



The John Buchan Heritage Museum Trust

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation No SC042519

President: The Lord Tweedsmuir

Vice President & Chairman: The Lady Stewartby

Robin Tatler, Chairman, Chambers Institution Trust

23rd Nov 2023

Dear Robin,

Further to our discussion concerning the frontage of the Chambers Institution near the Buchan Museum, we have some thoughts for possible future development and improvement.

The John Buchan Museum has now been in Peebles for 10 years and is an important & widely recognised tourist attraction in the town. Pre-Covid, we saw almost 4,000 visitors come into the Museum – local people, UK tourists and a good number from overseas too. Sadly, due to a lack of volunteers, we have reduced our opening hours, but we are still a good Museum offering a great visitor experience. Our season is from April until the end of October and this year we have seen over 2,000 people come through our front door, which is very satisfying.

Whilst the inside of the Museum continues to develop, we are somewhat frustrated by the frontage onto the High Street to encourage visitors into the building. We recognise the constraints of this historic place, but our signage and the look of the frontage, we believe does require some attention.

So here are some thoughts from our committee regarding the future:

1. We currently only have a 'temporary' sign fixed to the railings, partly hidden by an unattractive bench. It would be ideal to remove that bench and raise up some larger signage of a more permanent nature.
2. We have signage attached to the inside of the small windows, some will be replaced next year to make a more appealing display. However, the iron railings on these windows make it difficult to keep the windows clean and the paintwork in good order. Any thoughts on removing this ironwork or at least ensuring regular maintenance?
3. Too much 'street furniture' on the frontage – not just for us, but looks ugly for the building. This includes large BT(?) boxes; brown bin for the café next door; an ugly black litter bin; unattractive bench etc
4. The Tweeddale Museum/library and ourselves all have a mix of different signage, both fixed to the railings and wheeled out into the street, so maybe long term, a more coordinated signage approach would be better.
5. The noticeboards down the alley into the Quadrangle have improved somewhat and we appreciate are 'owned' by different groups. However, sometimes they look messy and not always maintained. The signage to the various areas in the building are also confusing – we often get people into the Museum asking where various places are.

In conclusion, these are just some of the thoughts from the Buchan Museum re the future look of the frontage. We hear a lot of comments from visitors and locals, so hopefully some of this will assist in the future development of this wonderful building.

Kind regards

Ian Buckingham (on behalf of the Museum Committee)

www.johnbuchanstory.co.uk