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RIPERCUSSIONS OF THE GREAT FROST — 1982

In the first half of January 1982, much of Scotland was in the grip of very cold weather producing some spectacularly low temperatures in the Highlands. Bute, by its more modest standards, was likewise affected. After 5 days, when the temperature never rose above zero, minus 8.4 Celsius was recorded at the Rothesay Weather Station. As a result, the central heating system in the Museum was seriously damaged, the boiler and nine radiators being ruined beyond repair.

Emergency arrangements were made to heat the Lecture Room by mobile gas heaters to permit the Winter Programme to continue without interruption.

It quickly became clear that the cost of restoring the central heating system coupled with further work required to the roof could not be met from the Society's funds. An appeal was made to all members to contribute towards these costs – the first such appeal to be made for over 30 years despite the modest annual subscription. It produced the remarkable total of £4,550.00

In view of the value of the Museum to the community, applications for financial assistance were also made to Argyll and Bute District Council, Strathclyde Regional Council, Highlands and Islands Development Board and the Council of Museums and Art Galleries. These ultimately led to Grants totalling £7429.00 being made to the Society.

The central heating system has been restored and the opportunity taken to switch from oil to gas resulting in increased efficiency. Major roof repairs have been completed and internal refurbishment carried out under the Manpower Services Commission as a Community Project. Following the advice of the Council of Museums and Art Galleries, an even temperature is being maintained to safeguard the exhibits in addition to the provision of special roof lights to conserve heat and exclude ultra-violet light. All this has made the Museum a comfortable and attractive place for browsing or study.

I. M.