

REPORT: FALCONER MUSEUM & STORE, VISIT 19th September 2024

FALCONER MUSEUM

GROUND FLOOR:

Environmental data: please see separate environmental report.

Ground Floor Insect Traps:

- All checked and replaced with new traps.
- An additional trap was placed in the Falconer Room, adjacent to the elephant skull.

Contents of the traps were mostly spiders, woodlice and thrips, not necessarily museums pests but indicators of higher levels of humidity.

GROUND FLOOR:

All cases and displays were visually checked.

- The Flat Iron in the large trade case has white (plaster) dust accumulating on the handle and the body, there was no obvious damage to the ceiling of the case, the dust may have come from a light or other fitting. This is not damaging to the iron as such, however, the potential risk depends on the cause.
- The sharks jaw in the partially emptied marine case does have a fragmentary loss to the surface and a large crack along the jaw line, however, this looks to be older damage , there is no debris in the case to suggest any recent problem.

FIRST FLOOR:

Falconer Room:

The cases are all appear stable and clean.

- The elephant skull, no further flaking of the bone surface, however there were several small circular accumulations of very fine dust beneath the skull.
- All the dust and debris below the skull and in the fire -place area was cleaned away so that any change can be monitored.

Mezzanine:

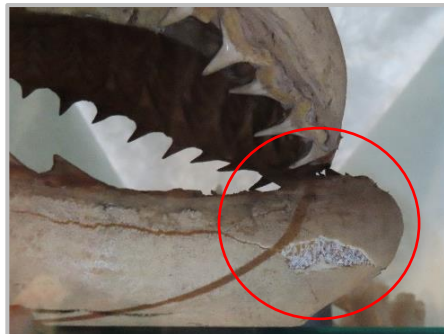
All cases and open displays were checked, there are no obvious changes in relation to pests.

- The badger in the Mammals case does have a small accumulation of fine dust towards the rear of its plinth, this has been present for all our visits and does not appear to have changed. However, as a precautionary measure this will be inspected and cleaned next visit.

- All the other taxidermy appears to be stable.
- One possible source of concern is the Aurochs skull in the Archaeology case, a deposition layer of dust was visible on the upper glass shelves of the case, closer examination suggested that the dust came from the surface of the horns of the Aurochs Skull. The surface appears friable and is shedding particles. During this visit, the dust was cleaned from the shelf for monitoring purposes.
- Low level tarnish of the silver medals in the Agriculture case, not serious, they will require simple cleaning in the future.
- Commerce case: One of the farthings, looks to have a very small spot of potential bronze disease, I haven't done a close examination. Would need to confirm.



Flat Iron



Sharks jaw



Badger mount

ACTION: Next visit

- Maintain a check on the environment and the pest monitoring of the gallery spaces.
- Monitor the Elephant skull, Aurochs skull, Shark jaw for any further deterioration. Continue to monitor.
- Check the farthing in the Commerce case

MUSEUM STORE

GROUND FLOOR

Current visit:

The ground floor store was checked.

The RH in this area was very high, the sensor reading was 90%RH (see separate environmental report)

- Selected geology / palaeontology trays were examined.
- The specimens affected by pyrite decay in trays 18.3.1 and 18.3.2 and in several of the other trays are bagged and separated but are continuing to deteriorate. Bags of silica gel were placed in some of the bags with specimens affected by pyrite decay.
- Drawer 18.4.9 containing mixed fossil material was cleaned, relined and one specimen bagged with silica gel.



Silica gel sachets



Drawer 18.4.9 Mixed Fossils

- The furniture was checked, there is still a white bloom on some of the chairs by the rear wall. This has not changed from the last visit. The room does feel a little damp – next visit, adjust the heating in this room.

ACTION: Next visit

- Continue cleaning the trays to remove incidental insect debris
- Add silica gel sachets to the pyrite affected specimens
- Add softening to reduce physical damage where necessary
- General clean to remove residues and dust accumulation

GROUND FLOOR FOYER AREA OPPOSITE OFFICE

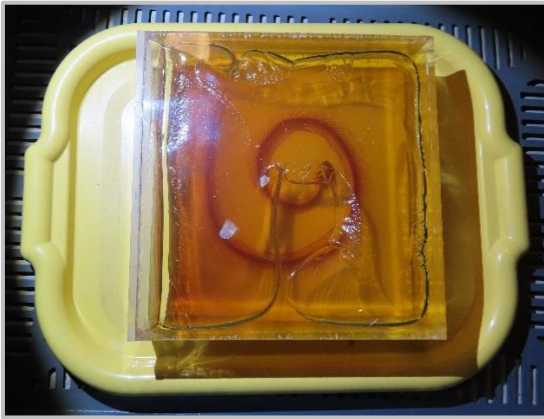
Large incised stone in case. Acc. No. 1992-16

Monitored and photographed – no change this visit

FIRST FLOOR STORE

A walk-through visual check was made for all the stacks and shelving bays.

- Taxidermy, stacks 14 & 15 appear stable no evidence of live moth or beetle. Minor surface dust on the shelves and broken hair fragments from the mounted trophy heads but otherwise in fair condition.
- Shelf 13.2.3: woodworm to rear panel of bird (partridge) diorama 1873:26, this has been noted previously. There is no dust to suggest current activity, will continue to monitor.
- Stack 7: A percentage check of the trays was carried out, to include the lower 5 trays and upper 5 trays of each stack.
- 7.19.11 drawer containing an alizarin red stained prepared snake skeleton (in a discoloured glycerine/ gelatin medium ?). The medium looks to be deteriorating, there is noticeable shrinkage and probably a loss of solvent, the medium is very thick and gelatinous. The medium has split and pulled away from the sides of the Perspex container. There is currently no leakage of the medium or obvious damage to the sealed edges of the container, the changes in consistency of the medium are most likely just long-term evaporative effects linked to the porosity of the Perspex container.
- As a precaution, the snake specimen container was placed in a tray and moved to an empty drawer 7.1.1.



Snake specimen placed on a tray



Shrinkage of the medium

- Art Racks: The racks were pulled out and the frames/artworks checked. No new damage or frame losses noted.
- The Freckled Duck in the diorama case of Australian Ducks, was noted to have some feathers lifting on its neck and a couple of loose feathers present on the base. No moths or moth debris was visible. Movement of feathers is potentially a sign of the presence of pests, will continue to monitor.



Australian Speckled Ducks



Movement of feathers neck area

ACTION: Next visit

- Specimens and shelving require ongoing basic housekeeping measures to remove dust accumulations.
- Cover unglazed or incompletely glazed entomology units, especially those showing (probably historic) specimen damage, with an insect barrier, such as polythene sheeting as a preventive measure.

Jeanette Pearson ACR

High Life Highland Conservation Service

Inverness Museum & Art Gallery

Highland Folk Museum

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