup>th</sup> August is a Suffragette event with talks, films and an Edwardian Banquet; The Annual Ceilidh will be on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> August with Rona Lightfoot again Fear an Tigh supported by a strong team of Artistes.

The week of 5 to 9<sup>th</sup> September is Book Week for which Jennifer Baker has assembled a very full and varied programme on the theme of Scotland.

There are many unsung heroes who are vital to the success of the Centre; Laura Gloag provides an excellent Genealogy Service often at short notice-unfortunately she is unable to be here today. Maureen Mitchell has co-ordinated the Many wonderful Volunteers over many years but has

decided to step down this year, We owe her a huge "thank you". It would be a lovely Tribute to her if more people would volunteer for Desk duties- even the odd half day is very welcome.

The other people vital to CELM are those people based around the Office dealing with the day to day problems. Memory MacDonald is absolutely vital in this area and seems to spend most of her waking hours supporting the Centre. Her Husband, Iain, and Duncan Ferguson are endlessly fixing the Practical Problems. Others working away endlessly in the background include Jennifer Baker, Bob Hay, Lesley Hamilton, Douglas Breinghan, Margaret MacDonald, Cathie Carmichael, Duncan MacGregor and Duncan Livingstone. We are also very grateful for all the effort Freda and Duncan Drysdale have donated over the years; They will be missed but we do know where they live!

As I stand down from the Board after the Two Years I said I would serve, I feel it has been a great privilege to serve and in a small way continue the legacy of the great forebears of CELM .

I regret that more young Liosachs are not coming forward to stand for the Board and Volunteer, but I feel confident that there is so much good will towards the Centre that a strong and bright future beckons CELM and therefore Lismore.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Iain MacGregor". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background.