



Scottish Fisheries Museum

Boats, fish and folk...

Newsletter

Spring 2022

Welcome to spring and a new season of activity at the museum as we plan for renewed connections with the long hoped-for easing of Covid restrictions.

A word from our Director

Welcome to our latest newsletter as we look forward with hope for a glorious Summer. Trading conditions have remained challenging for the Museum and just as confidence was returning late last year, we were hit with another Covid variant in the shape of the Omicron strain. Despite this, we remained open throughout and remarkably our team were largely unaffected until late April, when several staff members were hit by the surge in cases.



The team have once again been magnificent in their support during the latter part of 2021, and this has continued into 2022. We are immensely proud and applaud such a wonderful team of people who continue to support the Museum through unprecedented times.

Throughout this period, we have continued to make progress with the launch of our exciting new "Waves Café" in March, maintaining a safe environment for visitors and restocking our shop for the new season ahead and, behind the scenes, preparing new exhibitions and upgrading our Zulu Gallery in a few weeks' time.

We are also pleased to report that we have continued to receive some much-needed financial support from Scottish Government and Museum Galleries Scotland and this has allowed us to continue to progress projects and survive financially. The *Reaper* conservation project continues and as we head towards final completion of Phase 3. Fundraising remains vital to the continued work of the Museum and to continue our efforts to obtain the necessary funds to develop our wonderful museum in the future.

Finally, thank you all for supporting the Museum and we look forward to a much better 2022 when life with our families and friends starts to gradually return to some normality.

Ian Goodyear

Waves Café

We are proud to launch our new-look and refreshed Waves Café with bright new décor and a brand new menu to tempt your tastebuds!



With windows looking across the harbour on one side and our fourteenth century courtyard on the other, our café is a pleasant spot, open to all in need of light refreshments, whether it be for breakfast to start your day off well, lunch to recharge the batteries or in the afternoon, tea and an irresistible piece of cake.

When it Rains, We Harvest / Cuando Llueve, Cosechamos

El Niño and Abundance in a Peruvian Fishing Community



Our latest exhibition explores the importance of traditional responses to extreme weather and the lessons we can learn from history to enable us to tackle the climate emergency.

Specifically, the exhibition showcases how the desert communities of northern Peru have adapted to the impact of El Niño, the shifting band of warm ocean found on the Pacific coast of South America.

Blending archaeological evidence from the Moche and Chimú cultures, modern-day objects from Peruvian fishing communities, and contemporary artwork by Scottish artist Frances Law, 'When it Rains, We Harvest' is a timely study of community, heritage, climate change and fishing.



Curated by Museum and Galleries Studies students at the University of St Andrews, the [exhibition website](#) has information and links to the research underpinning this display.

National Award for Knitting the Herring

In November 2021 we were so proud to win a prestigious Engaging People Award from the [Association for Heritage Interpretation \(AHI\)](#) for engaging communities during Lockdown through Knitting the Herring - Scotland's National Gansey Project.

Knitting the Herring - Scotland's National Gansey Project took the top prize in the Lockdown Response category of the Awards which celebrate the best heritage, cultural, natural and science experiences across Britain and Ireland.

Bill Bevan from the AHI, commented:

"Congratulations to The Scottish Fisheries Museum for a very well-deserved recognition for Knitting the Herring. The award was given because Knitting the Herring was a well-planned project in response to an area of the Scotland Fisheries Museum's collection, the need to record local craft and associated stories, and a general love of craft in the public."



Although the funded project ended in February 2021, its legacy continues through the website <https://scottishgansey.org.uk/>, international online Knit and Natter sessions, a network of over 100 enthusiasts promoting gansey-related activity, a new schools learning resource and the SHOAL exhibition which will tour to North Uist in July 2022.

New Mast for the *Reaper*

In a break with tradition, a new laminated timber mast was delivered for the *Reaper* in December 2021. The specially crafted 67 foot (21 metre) Fore Mast was commissioned from Noble Masts of Bristol. The new mast is almost as high as the *Reaper* is long (70 foot/22 metres) and made from Douglas Fir, a species traditionally used for 'Fifie' masts because of its superior strength.

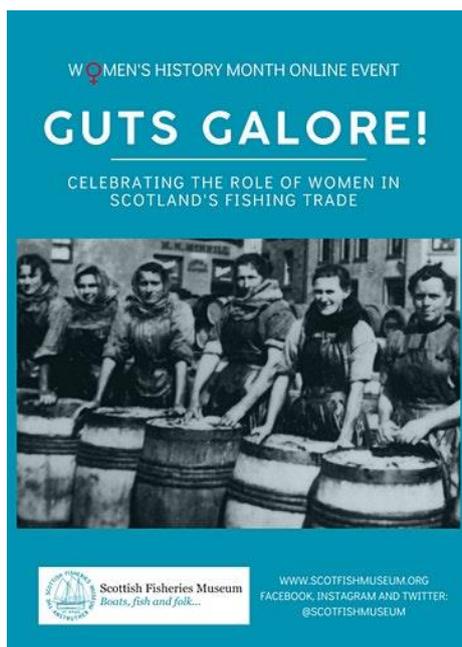
As climate change has begun to impact on the ring strength of Douglas Fir, the wood components underwent a complex lamination process. This has made the new mast 30% stronger and 50% lighter than traditional pole masts, significantly reducing the stresses under sail. It is also a way in which traditional boats can adapt to climate change without losing their historical integrity.



Work to fit out the *Reaper* below decks is ongoing and members of the Museum's Boats Club are making great progress towards re-opening to the public in Anstruther in the summer while the *White Wing* is due to travel to various harbours and festivals.

Guts Galore : online symposium

On the 9th of March 2022 we held an online symposium "Guts Galore: Celebrating the Role of Women in Scotland's Fishing Trade" for Women's History Month.



The afternoon of talks featured guest speakers in arts and academia, who shared their work on different aspects of the historic role of women as herring lasses in the Scottish fishing industry. The programme included Margaret Ritchie talking about working conditions, Meg Hyland who shared some wonderful songs sung by the gutters and Emer Mary Morris who shared her journey following the herring seasons and how it inspired her work as a theatre maker and writer.

The conference attracted 81 participants from locations as diverse as the USA and Australia who contributed numerous comments and questions to our speakers, and developed a lively discussion. Owing to popular demand we hope to make this an annual event and to maximise the potential of online connectivity to reach out to wider audiences across the world.

Royal Visit

The Scottish Fisheries Museum was delighted to welcome HRH The Princess Royal for a private visit on 15 October 2021 to officially mark the 50th anniversary of the Museum. Her Royal Highness, who visited the Museum last in 2009, toured the Museum, stopping to speak with a number of volunteers and representatives of the Scottish Fisheries Museum Model Boat Club and St Ayles Rowing Club.

Her Royal Highness then climbed aboard the *Reaper* where she unveiled a plaque commemorating the visit and paying tribute to the contribution of the late Dr Robert Prescott whose vision and expertise first saved and restored the vessel.



Kickstart Apprentices



The Museum has been fortunate, via Museums Galleries Scotland, to benefit from the Kickstart Apprenticeship Scheme. Our second apprentice started her placement with us in March and has already been helping to install two exhibitions and contribute to our collections documentation “behind the scenes”.

One of the displays, *Hidden Habitats*, explores seashore life, past and present. On show in our Merchant's Room, it includes a small exhibition of fossils and a poster showing the finds from our last Bioblitz at the Dreel Burn.

Joleen will be with us until September and will contribute to a number of projects and programmes over the summer.

Loving Earth Project

We are pleased to unveil an exhibition of textile art that celebrates some of the wonderful things threatened by growing environmental breakdown: people, places, creatures, and other things we love. Over 400 people from across the UK and beyond have created textile panels – those selected for display at the Scottish Fisheries Museum focus on threats to our seas and marine wildlife.

They are on display in our Zulu Gallery until 15 May and we are hosting them in partnership with Cambo Gardens, Falkland Estate and St Andrews Heritage Museum - visit each venue to see more of the wonderful panels and take part in the full activity programme.



Some Sad Farewells

Since the Autumn we have been sad to lose three stalwart supporters who each left their mark on the Museum.



Bernie McConnell, Vice Chair of the Boats Club will be well remembered for his singing voice as well as his willingness to help with all things related to the Club. Jim Lindsay was the Museum Manager throughout the 1990s and worked tirelessly to remodel the museum and to add the Boatyard and Zulu Galleries. And David Tod, our Honorary Vice President, who did so much to support our community involvement, founding the Model Boat and Rowing Clubs, while serving as a Museum Trustee and active aboard the *Reaper*.

We miss them. Our thoughts are with their families and loved ones.

Keep in Touch

You can find more information on our events and activities past, present and future at: www.scotfishmuseum.org Check the News and *What's On* pages.

Or follow us on social media for glimpses behind the scenes and details of forthcoming events:

<https://www.facebook.com/scotfishmuseum/?ref=hl>

<https://www.instagram.com/scotfishmuseum/>