PAS Conference 2013

The 23rd Pictish Arts Society conference was held at the AK Bell library in Perth on the 5th of October, 2013. The President, John Borland, welcomed an audience of over 50 members and friends to the conference, noting that this year marked the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Pictish Arts Society. He handed over to Jill Harden, who chaired the morning session. Over the years, Jill has contributed much to our understanding of early historic Scotland. She recently co-authored *Winds of Change: The Living Landscapes of Hirta, St Kilda.* Historic Scotland published Jill's *The Picts* in 2010.

Jill introduced our first speaker of the day, Christopher Bowles. His academic background comprises a BA in Anthropology from the University of Colorado, an MSc from the University of Edinburgh and a PhD from Glasgow University. Since 2008, he has worked as Archaeology Officer for the Scottish Borders Council. Christopher spoke on **Trusty's Hill, Galloway: the context for a Pictish inscription in southern Scotland.**

Trusty's hill is one of the Boreland Hills, a small chain which lies to the south west of Gatehouse of Fleet. The summit of the hill offers good all-round views, and overlooks Ardwall Island, in

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Double-disc and Z-rod, Trusty's Hill

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S-dragon and 'dagger', Trusty's Hill

Fleet Bay. It is, however sheltered from the view of anyone approaching up the Fleet from the Solway. The hill has been surrounded by a series of ramparts, the innermost enclosing the summit of the hill. On the face of a rocky outcrop to one side of the entrance to this enclosure, two Pictish symbols have been carved: a double disc and Z-rod, and a strange hippocamp-like figure with an unusual head (Christopher affectionately dubbed it the 'Prawn Monster'), which has a sword like feature piercing its belly. There are also modern graffiti in plenty. Christopher noted the presence of incised diagonal lines running through the symbols and suggested they may be wilful act of slashing and defacement by a conquering force.

In 1960, Charles Thomas carried out a short programme of excavation at the site, cutting seven trenches. Trench two was over what he termed a guard hut, on the opposite side of the entrance to the carved stone. The trench was not bottomed, because of waterlogging. Trenches four and five were placed across the highest of the three encircling ramparts, extending in to the

interior. The whole excavation produced only the bottom half of a rotary quern in the way of finds. The two weeks of digging had coincided with a spell of very wet weather, which had turned the earth on the site to a sticky, heavy mess.

A recent rubbing and subsequent measured drawing of the stone by John Borland of RCAHMS revealed a series of cut marks along the well-defined left hand edge of the stone, suggesting a possible ogham inscription. RCAHMS commissioned a laser scan to help analyse these markings but the protective iron cage restricted access and compromised the results. In 2012, Scheduled Ancient Monument consent was granted for the temporary removal of the cage and with Historic Scotland's assistance, a more thorough scan was carried out. RCAHMS also carried out a detailed topographical survey of the fort, revealing a pattern of terraces enclosed by ramparts and rock-cut ditches with a nucleated fort at the top, at least one other terrace to the south east, and possible building platforms outside the ramparts to the north and north-east.

Subsequent to this, a re-opening of some of Charles Thomas's original 1960 trenches was carried out, in a collaboration between GUARD and the Dumfries and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society, as part of the latter's 150th-year celebrations. This time, the weather was fine, and the dig was much more productive. It was possible to distinguish fire-reddened stones in the core of the upper rampart, and the voids for posts were clearly visible. What appeared to be scoops cut from the ramparts, and which it had been suggested were quarry holes for field dykes appear to be regular and to coincide with post voids, where the wall had collapsed. Lenses of dark earth over- and under-lying possibly revetted rampart faces made it very difficult to distinguish any sequence here. The greywacke bedrock of the site was quarried to form the ditches and provide material for the rampart.

A number of finds were recovered, including a stone rubber, fragments of crucibles which had been used to melt fine metals (these are to be analysed using X-ray fluorescence techniques to determine which metals were present) and small mould fragments reminiscent of those found at nearby Mote of Mark. As well as moulds for pins, a unique thistle headed iron pin,

with bands of copper alloy below the head, also turned up.

Also recovered was a possible Anglo-Saxon harness mount, and a fragment of Samian ware of a type common on early medieval sites. This was smoothed on one side and had possibly been used as some form of rubber. An E-ware rim sherd from the Loire valley dating from the very late 6th or early 7th century was found. This type of ware has been found at elite sites where there is evidence of metalworking and access to imported luxury goods.

Christopher compared the site at Trusty's Hill with Dunadd, a recognised royal inauguration site where a carved Pictish boar lies close to a rock cut footprint and basin. He suggested that the 'guard hut' at Trusty's Hill, which proved to be rock cut, was in fact a basin similar to that at Dunadd. He also drew comparison with other suggested royal sites, such as South Cadbury, where there was early historic period re-use of an Iron Age hillfort. He also noted that at Bamburgh, a 6th- to 8th-century Anglo-Saxon capital re-used a hillfort overlooking the Holy Island of Lindisfarne. Trusty's Hill overlooks the island of Ardwall, where Charles Thomas uncovered a number of probable early Christian burials although there was no suggestion of a monastery in the area he investigated there.

Drawing on these comparisons, Christopher suggested that Trusty's Hill may have been the capital of Rheged, a kingdom loosely located in the Solway area, and had been destroyed by fire during the Anglo-Saxon take-over of the area in the late7th/early 8th century. *Sheila Hainey*

Following on from Christopher Bowles, the second talk, **How 'Pictish' are the symbols at Trusty's Hill?** was given by Katherine Forsyth, reader in the Department of Celtic and Gaelic at Glasgow University.

Trusty's Hill in south-west Scotland is far from Pictland and the symbols there, carved into bedrock are among the few 'outliers' of Pictish sculpture. The others are a symbol stone found at the foot of Edinburgh Castle rock and an inscribed boar on bedrock at Dunadd hill fort in Argyll. This last one can perhaps be explained by the fact that Dunadd was temporarily under Pictish domination. The carved bedrock is visible on the skyline and also bears a carved footprint, thought to have been connected with the Royal inaugural ritual. The Pictish boar could

have been a political statement, a gesture to a conquered people.

In the absence of any historical Pictish connection with Trusty's Hill, the question naturally arises: Are the Trusty's Hill symbols genuine? They are mentioned in the *First Statistical Account* of the Parish of Anwoth, published in 1794 (vol.13, p.351), with the parish minister describing 'a broad flat stone, inscribed with several wavy and spiral lines, which exhibit however no regular figure'. Although vague, this description clearly refers to the symbols and as it predates any widespread or general awareness of Pictish sculpture, it seems reasonable to conclude that they are not modern forgeries or copies.

The large sheet of bedrock lies at a 45-degree angle near the entrance to the hill fort, thus displaying its symbols quite prominently. This again could indicate they were of political significance to a local audience. The two symbols sit side by side, a departure from the Pictish norm, separated by a natural cleft down the middle of the rock.

Katherine pointed out that symbols have been found inscribed on all sorts of objects other than standing stones: on cave walls, pebbles, bones, a bronze crescent plaque, a silver plaque, a silver pin and gaming pieces. A massive silver chain with Pictish symbols on its fastening was found at Whitecleuch, 60 miles to the north of Trusty's Hill, interestingly on the main route to Galloway from Pictland.

Next Katherine looked at the 'anatomy' of the double-disc and Z-rod. The discs at Trusty's Hill have unusual indentations in their centres, the right one particularly pronounced, but it is not thought to be a cupmark. The arms of the Z-rod are generally parallel but the incised outline which defines them is wavy, giving it an irregular appearance and the direction of the floriated terminals at both ends is highly unusual. Katherine concluded that the carving was carried out by someone with some knowledge of Pictish symbols but certainly not an expert and therefore probably not an imported Pictish carver.

Moving on to examine the right hand symbol, Katherine looked to the Pictish repertoire of 'hippocamps' and 'fishmonsters' for any parallel. She likened it to the 'S-Dragon' (her preferred name for such a figure) on the Ulbster cross-slab but noted there are no exact matches to the Trusty's Hill beast.

Next Katherine focussed on the pointed blade-like feature aimed at the S-Dragon's underbelly. Although it does not pierce the creature, the inscribed curls at the point of contact could signify an outflow of blood. However the round pommel or handle of the knife or sword is not comparable with any known weapon. Katherine touched upon Scandinavian, Germanic and Celtic traditions of dragons living in water and guarding treasure. She noted there are no slain dragons in the Pictish sculptural repertoire but drew our attention to Fowlis Wester 2 cross-slab where one S-dragon holds what may be a ring in its mouth (treasure?) whilst opposite, a second holds a human by the head in its jaws.

With regards to the possible ogham inscription along the stone's left hand edge, the new scan had allowed this to be recorded without hindrance. Katherine concluded that the notches may well be man-made but are not ogham strokes. As for the diagonal lines through the symbols – Chris's 'wilful act of slashing and defacement' – she believes these were totally natural features.   *Elspeth Reid*

Our third speaker of the day was Nicholas Evans, a scholar who focuses on the early medieval historical sources from Celtic-speaking countries, to understand perceptions of the past, identity and the nature of society. As well as undertaking post-doctoral research at the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, he has taught Celtic Studies and History courses at the universities of Glasgow, Strathclyde, Aberdeen and Edinburgh, and has published on Ireland and northern Britain (including the Picts). His talk was entitled, **Bede and Northumbrian views of Pictish history and society**.

By the late 7th century, the Anglo-Saxons had been confined to lands south of the Forth. Over the next few centuries, until they disappear from the historic record, the Picts were neighbours to the Northumbrians. Nicholas drew on a number of written Northumbrian sources, beginning with the works of the Venerable Bede, to examine changing views of these neighbours. Although much of what we know about the Picts from Northumbrian sources comes from Bede, he was not the only writer over this period to mention them. Further, his own views were not fixed, but changed over time. When considering what Northumbrian writers had to say about the Picts, it is necessary to examine what may have been the intentions behind the work in question, the

sources available, and the political context within which the work was written.

In his *Chronica Maiora*, completed by around AD725, Bede followed Gildas' account of the Picts. This 6th-century British monk was vituperative in his description of the Picts as joining with others from outside to attack the Britons. By the time he came to write the History of the English Church, completed in 732, Bede obviously had access to a quite different account of Pictish history. His account of the Pictish origin myth placing them as the first settlers in northern Britain may well come from a Pictish source. Indeed, its origins may be as late as around AD700, when the reference to inheritance by the maternal line may have been created to legitimise the inheritance of Bridei and Nechtan sons of Derilei through their mother. Also, as the first settlers, the Picts, led by Onuist, could be seen as merely taking back their own lands from the Gaels in their conquest of Dalriada.

Before Bede, surviving Anglo-Saxon sources had little to say about their northern neighbours. There is a vague suggestion that the Northumbrians dominated the Picts by the mid-7th century, a situation that was permanently altered by the Pictish victory at Nechtansmere in AD685. Although there were further clashes between the Northumbrians and their northern neighbours, by the time Bede wrote his *History of the Church and People*, the Picts were more or less peaceful neighbours, treated with a degree of respect. Although the Picts had come early to Christianity, they had sought out instruction in orthodoxy from the Northumbrians. When Nechtan son of Derilei wrote to the Abbot of Bede's own monastery requesting help in building a church 'in Roman Fashion' and in understanding the proper calculation of the date of Easter, he earned the Venerable author's approval, and deserved to be held up as an example. The Irish, who had accepted Christianity before the Anglo-Saxons, receive a fairly neutral treatment at Bede's hands. They appear as rarely venturing out of their own territories to encounter the Northumbrians, and Bede has little to say about them. Despite the fact that his British neighbours had also accepted Christianity before the Anglo-Saxons, Bede is vituperative in his language towards them, painting the British as savage and hating the Northumbrians.

The picture painted by Stephen in his *Life of Saint Wilfrid* is rather different. His account of Ecgfrith of Northumbria's interactions with the Picts in the 670s portrays the Picts in a negative light. He gloats over the numbers of Picts slain in battle. By comparison his account of Nechtansmere is brief and bald. This is much more a reflection of Wilfrid's relationship with Ecgfrith than an indication of Stephen's views on the Picts. Wilfrid was a forceful character, a major player in the synod of Whitby which saw the Northumbrian king Oswiu acknowledge the supremacy of Rome. In the early part of his reign, Ecgfrith and his queen, Aethelthryth were on close and good terms with Wilfrid. Ecgfrith at that time was triumphant in his contests with his neighbours. When Aethelthryth left Ecgfrith to become a nun, the relationship between king and bishop deteriorated. Against this background of acrimony, the Picts may be viewed as the instrument of divine retribution, by which Ecgfrith was punished for his treatment of Wilfrid.

This contrasts with Bede's treatment of Nechtansmere in his prose *Life of Saint Cuthbert*. There, Ecgfrith is seen, more in sorrow than in anger, as having paid the price for ignoring the advice of Saint Cuthbert in making war on the Picts. These contrasting views are a reminder that there was no single Northumbrian view of the Picts. The written record was coloured by internal Northumbrian politics as much as anything else.

The later 8th-century sources are more varied. The continuator of Bede refers to Oengus as a 'tyrannical slaughterer', but Pictish kings appear in the Durham *Liber Vitae* as friends of patrons of St Cuthbert's community, to be remembered in prayer.

The Northern recension of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle repeats Bede's later version of the Pictish origin legend. In this work, the emperor Claudius is credited with defeating Picts as well as Britons during his invasion of AD43. In fact, by the later Anglo-Saxon period, the Picts are seen as the permanent inhabitants of the north in contrast to Gildas' view of them as invaders. Ironically, this view seems to have been accepted around the time that the Picts disappear from contemporary records.   *SH*

The fourth speaker of the morning was Peter Drummond, Dept of Celtic and Gaelic at Glasgow University who gave us **Some Brittonic hill- and settlement-names in southern Scotland**. His talk sought to differentiate those place-names in southern Scotland that are Brittonic in origin from later Gaelic and Scots names. Brittonic is closely related to Old Welsh, Cornish and Breton) and is sometimes referred to by others (for example WFH Nicholaisen and Simon Taylor) as Cumbric.

In particular Peter discussed four examples of Brittonic place-name components: *caer* or *cair* meaning fort or hill-fort (eg Caerketton); *din* or *dun* again meaning fort (eg Tinnis and Dunpender, from *dïn+peleidïr* = 'fort of the spear-shafts' now known as Traprain Law); *pen* meaning hill or head (eg Penicuik and Penvey); and *mynydd* or *monadh* meaning hill or mountain (eg Mendick).

As Peter's illuminating talk revealed, the Brittonic origin of many place-names in southern Scotland are sometimes apparent, sometimes disguised:

Caer: most likely to be a Brittonic name is Carnethy Cairn. Its summit is scattered with large heaps of stones; in Welsh *carneddau* connotes the same feature and occurs in several Welsh mountain names.

Din, dun: Dundreich is probably derived from *dïn+drich*, 'hill fort with a view'.

Pen: looking at *pen-* names near Peebles, Peter listed Penvalla, Penbreck, Pencraig and the lost name Penairs. Some names have an added Scots element, for example Skelfhill Pen and Ettrick Pen in the Borders.

The South East is the area for genuine *pen*-names. Peter warned against some ostensible examples with *pen* or *pin* elements, which you can find in Galloway for example. These he called 'false pen-friends', one such is Penny Hill.

Mynydd: Peter explained how the anglicised form of the name Herman Law was printed on the OS map, despite locals telling the name-gatherers that the hill was called Hirmont Law. Looking at it on a map it was evident that it was an especially long hill. *Hir* in Welsh means long +*mynydd*, hill. Thus Herman Law is in fact a partly hidden Brittonic name.

It is, of course, not always clear if a name is Brittonic or Gaelic or a Gaelicised form of the original Brittonic. Kirkintilloch might come from Brittonic *caer+pen+talog* = fort+head+ brow of hill, Gaelicised and eventually re-interpreted in Scots as Kirk. The same process may be evident in Kirkcaldy, *caer+caled* = hard fort. Some names exist in several languages for example Cumbernauld means a confluence of a steep slope in both Brittonic, Gaelic and Old Gaelic (Br. *cömber+ïn+alt*, G. *comor+an+allt*, O.G. *combor+n-allt*).

Peter closed his talk by returning to his home town of Coatbridge. There runs the Luggie Water (now Burn), a Brittonic word meaning bright, shining, which Peter observed was sadly no longer the case. Near Coatbridge is the French-looking name of Drumpellier. Peter has traced it back through its many forms: Drumpender in 1560; Dumpeleder in 1162; also Dunpeldre. He suggests it is another instance of *dïn+peleidïr* = fort of spear-shafts, a not uncommon name. He sees the development of the place-name's first element, from Brittonic *dïn* > Gaelic *dùn* > Gaelic *druim* > Scots *drum*.

This talk was extremely useful for helping us recognise Brittonic elements in place-names around the Borders, while showing us some of the difficulties that arise when analysing their origins.   *ER*

Courtney Buchanan's PhD in Viking research is from Glasgow University and in her absence, her paper, **Pictish Playmates: Vikings in the Forth and Tay Basins**, was presented by Jill Harden. In this paper Courtney set out to show that there is a clear story of Viking activity, including settlement, in the east of Scotland, pointing out that contact and interaction between peoples of different cultural backgrounds will lead to changes in both groups and create new identities with new forms of material culture.

She cited two sources, the *Chronicle of the Kings of Alba* and the *Annals of Ulster*, both of which record raids or military campaigns by Vikings. In 839 'The Danes ravaged Pictavia as far as Cluny and Dunkeld'. In 866 'Olafr and Asl took hostages' from Pictland back to Ireland, and in 874 demanded tribute from Constantin. In the same year Halfdan's army wintered along the Tyne 'and often raided among the Picts' and the following year engaged in battle at Dollar, when 'the Scots were slaughtered as far as Atholl'. His army then spent a year in the area. Further references speak of how 'the Northmen ravaged Pictavia' in 899, targeted Dunkeld and plundered

'all Alba' in 903, and fought the Scots under Constantin at the battle of Corbridge in 918. Yet in 937 it is recorded that the Irish Sea Vikings, Scots and Cumbrians formed an alliance to fight a battle at *Brunanburh* against a common enemy.

Looking for evidence of Viking settlement in the east, Courtney examined place-names and found -*byr*, -*tun* and -*gall* names (Gaelic 'foreigner'), demonstrating perhaps that during the Viking Age Old Norse and Gaelic speakers lived in the same region. The place-name Moorfoot is a corrupted form of the earlier Morthwait, containing the Old Norse generic – *veit*, meaning 'clearing'.

Looking at archaeological evidence, she drew our attention to the Dull hoard which contained Hiberno-Norse pennies and an earlier hoard found at Lindores, Fife, now lost, that contained coins of Cnut. Stray finds reported to Treasure Trove include a silver Hiberno-Viking arm-ring from Largo, Fife, and the lost bronze crescent with Pictish symbols and runes from near Monifieth, Angus, a comb at North Berwick, ringed pins, hacksilver and hogback fishing weights also found in Fife, etc. Hogback monuments themselves are, of course, found in the east of Scotland.

Courtney made it clear that written records talk only of Viking armies and their raids in the Forth basin, but judging by the domestic artefacts found, there was also clearly a non-military presence. She concluded that the evidence 'most probably indicates a settled population of Vikings in the Forth basin'.

As for the Tay basin, there were no obvious concentrations of artefacts but a pattern of

Hacksiver from Crail

artefacts along the coast and waterways. She informed us that nine items of Insular manufacture found in the Tay region which had been altered in ways akin to items found in Viking contexts and have thus been evaluated as probably Viking. She concluded that, given the slim evidence for a permanent Viking population, even with hogback monuments and place-names dating from the 10th–11th centuries, it is probable that this area was not settled by Vikings in the same manner as the Forth basin.

After the battle of *Brunanburh*, where Scots and Irish Sea Vikings participated on the same side, Courtney suggested that Constantin may have granted portions of land to Vikings at the most southerly point of his kingdom, as a buffer. It follows that these new settlers would have brought their own material culture, but new identities would form as ethnic distinctions faded. Courtney described it as a 10th century period of multiculturalism, involving interaction and negotiation in the political and social realms.

ER

'Hogback' fishing weights from Crail

The afternoon session was chaired by Barbara Crawford, past President of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. Having retired from teaching at St Andrews University some years ago, Barbara continues to pursue an active interest in research into the history and archaeology of Scandinavian contact and settlement in early medieval Scotland.

Katherine Forsyth once again took to the floor, this time to deliver a paper on work carried out jointly with Adrian Maldonado who could not be with us. **A Magnum Monasterium in southwest Scotland: a new look at Kirkmadrine and its stones** described their work and conclusions so far.

Kirkmadrine lies on the Rhinns of Galloway, inland between Sandhead to the east and Float Bay to the west. The waters of Luce Bay on one side and the North Channel on the other are no great distance from the site, which is currently accessed by a green avenue lined with trees off a minor road. The church which now stands on the site was rebuilt as a mausoleum in the 1840s, when the avenue and encircling wall were added. The earliest surviving record of three early cross marked stones is a sketch produced by a local schoolmaster in the early 19th century. Casts of two of the stones were made for the Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh in 1861: these were at that period used as gateposts at the entrance to the burial ground. The third had been built into the gateway to the Free Church Manse and came to light many years later. Other fragments of crosses dating from the 9th–11th centuries have been recovered from the graveyard. The collection is third only to Whithorn and Barhobble in this area in terms of size.

Most of the later stones bear signs of re-cutting for use in building. The range of cross types is wide: Kirkmadrine no.4 is possibly a consecration stone, where a cross is represented on a square base, divided diagonally in four, with a small cross in each section. Number 5 has equal, flaring arms with rounded terminals and a central lozenge cut in relief, with a hammer-headed cross on the reverse. Kirkmadrine no.6 features a cross below the cross head, while no.7 shows curved lines below the arms of the cross. Kirkmadrine no.8 has median incised interlace in a panel above a cross with circles in the spaces between the arms. Other stones from the area include a possible basin and bullaun (a stone with a depression in which a second stone was ritually turned) and a possible stone mould or failed attempt at cutting a cross.

Kirk-names appear to date to the 10th to 11th centuries and to have been formed in a Gaelic speaking milieu with some Norse involvement. A variety of names have been put forward for the saint commemorated here, but none are very likely. '-madrine' is consistent with the use of the hypocoristic 'mo-' (my -) a common enough formation where Gaelic saints' names are invoked, but no very plausible explanation as to the saint in question has been put forward. The 19th-century suggestion that the saint commemorated at Kirkmadrine was Saint Martin has some linguistic problems, however, Saint Martin's day falls on 11 November, and a Fair was held at Kirkmadrine on the 22 November – or the 11th in the old style calendar before the reform of 1752. It seems likely that here a 10th to 11th century name replaces a much earlier one, possible a topographical one.

Kirkmadrine stones nos.1–3 all date to the 6th century, although they do not appear to have been carved at the same time. Number 1 features an early Chi-Rho monogram on both faces, and one side bears an inscription which can be translated as: 'here lie the holy and outstanding priests, that is, Viventius and Mavorius'. Kirkmadrine no.2, with an encircled Chi-Rho, commemorates two people: one whose name is now damaged and another called Florentius. There is nothing about these stones, including the names, to suggest that they are not the product of a local community. Kirkmadrine no.3, again with an encircled Chi-Rho, bears the inscription '*initium et finis*': beginning and end, a common early Christian theme often represented by Λ and Ω, first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Here there may be a direct reference to the Book of Revelations, 21:6, which goes on to promise drink from the spring of the water of life. Natural springs were to be found on three sides of the site at Kirkmadrine, and the patterns below the cross-arms on Kirkmadrine no.7 may also reflect this idea of the living waters.

There are some variations in the letter forms between stones nos.2 and 3, suggesting that these are not contemporary. The form of the letters on each of the stones is typical of a manuscript tradition, indicating that there was not only a church served by priests in the vicinity, but a scriptorium where education was available in the 6th century.

At Whithorn, across Luce Bay, the Latinus stone is a 5th-century secular grave marker, while the 7th-century Petrus stone suggests an ecclesiastical site. However, no 6th-century Christian stones have been found there. At this period, there is solid evidence for a major secular site, possibly with a church and burials, at Whithorn, but the evidence for Hill's posited monastery is lacking. The equation of the site of Finnian of Moville's studies at Magnum Monasterium under Bishop Nennio with Futerna – the Gaelic version of Whithorn – was made much later. According to Bede, Nennio's see was distinguished by the name and church of St Martin. St Martin of Tours' monastery at Marmoutiers was known as Maius Monasterium – suspiciously similar to Nennio's Magnum Monasterium.

However, two sites closely associated with Finnian (Moville near Bangor and Nendrum on the Antrim coast) have stones with encircled Chi-Rho motifs very similar to those found at Kirkmadrine. Given suitable weather, these sites are all within a short day's travel on one another.

So far, some geophysical survey work has been carried out around the church at Kirkmadrine. Gradiometer survey showed no sign of a circular vallum, but did suggest an area of possible rig and furrow cultivation and some possible medieval features, including rectilinear enclosures. These are not inconsistent with early ecclesiastical activity. A resistivity survey of the area reinforced these findings. As yet, there has been no excavation carried out at the site.

Kate suggested the following speculative chronology:

5th century – a Christian secular site was established at Whithorn

6th century – Finnian studied under Bishop Nennio at 'Magnum Monasterium' (also known as Rosnat) Evidence at Kirkmadrine of a possible monastic site at this period: Nennio's monastery?

7th century – the cult of Finnian developed in Ireland, with his teacher 'Mo Ninn' as part of Finnian's story. Late in the 7th century, the Anglian take-over of Galloway disrupted support for the monastic site at Kirkmadrine. Whithorn was handed over to the church

8th century – about AD730, an Anglian bishopric was established at Whithorn. Ninian was 'located' at Whithorn to establish the antiquity of this as a holy site. His story was adopted from Irish sources where he appeared as Finnian's teacher.

9th century – Viking raids caused further disruption in this area

10th–11th century – a new political and ecclesiastical order was established under Gall-Gael leadership, with sponsorship for a new parish centred on Kirkmadrine. *SH*

Our final speaker of the afternoon was Ann Crone. Anne is a Project Manager at AOC Archaeology Group, managing post-excavation programmes through to publication. She specialises in dendrochronology and the study of wooden artefacts and structures, and pursues research into crannogs through survey and excavation. Her subject was, **Living and dying at Auldhame: the excavation of an Anglian monastic settlement**.

Auldhame is on the East Lothian coast, on the promontory to the south east of Tantallon Castle across Oxroad Bay. When the local farmer turned up human remains here in 2005, AOC Archaeology was called in by Historic Scotland to carry out excavation and survey work. During the course of this work, burial activity was revealed in the north-west corner of the headland, close to a scatter of ditches and post holes. A total of 308 burials were identified, of which 242 were excavated. The remainder were deemed not to be at risk and left. It is, however, likely that many more remain to be discovered. The vast majority, around 90%, were simple, earth cut graves. Graves with stone cists, pillow stones and wood coffins were also identified, but with no apparent chronological significance. Many of the grave finds were coffin nails and fittings, although some personal items were also recovered. Notable among these was a decorative mount with red glass cloisonné inlays.

Radiocarbon dates were obtained from samples of 43 of the buried individuals. Ten further samples of animal bone and shell were also dated. Bayesian analysis of the resultant data indicated four major phases of activity at the site: Phase 1:AD650–1000, Phase 2:AD1000–1200, Phase 3:AD1200–1400, Phase 4:AD1300–1700. The information obtained from the excavation and post-excavation analysis was assessed against Martin Carver's list of physical attributes typical of a monastic site: enclosure, church,

burials, stone markers, book production, food production, ancillary buildings and metal working.

Enclosure: Ditch 1, uncovered during the excavation, may have been a monastic vallum, in this case a boundary ditch cutting off the headland. It was respected by nearby burials, but unfortunately, under the terms of the contract with Historic Scotland, AOC were unable to dig to the bottom of the ditch to seek for material that would allow a determination of the date of construction. There was, however, no evidence of a prehistoric phase. The ditch had been backfilled using domestic waste, probably some time later than the 8th- to 9th-century date obtained for animal bone incorporated in the fill.

Church: The earliest suggestion of a building was a short length of what might be a bedding trench, possibly of an earth-fast oratory. Bede makes reference to early wooden churches in Northumbria. Again, restrictions on excavation made it impossible to investigate this further. Further east lay the clay-bonded foundations of a unicameral building with a single entrance. Unicameral churches are not uncommon: examples are known at Dunbar, Ardwall, Inchmarnock and St Oran's, Iona, all of which bear useful comparison to Auldhame.

Burials: Among the burials dated to Phase 1, all but two out of the 18 were in simple graves. Young and adult women, older men, children and infants were all present with no obvious segregation by age or gender. It was suggested that this may reflect an early use of the site.

Carved stones: These were represented by the presence of two socket stones which may have held free standing crosses and by cross-incised slabs which may have served as grave markers.

Book production: Evidence for this is slight but significant. A glass inkwell fragment from the plough soil over the site was a rare find: four out of six such inkwells known in the UK came from recognised early monastic settlements. Dog-whelk shells in quantity were found in the earliest context of the site. These yielded a highly prized dye: Bede refers to Alfrith ascending the throne in whelk-dyed cloth. It is perhaps more likely that the dye extracted from whelk shells at Auldhame was used in producing pigments for illustrated books of the kind known at Lindisfarne. The use of purple-dyed parchment in producing gospel books is also recorded in an Anglo-Saxon context.

Food production: In the earliest phase, evidence for food production took the form of bones of cattle, sheep and birds. Carbonised barley and wheat grains were also present, showing that these were processed on site. Periwinkle shells were also found; at the monastery at Jarrow these were eaten on meatless days in the church calendar. Analysis of a buried soil from this early phase revealed that this had been actively manured using seaweed.

Ancillary buildings: Slight evidence for ancillary buildings took the form of post holes and a bedding trench. Phase 1 dates were obtained from animal bone fragments from post holes. Remains of an oven and a circular hearth were found at the north end of the site. At the southern end of the site, phase 1 dates were obtained for animal bone associated with a rectangular trench outside the vallum. It was suggested that these may be remains of a secular settlement, accounting for the women and children buried here.

Metal working: No clear evidence of metal working was recovered from the site. However, much of the area remains unexcavated.

The restricted intervention at Auldhame managed to yield evidence of seven out of eight of Carver's monastic attributes.

According to Simeon of Durham, Olaf Godfreyson (a Viking king based for a short while in York) laid waste Tyninghame and the church of St Baldred. Both Auldhame and Tyninghame, a short distance inland, were once minster estates ('hames') and were both listed as belonging to Lindisfarne in the 9th century. Auldhame ('the old estate') then disappeared from the record. Tyninghame did possess a church of St Baldred, and in the Melrose chronicle, the church destroyed by Olaf is equated with Tyninghame. In that account, Olaf died immediately after this attack.

Ann suggested that the first phase of use of the headland at Auldhame saw a monastic site established there, possibly by St Baldred himself. There are a number of features nearby which bear his name: a cave, a rock known as St Baldred's Boat, another as his Cradle, two wells and a chapel dedicated to him. Baldred is said to have used the Bass Rock as a place of retreat, and the site at Auldhame has a convenient landing place for the Saint to use in his voyages back and forth to the Rock. Such a foundation would equate with phase 1 of the site, Baldred

having lived in the first half of the 8th century. At some time, perhaps in the middle of the 9th century, the monastic community may have moved inland to Tyninghame, either in fear of an attack from the sea or inconsequence of an actual attack by Viking raiders. The headland continued to be used for burials.

Two phase 1 burials are worth special mention. One older male, possible from late phase 1, bore evidence of violence in the form of a cut made to his skull by a sharp blade. The other, again from phase 1, was a young man who had been laid out with his head to the west. Unlike the other burials which mostly lacked all grave goods, he had been buried dressed in a linen tunic, which had left its imprint on the back of a belt buckle, and wearing Viking style iron prick spurs, with a sword by his side. Isotope analysis of his bones has been unable to discriminate whether this young man was raised in East Lothian or Denmark. The presence of a young Viking in a Christian burial ground is intriguing, to say the least. *SH*

Pictish Arts Society AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Pictish Arts Society was held at the AK Bell Library in Perth on Saturday 5th October. Thirty-three members were present.

Apologies for absence were received from Marianna Lines, Stewart Mowatt, Eileen Brownlie and Barbara Thomson.

The minute of the 2012 AGM was published in Newsletter 65. Elspeth Reid proposed and David McGovern seconded its acceptance. This was agreed.

The annual reports of the President and Secretary appeared in Newsletter 68. No questions arose from these reports.

The Treasurer's Report, encapsulated in papers presented to the meeting was accepted without any questioning. Hugh Coleman proposed and John Borland seconded the motion that Catriona Gilmour be re-appointed Independent Examiner. This was agreed.

The Treasurer, Hugh Coleman, proposed that the subscription rates remain unchanged for UK members. He proposed that in future, overseas members should receive the Newsletter by email, and that they should be charged the same rates as UK members. This was agreed.

The post of Membership Secretary having been combined with that of Treasurer, Hugh went on to report that we had just over 100 members in good standing last year. More than 50 have renewed so far this year. A number of new members have joined through the website, where we now have the facility to take payment via Paypal.

David McGovern reported on the new website. This has been revitalised to carry up-to-date information about PAS events, to allow online joining or renewal, conference booking, etc. Archive newsletters will be added to the site in an ongoing project.

Our Facebook page currently has 904 'likers', covering every continent including Antartica. It is hoped that the ability to distribute the newsletter in pdf format to overseas members will be attractive to some at least of them.

John Borland thanked David for all the work he has put into our online presence.

Speaking as editor, John Borland noted that he has had a fairly steady flow of contributions, but that more are always welcome – from a few lines to a few thousand words. He also drew the meeting's attention to the continued great work carried out by David Henry on the layout and publishing of the newsletter, as well as preparing back issues for inclusion on the website.

John then resigned the Chair to Hugh Coleman for the election of the President.

John Borland was proposed by David Henry and seconded by Nigel Ruckley, and, with the agreement of the meeting, resumed the chair.

The following were duly elected:

Vice President: Stewart Mowatt, Secretary: Elspeth Reid, Treasurer: Hugh Coleman, Editor: John Borland. Committee members: Nigel Ruckley, David McGovern, David Moir, Sheila Hainey.

Other Competent Business.

Sheila Hainey proposed that, in view of his services to PAS, to the preservation and presentation of Pictish remains in Angus, and to Pictish Studies and education in a broader sense. Norman Atkinson should be made an Honorary Member of the Pictish Arts Society. John Borland was joined by at least eleven of the members present in seconding this motion, which was passed by the meeting.

John Borland brought the meeting up-to-date with the society's input to the decision of the

Kirk Session of Glamis to lend the four fragments which had been lying disregarded in the vestibule of the kirk to Angus council (which will place the stones in the Meffan) until a suitable home can be found for them in Glamis. The Kirk Session will look into the possibility of converting the former Counting House at the back of the Kirk for them.

We have also been in touch with the Kirk Session at Logierait to see if the second cross-slab there, which is lying on a pallet in the church, could be erected and suitably mounted in the kirk. PAS would offer help with raising grant-funding etc. So far, the response has been encouraging.

Norman Atkinson noted in a light-hearted vein that Marston's – a brewery company from south of Hadrian's Wall – will be opening a new pub/restaurant at the Forfar Glamis crossroads in November. It will be known as 'The Dunnichen Stone'.

Graeme Cruikshank returned to the question of publishing a Journal. He noted that he had previously approached a former editor, who might be prepared to take on the job of editing a PAS journal again. While he felt that the lecture series, conference and website were useful, he felt that the committee should be asked to consider the publication of a journal even on an occasional basis. He repeated his belief that there was material awaiting publication and a possible editor waiting in the wings and that the membership was anxious to see such a publication.

John Borland noted that he was aware that the newsletter was not appropriate for journal-length articles but that there was no body of work sitting waiting to be published. In his time as editor, he had been made aware of only two potential journal articles (one by Graeme himself) but neither had been submitted to him. Clearly when the journal was first launched there was a buzz of excitement which resulted in a good flow of material. Perhaps the lack of a peer review system for the journal had made it less attractive to academic members? John accepted that we should remain open to the concept of renewing the journal, but the demand must come from the membership at large. He suggested that Graeme use the Newsletter to write to the membership to see if he can flush out any contributions suitable for a journal.

Bob Diamond suggested that we could go half-way on this issue by instituting an occasional paper series on electronic media.

David Moir felt that this was a way of moving on, and queried whether we had been too selective in trying to improve the quality of the journal.

Kate Forsyth also backed the idea of an electronic publication. She felt that the lack of peer review had a positive side, and that this could also be a vehicle for short notes. She also suggested that it should be possible to get a grant towards putting back issues of the journal on the web as well as the newsletters. Graeme Cruikshank noted his opposition to electronic publication.

Finally, John Borland announced that the committee were working towards holding next year's conference at Caithness Horizons in Thurso. The Pictavia season had already begin: this year we have planned a winter break with lectures in September, October and November, resuming again in March. The first of what we hope will be a number of joint meetings will be held on 18 October, with Gordon Noble giving a report on this season's work at Rhynie to a meeting of Perthshire Society of Natural Science and PAS in Perth. Members are encouraged to get in touch if they believe that any other Society of which they may be a member would be interested in holding a joint lecture.

Bob Diamond asked if it would be possible to organise a field trip to accompany the Thurso conference. John noted that this was the committee's intention. Kevin Tolmie asked for the date of next year's conference: this will be Saturday 4th October.

John Borland thanked the committee members for all their contributions over the past year and Nigel Ruckley proposed a vote of thanks to Sheila Hainey for her many years as Secretary.

Sheila Hainey

Pictavia Lectures 2013

20 September – Our new-look winter season at Pictavia started a month earlier than usual with Philip Roberts on, **The contribution of old maps to understanding Pictish history**. Philip is a mechanical engineer by training, with a lifelong passion for history. He talked about three pieces of work which, owing to ill health, he fears may not be published.

The first section was based on Ptolemy's map of Britain. This is something of a misnomer: if Ptolemy ever did draw maps, none have survived

with any of the early copies of his Geography, which gives instructions on map making and long lists of co-ordinates for coastal features, towns, Roman army camps and miscellaneous other sites covering most of the (then known) world. Living and working in Alexandria around the middle of the second century AD, Ptolemy collected his information from a number of sources.

His data for Britain present a number of problems: the whole set is located too far north and is incorrectly oriented (Catterick is given as due north of London, when it is in fact further west). North of the Tyne, Scotland appears to have been turned clockwise through 90º, so that the north coast faces east and there are serious distortions in the outline of the west coast, which appears stretched. Richmond was the first to suggest a correction to Ptolemy, turning Scotland back into an upright position using the mouth of the Wear as a hinge. Several variants of this have been proposed, but all leave the west coast with its stretch marks, Philip has produced a refined correction, taking the given co-ordinates for Catterick and Trimontium (Newstead) as the base and using a mathematically-derived algorithm to adjust for the 'stretching' effect of the turning. This produced a final shape much closer to the familiar outline, and placed the Roman site of Colonica on the Antonine Wall. Victoria would then be in the vicinity of Glamis, with Horrea Classis (the storehouse of the fleet) possibly around Montrose (both definitely in Angus). Ptolemy's source of data for Scotland (probably Marianus of Tyre) does not mention either the Antonine or Hadrian's Wall. His information probably came from Roman army sources, and was most likely collected during the Flavian campaigns in the north. Ptolemy's work gives a clear indication of early contacts between the Picts (or their ancestors) and Roman forces. The later Ravenna Cosmography, a curious document containing information collected towards the end of the Roman Empire in the west, is probably quoting a first century source for the itinerary it gives of a route to the north of the line of the Antonine Wall.

The second theme of Philip's talk was the route of a Roman road through Angus. As evidence for a Roman presence as far north as the Moray Firth grows, it becomes more obvious that there must have been Roman roads to enable men and supplies to move easily.

The lines of some roads (with respect to the route between Newtyle and Perth) show features suggestive of Roman construction. It would be reasonable to expect the western end of such a road to lie somewhere on the Tay opposite the Roman fort of Bertha at the confluence of the Almond. A good stretch of any such road would lie under the runway at Scone aerodrome. Ainslie's map shows a farm called Rome close to the banks of the Tay opposite Bertha, while Roy's map of the highroad from Perth to Forfar via Newtyle would join the road from Rome Farm at the Scone crossroads. Philip suggests that a Roman road from Bertha may have run along the south side of Strathmore towards Brechin. This is not only a shorter route than the Northern edge of the Strath, but it has the advantage of needing no major river crossing. A route that followed the northern edge would cross several major rivers, all of which can, and regularly do, carry much floodwater. A southern route would have fine views to the north, looking out over the lochs, rivers and marshes of the valley bottom. By relying on early maps of the area, which he displayed at Pictavia, and which can be viewed on line at the National Library of Scotland's website (www.maps.nls.uk/scotland/index.html), he was able to trace a possible route linking the Roman forts of Carzield, Coupar Angus and Cardean. The spacing suggests a fort in the Glamis area, but none has so far been found. The main arterial route would have been linked to the fort by shorter minor roads. While Philip's theories of where the Roman roads ran are limited by his focus on the older maps of Angus, it is certain that Roman road systems are known further south, and highly probable that a Roman road system carried on towards the Moray Firth.

As there is so far no evidence of any earlier network of roads or tracks in this area, Roman roads must be regarded as an innovation in what was, or was rapidly becoming, Pictish territory. Such an infrastructure would be a legacy that would play an important part in the later development of Pictish politics, providing as it did a new and efficient means of communication over considerable distances.

His final section was on the possible location of Mons Graupius, where Tacitus locates the battle which was the climax of his father-in-law's career as Roman Governor of Britannia. Philip suggested that a possible site for this battle may have been recorded by Timothy Pont, around

the beginning of the 18th century. Pont's original map of the area is now lost, but a copy made in 1856 by W H Lizars survives. This shows a 'Moore of Monroman' in the area of modern Montreathmont. Robert Edwards, working independently in 1678 also shows this area as Moor Monroman. Both show the area as featureless, with no obvious reason for the name. Philip put forward the proposition that the Roman name may refer to the people against whom the Romans fought. Conversely, the locals may have regarded this as a battle against Roman aggressors, and named the site as such. While modern archaeology has revealed much to strengthen scepticism over Tacitus's account of Agricola's career, it is possible that there is some underlying basis for the story. Agricola, as Governor of a province that was rapidly acquiring a degree of Romanisation, was unlikely to have led his troops on an expedition to the north. Roman troops in the area were more likely to have been commanded by anonymous generals. A successful encounter with native forces followed by a march to the sea to link up with the fleet in the territory of 'Boresti' may have been adapted for Tacitus' purposes.

Sheila Hainey

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18 October – Our October lecture on **The Archaeology of Fortriu: Investigating the Tarbat Peninsula**, was given by Candy Hatherley who is currently working with the Fortriu Project while engaged on a PhD at Aberdeen University, researching enclosed and defended settlements on the Tarbat peninsula in Easter Ross.

Alex Woolf contends that Fortriu lay in the Moray Firth area, perhaps centred on Burghead and the Fortiu project, which is part of Aberdeen University's larger Northern Picts Project, seeks to examine the archaeological evidence for this theory. The major monastic settlement at Portmahomak and the concentration of symbol stones along the Tarbat Peninsula's east coast, as well as seven known Pit- place-names, clearly indicate a strong Pictish influence in that area.

Candy discussed her recent excavations of two hillforts and a promontory fort, posing thoughtful questions about her findings. The now flat and fertile plain of the Tarbat peninsula may well have been an extensive bog when these defensive sites were occupied, making them and the slightly higher ground to the east virtual

islands. Cores are being taken from surviving boggy ground for pollen analysis to see what can be learned about land usage in the past.

Easter and Wester Rarichie are mini hillforts on two rocky knolls only 150m apart, but both were occupied at the same time. Both stand out amid the flat land and command wide views. Easter Rarichie is topped by a monumental round house, with encircling walls and terraces. At the bottom of the hillock is an upstanding bank fully 3m high. Candy, with students and volunteers dug three trenches here. Inside the round house they found a neatly constructed inner wall-face, a flagstone hearth and two stone-lined postholes for timbers which would have supported a roof. A carbon sample taken from just under the inner edge of the wall proved to be oak from 400–200BC. Cobbled surfaces, pits and postholes, and a possible metalled road were also discovered in the two outer trenches. The walls encircling the round house were found to be 4m thick, the same as the wall of the round house itself, making this a defended settlement.

Wester Rarichie has a visibly flattened top covered by a large circular structure, 16m in diameter with a SW entrance. These walls were also 4m thick but in this case they were made of turf. Candy considered that both duns were in

Bird's-eye view of the excavation at Tarrel Dun

permanent rather than seasonal occupation. Two finds were made: in Wester a piece of a polished cannel coal bracelet; in Easter a piece of a shale stone bracelet. They are dated to the later Iron Age, but as Candy lamented, that spans more or less a thousand years in Scotland!

The promontory fort of Tarrel Dun sits atop a rocky knoll on the coast, again with wide views. One side seems to have fallen away, leaving the flat top no more that 10x7m. This limited space, with almost sheer drops to the shore posed problems for excavation and photography. As the team excavated what looked like outer defensive structures on the landward side of the knoll, they started to reveal a curving wall, suggesting that Tarrel Dun may be an infilled broch with a later structure built on top.

This later structure is rectangular and has a smooth inner stone face which starts to curve round at one end. Candy admitted that she does not as yet know what it is. An early medieval chapel would be a welcome discovery but there is no proof currently. In the occupation layer she came across a blue glass bead. Expert opinion again places this find in the long Iron Age, making dating very inexact. What can be said though is that the bead is not imported but made in Scotland.

Underneath the knoll of Tarrel Dun is a large natural cave. It is known to have been occupied in the 18th century but may well have been in use at the time of the Iron Age settlement above. Inside is a small, rock-cut basin, measuring 20x9cm. The Pictavia audience came up with some suggested reasons for it, but perhaps the most likely explanation was one given to Candy by a Shetlander, who recognised it as a bait hole. Shellfish are ground up with a pestle and scattered in the water before fishing.

Candy concluded by listing some of the future coastal duns she plans to investigate: Morangie Dun, Castlehaven and Cnoc Tigh and invited us to follow her progress on the Facebook website under Northern Picts.   *Elspeth Reid*

Early Medieval Scotland: Individuals, Communities and Ideas

David Clarke, Alice Blackwell
and Martin Goldberg

Published by National Museums of Scotland.
ISBN 978-1-905267-63-7

Drawing on research into objects from early medieval Scotland funded by the Glenmorangie Company, this is a beautiful book packed with illustrations that bring out in exquisite detail the skill of the craftsmen working in early medieval Scotland. At roughly 24·5x25·5x2·5cm this is literally not a lightweight book and certainly not easy for reading hand-held for any length of time. On the other hand, the lengthy and detailed essays it contains require some thought: this is not, despite the charm of the illustrations, a coffee table book. What, then, is the target readership? The answer is not obvious.

The authors have divided the three parts of the subtitle between them: Alice Blackwell: *Individuals*, David Clarke: *Communities* and Martin Goldberg: *Ideas*. The result is that each section reads as a separate essay, when more may have been gained by allowing the overlaps to become obvious: communities are formed of individuals who have ideas. Although it is obvious that a great deal of work has gone into studying the artefacts, and into seeking for insight into how they were made, it is equally obvious that many of the questions raised remain unanswerable in light of current knowledge.

Nevertheless, there are a number of interesting insights into the manufacture and meaning of some of the objects studied. The research has brought to light a number of new facts about well known pieces, and Glenmorangie should be toasted in some of its own amber nectar for its support of this work. Above all, the book stands as a lovely, eloquent plea for continued research into this most fascinating period of Scottish history.   *SH*

Uncovering the Northern Picts

In October the Pictish Arts Society arranged a lecture in conjunction with the Perthshire Society of Natural Science. The talk was given at Perth Museum by Dr Gordon Noble, who is Senior Lecturer in Archaeology at Aberdeen University and Honorary Curatorial Fellow to University Museums. He is also director of both The Rhynie Environs Archaeological Project and The Archaeology of Fortriu, and reported on progress with both of them.

Given the lack of native historical document-ation, it is hard to piece together the political organisation of Rhynie in Early Historic times but according to place-name expert Simon Taylor, the name itself means 'a very royal place'. 'Aerial photography has revealed circular cropmarks in the vicinity of the large Pictish symbol stone known as the Craw Stane. Upon excavation, these turned out to have been ditched enclosures, within which traces of a building was found. The aerial photos also show a thin circular line, evidence of an encompassing timber palisade. Excavation revealed that this palisade comprised of large split timber planks which may well have been imported into the area.

It is believed that the Craw Stane is *in situ* and that it thus stood, not in the open landscape, but within this enclosure. Deposits recovered from the ditches have proved to be contemporaneous with the symbol stone. The finds from this site have been illuminating: a piece of a 6th-entury Roman amphora from the eastern Medi-terranean, probably a wine vessel, made its way to Rhynie. It is the most northerly specimen of its type and the only one found in eastern Britain. A piece of glass imported from Gaul also points to Rhynie being a high status site.

There is good evidence of metalworking on the site too, in the form of tongs (similar to those featured on a few symbol stones) and moulds for handpins. Metal objects recovered include a bronze pin and an unusual iron pin, shaped like an axe with a spiral end. Gordon pointed out its similarity to the instrument carried by the 'Rhynie Man'.

The aim of the 2013 excavations was to locate and examine square features which show up as cropmarks near the modern village, thought to be a Pictish cemetery. The team stripped and mapped the area and sampled small deposits.

© Gordon Noble

Excavated stone-lined Pictish grave, Rhynie

of excavation. This hit a real high when one of the schoolchildren visiting the site succeeded in finding a blue glass and a white glass bead! It has also manifested itself in a campaign to bring 'Rhynie Man' back to the village. Currently the stone is housed in the foyer of Woodhill House in Aberdeen, the headquarters of Aberdeenshire Council.

Gordon reported briefly on the project called The Archaeology of Fortriu which aims to research the Pictish archaeology of Moray and Ross-shire. The monastery at Portmahomack on the Tarbat peninsula and the coastal fort at Burghead were clearly major centres in this area. The team intend to look for structures in the fort, known for its multiple bull sculptures and remarkable subterranean well.

The project will collate existing information on Pictish remains, stones and forts, and to map cropmarks. Investigation around the Shandwick cross-slab using geophysics has already in-dicated what may be a square Pictish barrow with a central the grave. Meanwhile in the area around the monastery at Portmahomack, Gordon's colleagues have taken core samples from areas of boggy ground for pollen analysis, with the aim of discovering what once grew

there. It is hoped this will reveal the extent of and changes in cereal cultivation and therefore inform on dietary trends.

Gordon was warmly received by a full house of PAS and PSNS members who I'm sure will all look forward to hearing more from him as these projects continue. *Elspeth Reid*

© Gordon Noble

X-ray image of axe-shaped iron pin from Rhynie

This was the first joint meeting PAS has organised but hopefully it won't be the last. If you are a member of another society with similar interests, and if you live in an area outwith our usual activity (Angus), please get in touch. *JB*

PAS website news

An updated version of 'The Scoonie hunt and other horsemen' by Elspeth Reid, published in Newsletter 68, will shortly be available on our website, the first in an occasional series of on-line papers. Meanwhile the back catalogue of newsletters available on-line continues to grow. Keep a look-out on

htpp://www.thepictishartssociety.org.uk

There's no such thing as bad press? #1
Pictish 'paintings' to be saved

The Angus & Mearns edition of *The Courier* recently reported that the ancient Pictish and Viking (?) cave paintings (??) on the walls of Wemyss Caves, apparently the largest collection of Pictish drawings (???) in North West Europe are to be saved. A partnership between the Save Wemyss Ancient Caves Society (Swacs), the Scottish Coastal Archaeology and Problems of Erosion (Scape) and the York Archaeological Trust (YAT) will see YAT carry out a laser scan of initially one cave and then hopefully the others.

Misnomers and predictably sloppy journalism aside, this is of course great news and all the above organisations (with perhaps the exception of *The Courier*) are to be congratulated. Of course, laser scanning won't 'save' the carvings but it will make a detailed and metrically accurate 3D record of them before they erode further. We look forward with interest to seeing the results.

There's no such thing as bad press? #2
Well, maybe there is …

The same edition of *The Courier* also reported that Visit Scotland are considering closing its Tourist Information Centre at Pictavia and that if they do so, according to Angus Council's CEO it would probably tip the balance on the future viability of the Council-run visitor attraction. According to the paper, visitor numbers at Pictavia have dropped from 13,000 in its first year to fewer than 4,000 per annum. Visit Scotland staff currently administer admission to Pictavia and if they were no longer there, Angus Council would have to do this at their own cost.

PAS has written to Angus Council suggesting they look into some new partnerships in order to secure Pictavia's future but whether or not any initiatives are taken remains to be seen.

PAS lecture series – 2014

The next lecture at Pictavia
will be on Friday 21 March at 7.30pm

Peter Yeoman
New understandings of Iona

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

<http://www.thepictishartssociety.org.uk>