

A 'fantastic space'

By Alan Hendry

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WATERLINES in Lybster was hailed as "a fantastic space" at the opening of a joint exhibition at the weekend.

The harbourfront heritage centre is the venue for *Abandoned*, featuring work by photographer Angus Mackay and artist Jane McDonough.

The exhibition is inspired by the deserted houses of Caithness and Sutherland and Angus has produced a hardback pictorial book, also called *Abandoned*, to tie in with it.

Waterlines has had limited opening since the pandemic but wind-farm funding helped the centre to reopen this year, with Donna Booth appointed as manager/curator.

As well as developing the exhibition space, there are plans to host rotating exhibitions, workshops and events, and to make it a



Photographer Angus Mackay and artist Jane McDonough in Waterlines on the opening day of their exhibition, *Abandoned*.

year-round venue.

Waterlines originally opened in 2000 in restored harbour buildings close to the shore.

Abandoned will run on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, from 10am to 3pm, until December 21.

Jane has a mix of paintings, drawings and canvas prints on show.

"I think the venue just lends itself to the theme of *Abandoned*," she said.

"All the beams, the stone walls, all the little treasures

Upper Borgue, one of the abandoned properties featured in Angus Mackay's work.

that we've got around the room, things that have been found as well around the area, and the sea... it's just all in keeping with the theme.

"It's a beautiful place and I'm really proud that me and Angus have got the first exhibition here. Hopefully there will be more to come because it's a stunning place to have your work."

Angus said: "I think this is a fantastic space and it's great to see the building coming back to life.

"It kind of goes with the *Abandoned* theme of the exhibition and how the space now is being re-utilised for a whole new generation of people and for events."

Artefacts around the exhibition area include an old typewriter that came out of Benachielt, Latheron, one of the properties featured in

Angus's work, along with items from Waterlines' own collection.

"There's a butter churn in the corner, there's an old sewing machine, peat-cutting tools... all things that are indicative of lots of the houses that are included in the exhibition," Angus said.

"You can imagine that many of the artefacts could have been in any of the buildings in the exhibition, or all of them."

Angus's book is available through his website - www.angusmackay.co.uk/abandoned - and at several outlets in Caithness and Sutherland, priced £25.

He reported that orders for the book have been going well.

"The feedback from one lady was that she was crying and smiling in equal measure as she was going through the book," Angus said.

"It was evoking so many emotions of the sadness of the fact that these places were abandoned, but it brought back memories of when they were lived in by people like her granny and grandpa," Angus said.

"It really struck a chord with her, and it seems to be striking a chord with so many people. There are three books going out to America, and they're going down to the south of England, all over.

"Everywhere you live, there are houses like these, and people can relate to that."

The photographs and artwork will be available to buy.

