



The Winter Programmes

The winter programmes are drawing to an end, with only a few more lectures to go. So far, we have enjoyed talks by a diverse, interesting, entertaining and often provocative group of speakers at both venues.

The Pictavia series has been highly successful, with audiences of over twenty from the beginning and still growing. The meeting space has been redesigned to provide a comfortable venue with plenty of room. Craig (our archivist) has seen to providing us with tea or coffee. As members come from as far afield as Glasgow and Aberdeen, a hot drink on a cold night before an interesting and thought-provoking lecture is most welcome. Perhaps being located deep in Pictish territory gives an extra spice to the experience.

On the other hand, the Edinburgh series has seen a falling off in numbers since we had to leave our old base of many years in the School of Scottish Studies. The massive reorganisation which is still working its way through the University of Edinburgh makes it highly unlikely that we can expect to see a return to a George Square venue in future. We will, however, be trying to find a convenient and cheaper location for next year. It may well be that Edinburgh is too well served for talks on the Early Mediaeval period, or that there are problems of getting around the city. (Parking is certainly an issue for speakers as well as members). The committee would like to hear from members in the Edinburgh area if there are problems with the venue, the time, or with the programme itself.

Please drop us a line, either to

Pictish Arts Society,
c/o Pictavia,
Haughmuir,
Brechin,
DD9 6RL

or to Sheila Hainey at the address on the back page.



Pictavia

There are two meetings still to go at Pictavia'

Friday 14th February: Dr Richard Oram "Burghead Bull - a capital tale"

Friday 14th March: Dr Isabel Henderson "Reflections after writing an art-historical book on Pictish sculpture and metal work"

Edinburgh

Our last meeting of the year will be a re-arranged Members Night on Thursday, 6th March at the Glasite Meeting House, Barony Street at 7.30pm. This replaces the meeting cancelled due to weather problems in January.



AGM and Dunnichen Day Celebrations

The annual conference of the Pictish Arts Society has traditionally been held as close as practical to the anniversary of Dunnichen Day. In the early years of the society this presented few problems in terms of clashing with other events which are likely to interest our members. However, over the years, more and more conferences are held in the late Spring. It is now almost impossible not to clash with something which is of competing interest. We have decided to move our main conference to September (in the Black Isle this year) but will hold a meeting at Pictavia offering a pair of related talks, followed by the AGM. We will then have an afternoon given over to activities for Picts of all ages, and hope that members will bring friends and family along on Saturday 16th May. More details in the next newsletter.

Rolling Stones

We intend to feature news of discoveries, re-discoveries, moves, losses and alleged losses in order to keep members up to date with events, and also keep a watchful eye on our Pictish heritage. This is the first, and many of the snippets will be hazy and downright inaccurate! Please chip in and make this column useful.

Old Scatness, Shetland: There has been an on-going excavation at this site for 8 years now with 2 Pictish stones, including a crescent and V-rod coming to light.

This year an incised bear turned up in August. Although damaged it clearly depicts a brown bear walking to the right, its muscles portrayed in familiar Pictish scroll work. Unfortunately the head is worn, but the rear end and the claws are very detailed, and well preserved. It had been built into an early pier of the wheelhouse c 650-900 AD. A bead with an ogham inscription was also discovered later the same day. I am grateful to Lawrence Malcolmson for this information.

Kilduncan, Fife: The late Pictish cross slab found earlier this year, has been awarded by the Treasure Trove panel to Fife Museums, and it will be displayed in St. Andrews Museum following conservation.

St. Vigeans, Angus: No new stones but new winter hours! The museum is now open daily 9.30am-4.00pm October-March. The new key-keeper is Mrs. L. Ramsay, Kirkstyle House (the new house behind the museum). If she is not available, visitors can obtain a key from Arbroath Abbey 01241 878756 with proof of identity. PAS is grateful to Mike Weir MP for taking such an interest in this wee, but very important museum.

Pictavia, Angus: New winter hours! Staffed by Angus and Dundee Tourist Board, Pictavia will now only be open on Saturday and Sunday, closed week days until Easter

Falkland, Fife: The two stones supposed to be in Falkland Museum are not known to the staff there. Rumours of their disappearance and also a move to Newburgh abound. Both stones were discovered at Westfield Farm and were entrusted to the National Trust for Scotland. This NTS museum and its staff are not aware of these two important stones. Any PAS members who are also NTS members could perhaps take this up.

Thanks go to several members for bringing this to my attention.

Norman Atkinson

Pictish Problems at Bourtie and Dyce

Members will be concerned to hear of problems in Aberdeenshire with regard to some Pictish stones: I am very grateful to Marian Youngblood for alerting me to this, and for drawing attention to the website of the Friends of Grampian Stones (FOGS) which society members might like to visit.

Aberdeenshire is not the richest county for Pictish sculpture (though it has some very interesting stones), and those it has seem to be rapidly disappearing. The stones at Dyce, for long built into a wall in the kirk doorway, were wrested in 1997 from their home by Historic Scotland and taken to Edinburgh 'until an appropriate shelter to house them is provided' by Aberdeen City Council. The local group, FOGS (Friends of Grampian Stones), has offered to make a small donation to have them rehoused at Dyce, but so far there has been no response.

That is bad enough, but last year a Class IV cross-incised stone was found in a steading wall at Kirkton of Bourtie farm, near the kirk which (still) has a Class I stone built into the S wall (Mack, Field Guide to the Pictish Symbol Stones no 21), with a further cross-incised stone built into the kirkyard wall. This new stone's fate is in the balance as there is an application for planning permission

for 3 houses on the site. Historic Scotland have said helpfully that they do not intend to schedule the stone, and that it 'should be removed to the most local museum' - presumably Aberdeen or Inverurie. Why could planning permission not specify the need for the stone's preservation in situ - surely an interesting feature to be incorporated into the development in some way? Historic Scotland is very keen to stress the need for the conservation of Pictish stones, but so far the easiest type of conservation seems to be the transportation of the stones to some distant archive where they will languish unseen and largely forgotten by all but the most dedicated researcher.

[Ed:-- The two large Dyce symbols stones are back at St. Fergus, according to Historic Scotland's Conservation Centre. The four smaller early-Christian cross-marked stones are possibly still with Historic Scotland's Northern Division awaiting reinstallation at St. Fergus'.]

Lloyd Laing

Picts and Bobs

Oldest star chart found - BBC online news 21 January 2003. An Ivory tablet, said to be 32,500 years old showing Orion. This was found in Germany - do you think we have anything similar on our Pictish stones in Scotland?

Scotland's top treasures - Scotland on Sunday 5 January 2002.

At 4th on the list came the Pictish Stone slab from Hilton of Cadboll. What do you think is our top Pictish Stone?

For the Megalithic hunter who has everything try shopping at www.megalithic.co.uk/shop. You can buy your own tabletop stone circle. I thought it might look quite nice in my fish tank!

Sheila Fraser.

New Developments at Fortingall

Fortingall, near Aberfeldy in highland Perthshire, will be known to many PAS members for its collection of early medieval cross-slabs, and as the site of the Fortingall Yew, possibly Europe's oldest tree.

Recent months have seen several environmental improvements to the kirkyard to enhance the setting of the Yew. The display of the important collection of early stones has also been improved.

A flagstone path has been installed between the kirkyard path and the stone-walled enclosure that protects the ancient tree. The individual slabs have been decorated with inscriptions and symbolic motifs referring to the various peoples who would have encountered the Yew from prehistory onwards.

The Picts are represented by a picture of the Aberlemno symbol stone. Within the enclosure, a circular setting of posts has been laid out to give an impression of the Yew's formerly massive trunk (as recorded in early descriptions), which has largely rotted away, giving the tree its present fragmented appearance. An information board about the Yew, including a speculative reconstruction of its appearance alongside the early medieval church on the site, has been attached to its enclosure.

Further improvements to the kirkyard include the rescuing of one of four simple cross-slabs (Fortingall 5) from its use as the threshold-stone of the gate. It has been placed upright against the eastern end of the south church wall, where it will hopefully be protected from further damage. The other old slabs in the graveyard (including two other simple cross-slabs) have had the surrounding turf cut back several centimetres, thereby lessening the danger of damage during grass-cutting.

Within the church, the fragmentary but finely-carved cross-slabs Fortingall 1-4, formerly lying loose within window embrasures, have now been clamped against the internal splays of the same windows. This will serve to bring out the carved detail by side-lighting, and will help to ensure that no further pieces 'disappear', as a part of Fortingall 1 did in recent years.

A leaflet giving details of the archaeology and history of Fortingall is currently in preparation by David Strachan of Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust, and should be available at the church in 2003.

Burghead News

Work on a new Visitor Centre is underway at the promontory fort of Burghead, a magnificent relic of Pictish times.

Some of our readers will be familiar with the spectacular celebrations that take place on old New Year's Day (11th January) here. The Clavie, a barrel of burning tar and wood, is carried round the village before being firmly placed on a cairn on the old earthen ramparts of the fort. Domestic fires should be extinguished and relit from the fire carried through the streets. When it finally comes to rest with enthusiasm and combustible liquids, to the acclaim and chants of local youngsters as flames leap high into the night sky.

The Burning of the Clavie is genuinely an ancient tradition; one of the many ancient festivals which the post-reformation Church of Scotland did its best to eradicate. It may even date back to the days when the famous Bulls were carved at the Pictish fort.

The new Visitor Centre (created within the former lookout post on the headland) is likely to house the Bull Stones, the shrine corner post and the hunting scene which have been until now kept in Burghead Library. The Centre is now at the stage of

fitting out, and should be open in early summer.

Prof. Ian Ralston gave a talk to the Pictish Arts Society in Edinburgh on the topic of Burghead, beating the jinx which has seen him struck by illness on the previous occasions when he has agreed to speak at PAS conferences. He summarised the results of past excavations, up to and including the recent work at the new Visitor Centre. It is clear that many questions remain to be answered about the role of Pictish forts, of which Burghead is an outstanding example.

The work of the Bughead Headland Trust in furthering this work and promoting the preservation, and display of this important site is to be applauded. Anyone seeking to find out more can visit the Trust's website at www.burghead.com

Inchmarnock

Headland Archaeology have recovered a collection of interesting stones from this site. Near the ancient chapel of St. Marnock, in an area overlying a cemetery of at least seventeen graves, were a number of pieces of slate and stone. Some were marked out as 'gaming boards', others carried abstract designs. There were cross inscribed stones, and pieces with writing.

Among them was a curious sketch, illustrating a group of figures and a long boat. Two of the figures are fairly complete, a third is visible from the waist down. A possible leg of a fourth is visible above the boat. The taller of the two complete figures and the two fragmentary individuals appear to be cross-gartered, and wearing chain-mail tunics. The smaller, individual has a plain tunic, and an arm extended. Over the wrist is hung a rectangular object. The detail of the head of this smaller figure is unclear; his taller companion is bearded, with long wild hair. View this "Hostage Stone" on Headland's website at www.headlandarchaeology.com

Obituaries

2002 was a year which saw the loss of a number of influential figures in the world of Pictish studies. Three of them are remembered here.

STEWART CRUDEN, OBE (1915-2002)

Stewart Cruden, (Principal) Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Scotland from 1946 to 1980, died on 30 October 2002. His training as an architect and his attendance at Gordon Childe's early archaeology lectures gave him a practical and historical understanding of the great chronological sweep of Scotland's guardianship and scheduled monuments. Although renowned as an authority on medieval castles and abbeys, his friendship with Raleigh Radford gave him a particular interest in the early medieval period and an affection for the monuments of the Northern Isles. His little book on *The Early Christian & Pictish Monuments of Scotland* (1957; revised 1964), with its thoughtful text and admirable selection of illustrations, arose from an important practical contribution to early medieval studies. He had inherited three celebrated but ill-organised collections of carved stones of that period. The museum at Meikle was reorganised in 1949 and that at Whithorn extended in the early 1950s, at the same time as the warming-house at St Andrews was adapted to display the sarcophagus and other sculpture. In 1960 a home was secured for the neglected 'but none the less renowned' group of stones at St Vigean. These displays were accepted by later generations as the obvious way to present such material, with their whitewashed walls, systematic arrangement, concise but clear labelling and comparative illustrations of other guardianship monuments.

Stewart Cruden brought a distinctively Scottish voice to the inner councils of what was a UK department (MoW; MPBW; DoE) until the mid-1970s (SDD; HS). Highly respected by successive chief inspectors in London, he was able to initiate important excavations such as those by J R C Hamilton at Jarlshof and Clickhimin, and the rescue work of John Hunter and Chris Morris at Birsay in the 1970s. A strategic field-survey of Early Christian sites was also undertaken by Lloyd Laing and Aidan Macdonald. His own field-notebooks, now in the NMRS, show keen observation recorded in lively sketches which he also used as lecture-illustrations.

DAVID GORDON ADAMS, MA ALA FSA(Scot) (1940-2002)

Davy Adams, born and bred in Brechin, initially studied art at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art in Dundee and then worked as a draughtsman with Ferranti in Edinburgh and London.

The pull of history was too strong, however, and he returned to university at the new campus of Stirling to take a degree in Scottish history. This was followed by a course in librarianship at Robert Gordon's College in Aberdeen.

Davy then worked with Angus Libraries and Museums from 1978 until ill health forced his premature retirement. This did not break the relationship since he went on to publish many local history booklets and articles; a number of these were in collaboration with the department.

He established Chanonry Press, and went on to publish no fewer than 23 books and booklets, notably *The Celtic Mediaeval Religious Houses in Angus*, and illustrated guides to the Brechin Round Tower and Brechin's Mediaeval Cathedral, the latter two for the Society of Friends of Brechin Cathedral of which he was a life member. He published at least 25 articles on a wide range of topics, including *From Samson to Gregory: the bishops and clergy of Brechin c 1150-1359*.

Over the years he also gave much unpublished work to Angus libraries and Museums. This resource is well used by researchers.

Davy's passion for Angus history and language encouraged many to become interested in their heritage. The Celtic Bells event in March 2002, when John Purser delighted a large crowd by ringing an ancient bell from the top of the Brechin Round Tower, was his brainchild. On a practical note, the event showed that a handbell rung within the chamber at the top of the tower could be heard over a wide area of the town. Davy also gave the first PAS lecture at Pictavia in October 2001.

He was elected a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1983, and more recently appointed as an Honorary Research Fellow in the School of Scottish Studies at the University of Glasgow. Davy's passionate interest in the history of his beloved home, and in the folk music and tales of his native land will long be remembered.

BASIL RICHARDSON STANLEY MEGAW (22 June 1913 – 22 August 2002)

Director of the Manx Museum 1945–1957; Director of the School of Scottish Studies 1957–1969

On 24 October, a celebration of the life and work of Basil Megaw took place in the Raeburn Room of the Old College, University of Edinburgh. Basil was remembered in the words of friends and colleagues and in music reflecting his ties with Ireland, the Isle of Man, and Scotland. Tributes were delivered by Ian Fraser, who had been appointed to the School of Scottish Studies when Basil was its Director, and by John Dunbar, former Secretary to the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, who had been a long-standing friend; another, from Marshall Cubbon, who had succeeded Basil at the Manx Museum, was read by Anne Seaton as he was unable to be present. These warm tributes all affirmed Basil's great personal and professional qualities, and each contained accounts of amusing incidents revealing something of his impish sense of humour. The words were interspersed with music – Irish and Scottish airs on the clarsach, Manx Gaelic songs, and Scottish and Irish sets from an unusual but pleasing pairing of cello and small pipes. The celebration was thoughtfully and very ably organised and introduced by Margaret Mackay, Director of the School of Scottish Studies Archives, who was also the author of the Obituary which appeared in *The Scotsman* of 18 October, to which you are directed for a detailed account of Basil's life and work.

Basil came to Edinburgh in 1957 when he became first director of the School of Scottish Studies, following a successful and fruitful period of twelve years as director of the Manx Museum and National Trust. He remained in the university post until 1969, and retired in 1980, but retained an office at the School, in the premises in George Square where this Society used to meet. He was a member of the PAS and took a great interest in its proceedings, and often walked from his home in Merchiston across Bruntisfield Links and the Meadows to attend our meetings.

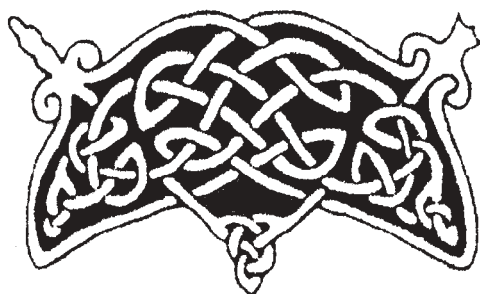
Basil was a great walker, his lean and upright bearing and purposeful sprightly stride belied his years. His mind was still sharp and he regularly attended many other societies' lectures and conferences, and he was always ready with sound advice and encouragement whenever his opinion was sought. Above all, he was a sociable character who found life alone very difficult "rattling around a large house full of books", and it was a cruel blow to him when his favourite meeting place, the University Staff Club in Chambers Street, closed a few years ago. After this he relied increasingly on the telephone to keep in touch with friends, or to share anecdotes with them from his rich store of personal reminiscences.

I particularly remember stories about the excavations at Finavon Hill, which Basil, as a student of Archaeology at Cambridge in the early 1930s, had worked on. The director, Gordon Childe, had his headquarters at the Royal Hotel in Forfar, whereas the workers were billeted at a lesser establishment further down the road, however, they were invited and expected to attend the Royal, in the evenings after dinner, for discussion with the master – and what an education that was.

Basil's beloved wife Eleanor died in 1977, and she and his surviving family, Sam and Helen Megaw, Clare, David and Heather Alford, and his elder brother Peter were always in his thoughts.

We all owe a debt to Basil's scholarship and his enterprising work in Manx and Scottish Studies, but I also remember him with great respect and affection for his genial friendship, and with lasting gratitude for his generous encouragement and support, and I join the Society in offering our sympathies to his family on their loss.

David Henry



Letters to the Editor.

Dear Sir

I have been dipping into the "Early Sources of Scottish History", collected and translated by Alan Orr Anderson, and have naturally encountered many references to the Picts. These include, however, the Picts of Caithness; the Picts of Galloway (converted by Kentigern and later subject to the Angles); the Picts of Ireland (Cruithni) who should not be confused with the Pictish Gaels (Gwyddyl Ffichti), or indeed the Orcadian Picts, or Peti, who "little exceeded pigmies in stature". I confess to being somewhat bewildered. What did the various annalists mean by "Picts"? Come to that, what exactly do we mean by "Picts"? I am reminded of Professor Nicolaisen's contention that all the experts in the field should be shut up in a conference room and not allowed out until they came up with a watertight definition. I should be interested to know how fellow P.A. S. members understand the term.

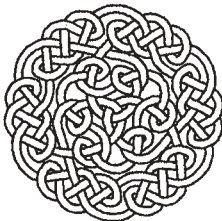
M. Rorke

Dear Sir,

Could some of the individual characteristics of "Doric", that are in many ways different from other Scots dialects, be the result of vowel and consonant sounds originating in Pictish that have survived through "Aberdeenshire Gaelic" and into Scots?

J. Hunter Gordon.

If you have any comment to make on either of the above, or wish to air your views on things Pictish, either write to the Newsletter Editor, PAS, c/o Pictavia, Haughmuir, by Brechin, DD9 6RL or to Alistair Carty, PO Box 3738, Glasgow, G41 4YD, marking the envelope "PAS". At the moment, we can only publish relatively short communications, so if you can keep letters to less than five hundred words, we would be grateful.



Abernethy, Perth: A fragment with key pattern which was found in a near-by garden has now been placed in Abernethy Museum. The museum now has two carved stones and a simple cross. Thanks to Niall Robertson

Rex Pictorum.

King of Pictavia, Normanus filius Aedcini, opened the new season's proceedings at his much improved Circinn capital with a discourse on his illustrious forebears. As relief from his exposition of the genealogies, he showed a slide of himself with the replica of the Stone of Scone at Arbroath Abbey, and he proposed that the metal rings inserted at either end of the genuine article were to facilitate the lifting of the hallowed object by Pictish kings at their inauguration—a moot point, Scotland has a long and continuing tradition of 'lifting stones' and of producing brutes capable of getting these esteemed objects off the ground. Accomplishing such a feat would be a prerequisite for a potential ruler in demonstrating occupational suitability – just as a blacksmith's long apprenticeship would be in vain if at the end of it he could not lift the anvil from its block to prove possession of the necessary strength to do the job.

Disappointingly, our own ruler candidly admitted that I had been unable to move the Scone replica without help. Surely if he could be persuaded that there was Pictish carving on the underside, Normanus would somehow find the strength. However, Health and Safety at Work regulations intervene to ensure there is no question of him being required to resit the kingship test. No matter, his loyal subjects all agree he is doing a grand job as it is. Let destiny take its course!



Unrecorded Pictish Silver Brooch

Members of the society may be interested to learn that a large Pictish silver brooch (diam. 77 mm), complete with pin (length 140 mm) and with square terminals, reputedly from Fife, has recently come on the antiquities market – if you have £450 to spare, it can be yours! I hope to be able to report more fully on it in the near future.

Lloyd Laing



Museum Opening Times.

In wintry Scotland, the thought of ploughing through heavy mud to visit stones in the field loses some of its attractions. For stone addicts, the museum collections are an attractive option, but which are open, and what are opening hours? Here are a few. All details were checked at time of going to print, but we cannot be held responsible for any subsequent changes.

Museum of Scotland,
Chambers Street,
Edinburgh.
10am-5pm Mon-Sat (Tues. till 8pm), 12-5 Sunday.
No charge.

Perth Museum and Art Gallery,
7-8, George Street,
Perth.
10am-5pm Mon-Sat.
No charge.

Meikle Museum,
Dundee Road,
Meikle.
Closed until 1st April

McManus Galleries,
Albert Square,
Dundee
10.30am-5pm Mon-Sat (Thurs till 7pm) 12.30-4 Sunday
No charge

Meffen Institute/Forfar Museum
20, West High Street,
Forfar
10am-5pm Mon-Sat

Tankerness House Museum,
Broad Street
Kirkwall.
10.30-12.30am, 1.30-5pm, Mon-Sat, 2-5pm Sunday.

St Vigeans
Kirkstyle
St Vigeans,
9.30-4pm daily (keys from Mrs Ramsay, Kirkstyle House or Arbroath Abbey if Mrs Ramsay is not available. Proof of identity may be required).

Elgin Museum
1, High Street,
Elgin
closed until Easter.

Arbroath Museum,
Signal Tower,
Lady Loan,
Arbroath
10am-5pm Mon-Sat

Montrose Museum,
Panmure Place,
Montrose
10am-5pm Mon-Sat.

Gateway to the Glens,
The Town House,
32, High Street,
Kirriemuir
10am-5pm Mon-Sat., closed Thursdays.

Pictavia Visitor Centre,
Haughmuir,
by Brechin
Saturdays and Sundays 10-5pm only until Easter

Please note that Brechin Castle Garden Centre no longer stocks any merchandise with a Pictish or Celtic flavour. For the time being, visitors to Pictavia will not be able to buy books, jewellery, or artwork of Pictish interest at the site.

Exhibitions, Conferences, Meetings, Fairs.

Saturday 22nd February 2003
Landscape and Environment in Dark Age Scotland
Seventh St Andrews Dark Age Studies Day Conference
(details: Committee for Dark Age Studies,
Dept. of Medieval History,
71, South Street,
St Andrews
Fife KY16 9AL
tel 01334 463332)

Friday 14th- Sunday 16th March 2003
Scotland in Ancient Europe
(details from Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Royal Museum,
Chambers Street, Edinburgh EH1 1JF)

3-4 April 2003
Able minds & practised hands-Scotland's early medieval sculpture in the 21st century.
The Hub, Castlehill, Royal Mile, Edinburgh (see details in enclosed flyer).

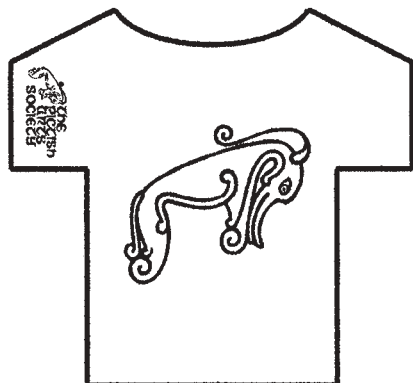
Do let us know well in advance of any events in your area .





NEW T-SHIRTS

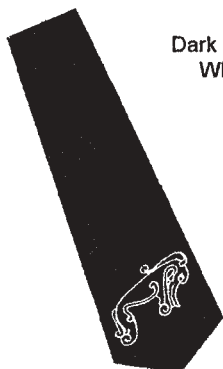
(Short Sleeve)
Natural colour cotton
with a Green Pictish Beast on the
front, the PAS ogham on the back, and
the 'Pictish Arts Society' on one



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M, L, XL

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£7.50
(PAS Members)
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£8



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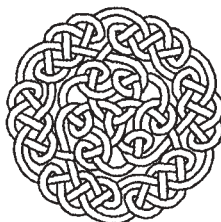
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As well as providing Pictish Arts Society news and gossip the newsletter serves as a forum to stimulate the debate on the future and care of our Pictish heritage. The views of individual contributors are not to be taken as PAS policy unless clearly stated. If you have something you feel needs saying or want to see what others think please send your letters to the PAS Secretary.

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