

# Museum opens its 'Aladdin's Cave'

**HAVE YOU** ever wondered what is held in the store-rooms of museums and galleries?

All museums and galleries have an ever increasing collection and, with a finite amount of space for displays, it is inevitable that the majority of objects are placed in storage.

Even with rotation of objects in the public display area, a large proportion of the collection never sees the light of day.

Historylinks Museum in Dornoch is attempting to overcome this problem, providing public access to images of all the objects in its collection, revealing many items which have been in store for many years.

For the past three years Historylinks has provided some access to its "Aladdin's Cave" with a page "From our collection" included on its website. This modest effort was recognised in March this year by the Scottish Museums Council (now Museums Galleries Scotland) with the inclusion of the Historylinks website in the European Multilingual Inventory of Cultural Heritage in Europe (MICHAEL) database ([www.michael-culture.eu](http://www.michael-culture.eu)) as a "good example of a small museum using online digital images and descrip-

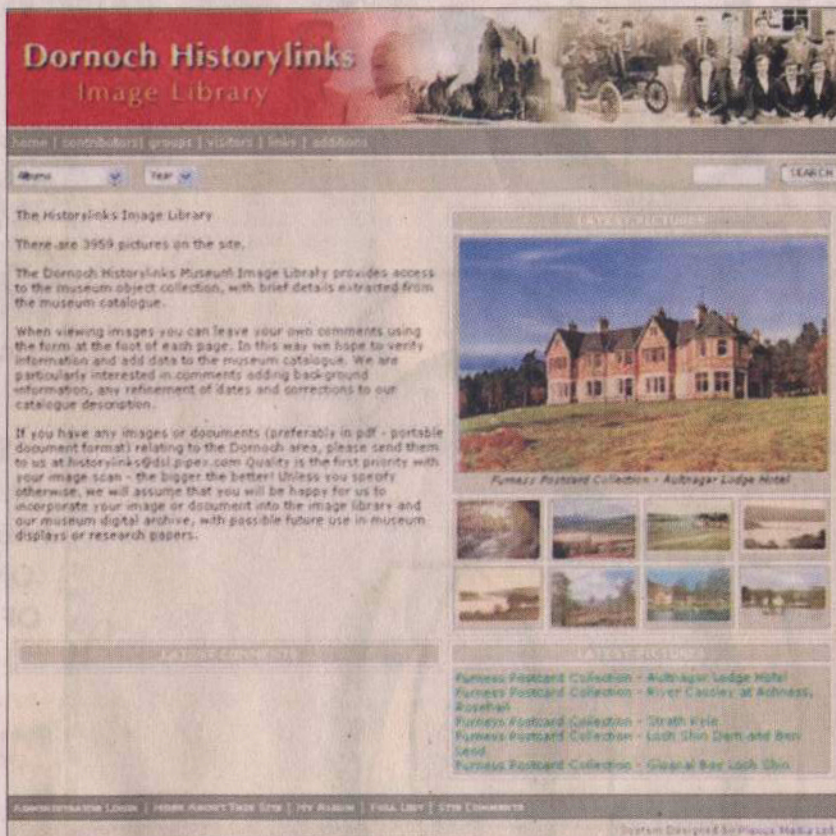
tions to increase access to stored collections".

Now, in a big step forward the Dornoch Historylinks Image Library, which may be accessed from the Historylinks website ([www.historylinks.org.uk](http://www.historylinks.org.uk)), provides public access to all the images currently linked to the museum catalogue.

Over 4000 catalogue records and their linked images were included in the image library at launch on 1st June 2008. The library permits the viewing of objects by year or by subject-related albums and there is a comprehensive search facility. The website is interactive, allowing users to add comments when viewing any image page. Historylinks is particularly interested in comments which will add factual and background information suitable for addition to the existing catalogue description.

The complete museum catalogue records more than 7000 objects, so about 40 per cent of the collection has yet to be photographed or scanned. A March 2009 target has been set to complete this work.

"There will be additions to the website throughout the coming year and, regular access will allow users to see not only the latest additions but also the com-



The homepage of the new website.

ments that have been submitted. We hope that comments may strike a chord, generating a dialogue of additions to the website," said John Barnes, secretary to the Historylinks Trust.

"If you have any photographs or documents relat-

ing to the Dornoch area the museum would welcome the opportunity to see them. Either call at the museum to show us what you have or send an image attached to an e-mail to [historylinks@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:historylinks@dsl.pipex.com). Please confirm in your e-

mail your acceptance of Historylinks' use of the image for display purposes both in the museum and as part of the image library."

The software and expertise for the image library was provided by Plexus Media Ltd of Cromarty.