

CHAIRMAN

We have occupied the present site since the building was gifted to the museum thirty years ago and it was deemed an appropriate time for some refurbishment of the exhibition area to take place.

Repainting and re-carpeting the exhibition, stair and library areas whilst not being a huge undertaking, nevertheless involved the removal of all the wall mounted displays and free-standing floor items - quite a bit of heavy lifting.

The opportunity for proper cleaning of difficult items like the naval pennants showed just how much unseen dust and dirt accumulates over time.

New LED lights within some of the displays help to improve the overall look.

A new glazed entrance door will be installed soon and should give a much more welcoming aspect for visitors to the museum. With almost thirty thousand through the door last year and no reason to believe numbers this year will be any less, it is important that we strive to constantly to improve and refresh the experience they receive.

CURATOR

We have had a busy winter, and quite a lot of small changes are now visible in the Museum.

New carpet tiles have been fitted to the display area and stairs; the previous ones must have been 30 years old, so had lasted amazingly well. The library too has a new carpet.

The display area has been redecorated; the flags have been washed, and the display looks much revived- we have already been complemented about this by a local who popped in.

We have also signed up to the trial connected to the Garmony Hydro plant, and as a result, five of our six storage heaters have been replaced for free. The scheme diverts excess power from Garmony to storage heaters on the island, to avoid overloading a substation on the mainland. All storage heaters are remotely controlled by SSE via little boxes, talking via our router, and can be given more or less boost depending on the weather forecast.

The installation involved a fair bit of new wiring and trunking, and meant some of our displays and shelves had to be removed. The electricians did not finish until the Sunday before we were due to open; we therefore opened on the Thursday before Easter, rather than the Monday. Thanks are due to Dennis Broad and Andrew Reid for refixing displays and altering shelves, etc.

We now have a new display panel illustrating the clans on Mull, and explaining the clearances.

The curator has found records of 33 townships and groups of townships, being cleared; there are no doubt more to be found. We have taken the opportunity to revise and refresh the panel of old Tobermory photographs alongside; this should be in place by early May.

Finally, we now have four new volunteers helping to man the desk- a warm welcome to all of them.

££££

“It’s free to come in” we say to our visitors, “but a donation would be welcome.” It is many years since we abandoned our £1 entry fee, and although we may not get £1 per visitor, we get lots more people coming in, some leaving generous donations. The Public Libraries and Consolidation (Scotland) Act of 1887 made all public museums free because “the objects were given by the public, for the public, and displayed using public money” and we feel we are following (voluntarily) that worthy aim.

UNEXPECTED FIND

When objects, photographs or books are given to the Museum, we are always interested in the provenance or “back story.” This pretty napkin ring donated by Renee Macnab comes with an interesting tale. Renee writes: *Whilst on holiday in North Yorkshire, July 1989, I visited a small shop connected to the heritage steam services. What a surprise, when looking through a basket of small items for sale, I came across this Tobermory napkin ring. Such a coincidence to find something from my home town.*



So thank you Renee for passing this on. The napkin ring is now on display along with other items bearing the Tobermory Burgh Crest.

Tobermory became a Police Burgh in 1875 and was thus governed - under the General Police and Improvement Act (Scotland) of 1862 - by two Baillies and three others who acted as Police Commissioners. However in 1847 the Lord Lyon challenged the right of the Burgh to use them. Ever resourceful, the inhabitants donated the sum of over £70 and the arms were correctly registered. In 1975 with the reorganisation of local government, the Burgh ceased to exist.

Final thought - was this napkin originally bought in Daisy Craig’s Treasure Shop (next to the Museum, now Seafare)? Daisy and her sisters were our Museum’s biggest benefactors - they gave us this wonderful building.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL - due in April each year

Annual Subscription £5 single, £10 family

5-year membership £25, 5-year family £50

Payable at desk in Museum or to Membership Secretary

Mull Museum, Columba Buildings, Tobermory,

Isle of Mull, PA75 6NY Tel 01688 301100

email membership@mullmuseum.org.uk

or pay with PayPal on the website www.mullmuseum.org.uk

**OFFICE-
BEARERS
2016-17**

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Archive and Library Report

HECTOR MACLEAN

Hector Maclean. A new book from Jo Currie

Those who have found Jo Currie's *Mull the Island and its People* a rich source of information about life in late 18th and 19th century Mull and her *Mull Family Names*, a mine of information on their ancestors, will be delighted to see the publication of the letters and diary of Hector Maclean 1751-1812, a man whose Mull connections included the patronage, (possibly through kinship) of Murdoch MacLaine (later 19th of Lochbuie). Murdoch was Hector's commanding officer in the American War of Independence and Hector was present with the 84th regiment at the battle of Eutaw Springs. After he left the army on half-pay, he took advantage of the army land grants to settle in Nova Scotia.. This work is a collaborative edition between Jo Currie and two Canadian academics, Keith Mercer and John Reid. The editors present Hector Maclean's words very much as he wrote them with abbreviations, contracted spellings, nicknames and initials of friends. These last are identified in copious footnotes wherever possible (and with Jo Currie's unrivalled knowledge of Mull names it is nearly always possible.) The feeling of being transported back into another age is also enhanced by the sympathetic way the book has been produced: the texture of the paper is suggestive of the originals and the diary section is a page for page transcription of short lines, just as Hector Maclean wrote them. It is a very attractive publication.

An introduction at the start of the book gives brief details of Hector Maclean's life, his connections with Mull, his military career serving under Murdoch MacLaine, his part in the battle of Eutaw Springs and the allocation to him of a parcel of land at Kennetcook in Nova Scotia. For those interested in emigration, it is a fascinating insight into the life of a particular type of emigrant. He was not a man of means but neither was he poor and he certainly considered himself a gentleman. He joined the army for a career and, on leaving, settled in Nova Scotia to better his lot. For several years life was a constant financial struggle, most notably when, following a recruiting mission to Newfoundland, the vessel in which he was returning from St Johns was blown so far out to sea that he and his recruits were carried across the Atlantic, eventually making landfall in Ireland. The continuing responsibility for about 150 recruits left him severely out of pocket. Mull readers will remember the case of the *Neptune II*, which, 150 years later, took shelter in Tobermory Bay after a similarly unplanned voyage from St Johns.

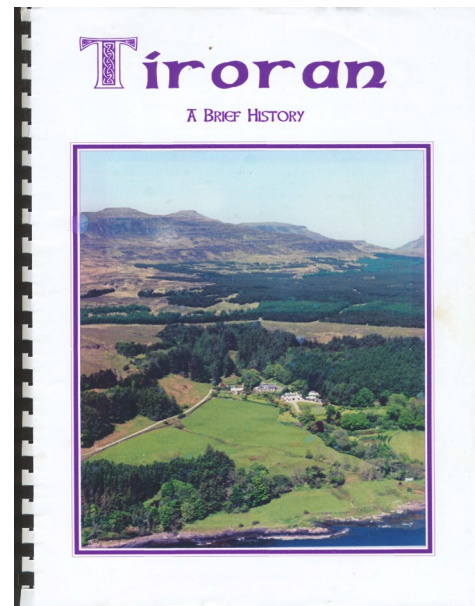
The letters that Maclean wrote and his diary enable us to follow the ups and downs of his life as a settler: the work involved in building his house, in fencing and farming his land and in managing his two farm labourers. The diary records, with explanatory footnotes where necessary, the quantities of seeds sown, the onset of late and early frosts and the co-operation between neighbours in borrowing and lending agricultural necessities. But the diary and the letters also give glimpses of his social life: visits to neighbours, dances attended, gossip about who might marry whom. And there was time, too, for some outdoor recreation such as a sailing expedition and a moose hunt.

The charm of any letters or diaries is that the information comes to us in snatches and snippets, unfiltered by a biographer's interpretation and opinions. It is the raw material of a narrative that we can construct for ourselves and is the next best thing to handling the original documents—perhaps better when they come as competently edited as these.

Hector Maclean is published in Canada by Gaspereau Press.

info@gaspereau.com

or contact Tackle & Books (01688-302336)



Cover of Christine Leach's *Tiroran, a Brief History*

LIBRARY

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Outcrop Britain by David Horsley

Hector MacLean by Jo Currie -

The writings of a loyalist-era Military settler in Nova Scotia.
Edited with Keith Mercer and John G. Reid.

To the Islands by Professor Steven Mithen

Christine Leach has donated 10 detailed studies of settlements from her Pennyghael in the Past Archive.

HANGING TREES

Amongst the various enquiries that have come the way of the Archives recently was one about a hanging tree at Crackaig. This was in connection with an art exhibition by Serena Korda, to be held in Glasgow and then later in Tobermory. The enquiry set off enquiries about hanging trees and Heritable jurisdiction which gave chiefs the power (not abolished until 1747) of Pit and Gallows, drowning and hanging which was . Most people will know of Hangman's Hill on the road to Glengorm (NM458 558) and our treasurer informs me that the rock in Salen was also known as a place of execution. In *Lost Townships*, p. 52, Meg Douglass writes of the gallows that once existed on the road to Gualachaolish at NM 715 298. She describes this as "a semi-circular platform constructed of stone and earth. In the centre hollow is a socket into which the gallows stance fitted. These gallows were clearly visible to all the surrounding villages."

If anyone knows of any other gallows stances or hanging trees, or traditional places of execution, we would be interested to hear of it.

KEEP IN TOUCH - please!

The Bulletin only comes out twice a year, but we send out news and information regularly by email, so if you haven't had an email from us recently about events it's because we don't have your current email address. We have large gaps in our email list so please help us by responding. Please email the Secretary at mullmuseum@hotmail.co.uk and help us get the mailing list up to date.