



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Comann Eachdraidh Lios Mòr held at Port a'Charrain, Lismore, on 9th October 2021.

Present: Jennifer Baker, Noelle Odling, Anne Livingstone, Duncan Livingstone, Sarah Jones, Peggy Nicholson, Carol Wormleighton, Julian Wormleighton, Stewart Ross, Sebastian Tombs, Archie MacColl, Dot Hay, Duncan MacGregor, Memory McDonald, Elaine Robertson, Mike Robertson.

Apologies : Bob Hay, Douglas Breingan, Arthur Cross, Clare Haworth, Lesley Hamilton, Laura Gloag, Eva Tombs, Caroline Bath, Marilyn and John Whitehead, Mark Newman.

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1 The Minutes of the last AGM, held by Zoom on 17th December 2020, had been circulated to members along with the invitation to join the meeting. Questions were invited; there being no queries the Minutes were agreed as correct. Proposed Julian Wormleighton, Seconded Sebastian Tombs, Accepted unanimously.

2 Chairs report: (Jennifer Baker)

CELM Chair Report 2021 AGM

Thank you all for attending our AGM – it's so nice to be able to do it face to face. This report perforce overlaps a little with last year's as last year's AGM was covid late. Hopefully, we will be back to some sort of normal in the year coming.

2020 was a crazy year – I think the best and most overworked word of the century is 'unprecedented'.

But, before I start, I would like to pay tribute to Margaret MacDonald – a founder member of Comann Eachdraidh Lios Mòr whose determination to preserve the particular language and culture of Lismore led to the creation of

the Historical Society. Without her magnificent efforts along with that of Donald Black, Cathy Carmichael and others this centre would not be here today. Margaret died in January of this year. She will be much missed. But what a legacy she has left behind.

On looking through the minutes of 2020, I'm amazed at what did get done. Although it felt like we were all locked away, work was, nevertheless going on apace at the Centre. Special thanks must go to Noelle Odling who did the necessary (and, no doubt, tedious) research and sourcing of covid grants that have kept us afloat during what could have been a very precarious time for the Centre.

Memory McDonald also did a sterling job manoeuvring through all the rules and regulations necessary for the opening when it did come in July. We had efficient one way systems and sanitisers etc which more than satisfied the inspection by the Environmental Health Officer.

Laura Gloag's team of volunteers also stood forward in sufficient numbers to man the desk all week. This, I believe, is unusual as there was, understandably, a general nervousness of meeting the public at that time. So much gratitude is due to them all.

The MacDougall McCallum Foundation must also be thanked for their annual donation which continued despite Covid.

The upgrading of the website continued too – it's now completed and looks great. A tribute to the hard work of Pauline Dowling and Andy Walters. Pauline continues to keep the website alive and lively. Do send her any items that you think may be of interest.

The 2020 Exhibition *Those Who Stayed* opened in July. We had decided that much had been written about the diaspora but not so much information was out there about those who remained behind. When Douglas Breingan and I began to do the research, it became evident that we should concentrate on the Napier Commission. The boards in the museum room display very poignant quotations from the transcripts. Unfortunately the compulsory one way system meant that the exhibition lacked its intended impact so it was decided to retain it for 2021,

We would like the use of the library as a display area and gallery space so, to that end, we agreed with the Community Trust that the public library should

be moved to the schoolhouse. Since then, the Trust has lost possession of the schoolhouse so we have to think again.

It's important to emphasise again that, apart from the café, the Centre is run entirely by volunteers. They are heroes all. Every year I list exactly what they do – it's a huge amount of work including general administration (which is huge and gets bigger and bigger the more successful we become); managing and manning the shop and coordinating shop volunteers; carrying out essential maintenance of the buildings; painting and decorating; cleaning; grass cutting, path maintenance; marketing and publicity; fundraising; organising events; liaising with other island groups; maintaining the public library; caring for rare books and others in the David White library; carrying out genealogical searches; maintaining the website, facebook and twitter; maintaining and updating the archive; mounting displays in the cottage and the museum, liaising with the school and island community – all and more done out of commitment to the principles on which this place was founded – namely to preserve the Gaelic culture, language and heritage of Lismore. We are privileged to live in a community so willing to help in all sorts of ways – each bringing their particular skills to the continuing success of this wonderful place.

It's interesting to note that a total of 3196 visitors in 2020 equates to what we usually have in a normal season. When we were open it was busy!

Finally, may I thank, from the bottom of my heart, the Board. They work tirelessly all the year round each in their special area. I'm proud to be part of such a team.

And – before we go – for information – the replanting of the roof is now complete thanks to the extraordinary efforts of Noelle Odling and Douglas Breingan.

3 Treasurers report, and presentation of signed accounts: The accounts for the year to 31st Dec 2020 having been circulated with the invitation, Treasurer Noelle Odling used the new projector and screen equipment in the museum to present a summary of figures and illustrative graphs to the meeting. Thanks to grant funding of 38,844 and legacies the total income for the year was actually up on the previous year, from £50,398 to £59,867. Costs were down from £69,680 to £36,136, partly because of work on the cottage in the previous

year. With total net assets in the charity of £382,849 the charity is in a strong financial position going forward.

The accounts were approved unanimously by the meeting, which also expressed warm appreciation of the work carried out by treasurer Noelle Odling, with particular reference to her success in applying for grants to cover the effects of the Covid shut down of the museum.

4 Museum Curators report: Bob Hay

Museum Curators Report 2020-21

The Covid lockdown and subsequent controls on meetings and travel have allowed the curators to spend more time on the collections. As a result of dissatisfaction with our Adlib-based electronic catalogue, its cost and the poor level of support, the Board voted to change to use the newer and cheaper eHive database. During the year, the transfer of the Objects catalogue to eHive has been completed and Jennifer Baker has now made a start on the enormous task of entering details of our image collection. One major gain with the new system is the ability to use key words to identify all the objects and photographs associated with a particular place, activity or family. This step is important in maintaining our accredited status.

Time has been found to review the uncatalogued objects that came to us with the clearances of Daisybank House and Hawthorn House. Unusual objects now entered into the collection now include:

Fleming's Vest Pocket Veterinary Adviser 1926

A set of early 20th century board games

A gentleman's tie press reused by Lily Stewart as a plant press, still containing some of her pressed plants

An alcohol-fuelled smoothing iron (to complement our collection of gas, petrol and slug irons)

An Edwardian skirt lifter! (note that this is by the wearer)

The more vulnerable artefacts in the Achinduin collection have now been conserved at the Scottish Conservation Centre, Hopetoun House (paid for by a Museums Galleries Scotland Urgent Response Covid grant), and returned to Lismore.

Douglas Breingan and Ron Livingstone have been busy looking out for Lismore-related items on eBay, resulting in the acquisition of 18thC documents relating

to land holding, and the purchase of an 1820 letter from the Duke of Wellington to General Colin Macaulay.

Macaulay, born on Lismore to the parish minister, was a distinguished soldier and campaigner against slavery. Look out for a short biography in the forthcoming Appin Archive.

Other heritage-related activities include the repair of the medieval “lady stone” with a grant from Historic Environment Scotland, and the production of a 10 minute videofilm, “A Sacred Island”.

The story of the three-week archaeological dig in the search for St Moluag has been fully reported on the CELM website. This year, our dig featured in the national DigIt website, attracting volunteers from across Scotland, and resulting in a wider profile including a feature on BBC Scotland, and an interview on Oban FM. The main challenge now is to raise the funding for the post-excavation analysis of the finds (estimated at a minimum of £10,000), and funding for any new digging in the roundhouse trench. This work is already underway.

5 Election of Board members: Following CELM Articles three Directors, Jennifer Baker, Noelle Odling, and Mike Robertson, all stood down, but being eligible for re-election were willing to serve again. Their continuing service was unanimously approved by the meeting. Jennifer Baker then announced that two people had offered their services as possible Directors, Ailsa Clarke and David Clarke. Ailsa was brought up on Lismore and has an abiding interest in the history of the island. Her mother still lives on Lismore and is a past member of the Board. David, her husband, is a historian, and shares his wife’s love of the island, and its heritage. Both were approved, and voted onto the Board, by the meeting.

6 Annual Membership Fees: Memory McDonald explained to the meeting that there had been quite a substantial increase in fees last year. Given the Covid situation, and the current healthy state of finances, she proposed to leave the figures as at present. This was agreed.

7 Appointment of Independent Examiner: The continuing appointment of David MacGregor of Simmers & Co CA Oban, was approved by the meeting.

8 AOCB: no items raised.

9 Date of next meeting: to be arranged.

