

The Society's Annual conference will be held on Saturday 25th September in the AK Bell Library in Perth. Speakers include Mark Hall, Ron Dutton, Niall Robertson, Matthew Shelley and Bob •••.

(See the booking form for details). The library is only a few minutes walk from both the railway and bus stations. Several parks are also close at hand. As at Dundee and Portmahomack, lunch will be available, giving time to catch up with friends and exchange ideas. On Sunday 26th, Niall Robertson has planned a field trip round sites in Highland Perthshire. As this weekend marks the ••• centenary of Adamnan, St Columba's biographer, who has associations with the area, what could be more appropriate?

Winter Programmes 2004-2005

All meetings start at 7.30pm, with doors open from 7pm, and usually finish around 9pm, with tea/ coffee available after the talk and question session.

All Edinburgh meetings are on Tuesday evenings in the Society of Friends (Quaker) Meeting House in Victoria Place; all Pictavia meetings are on Friday evenings at Pictavia Visitor Centre, Haughmuir, Brechin.

Edinburgh			
5	October	Dr Nick Dixon	Scottish Crannogs: Loch Tay update and new surveys
2	November	John Higgit	The Stonecutter and the Scribe: the evidence of the Pictish inscription from Tarbat
7	December	Dr Alasdair Ross	The creation of parishes in Alba: evidence from the north
11	January	Ian Fisher	Edderton: a cross slab revealed
1	February	TBC	
1	March	Fraser Hunter	
Pictavia ———————————————————————————————————			
22	October	Stuart McHardy	Pictish Folklore: stories from Angus
19	November	Dr Nick Dixon	Scottish Crannogs: Loch Tay update and new surveys
17	December	Ian Fisher	Edderton: a cross slab revealed
21	January	Sarah Winlow	Burial in the 1st Millennium AD: Pagan and Christian in Tayside and beyond
25	February	Dr Alasdair Ross	The creation of parishes in Alba: evidence from the north
18	March	Fraser Hunter	

Subscription Renewal

Apologies if we have confused you by not sending out the request for subscription renewal with the last newsletter. If you have paid your subscription within the last six months, you are a member in good standing and will receive a new membership card as a matter of course. We have held the cost of membership constant again, but have introduced a US\$ rate option for overseas members. Unfortunately, this has to be priced to take account not only of fluctuating exchange rates but also the high costs charged by UK banks for handling US\$ cheques. Please note that we are asking you to send your subscriptions, with the enclosed forms, to the membership secretary, Eileen Brownlie (address on the form), rather than to the Treasurer as in the past.

Kilmartin House

Another year, another splendid centre of archaeology in crisis. This year it is the turn of the award-winning Kilmartin House, with its splendid museum and thriving education service. The centre is at the heart of an area well endowed with monuments of national importance, including the great royal centre of Dunadd, and a large number of prehistoric cairns, standing stones and a wealth of prehistoric rock art. The area also has some outstanding habitats, such as Móine Mhór raised bog. The centre seeks to interpret, protect and make accessible all of this.

Kilmartin House is an independent charitable institution, seeking to raise funds through ticket sales and income generated in the shop and cafe. However, help is needed to underwrite the core running costs. Argyll and Bute (Scotland's lowest spending council) failed to offer support, while the Scottish Parliament has also shown no interest in supporting the museum.

The centre pulls spending visitors in to the area, contributing to the local economy and providing local jobs. It holds and displays artefacts found locally, and exists to help people enjoy and appreciate the relationship between the monuments and the landscape in a way that no city centre museum ever can do.

Surely it is a mark of a civilised nation that we should cherish and take pride in the diversity of our ancient monuments and our splendid landscape. Centres like Kilmartin House deserve support and encouragement. Perhaps it is time to raise the profile of the general question of how we regard our heritage. For the moment, however, any support that you can give to Kilmartin House would help this individual case. Visit the centre, and find out just how worthwhile preserving it is and what you can do. Write to Frank Macaveety, Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport in the Scottish Executive (at Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ), or lobby your MSP. Remember, Kilmartin House is not the first example of such a centre in crisis, and there are no reasons to believe that it will be the last.

Lines from the Kingdom

The dangers of visiting Pictish stones

This may be a somewhat incendiary headline for what is usually perceived as a most pleasant pastime, that of visiting Pictish stones in the countryside. Well, the dangers are noxious crops, especially rapeseed. Recently David Moir and friend Donna were visiting Fife, and I took them on a whirlwind Pictish stone tour, including and highlighting the Collessie Man. This stone, that many know, but few have seen, is deep within two field parks, and this year these have been cropped with oilseed rape. In the high jungle phase of growth, when it is all sticky and with no 'tramways' to walk on and with the flowers all turned to seed, it has a deadly poison to hay fever sufferers and the many simply allergic to oilseed rape. Still suffering a week after, I can attest to this fact. Do avoid any field filled with oilseed rape at all costs, even when the flowers have dropped!

The Collessie man is most obscure on the stone, rapidly disappearing from all view, and yet the feet and arch symbol are still clear. The beastie symbol below the arch is certainly there, in a triangular sort of shape, but not easy to pick out. Dave also saw the Strathmiglo deer-head stone, the Lindores stone at Abdie, and the Abernethy stone at the tower, and was delighted with the ancient treasures of Fife.

Other dangers in visiting stones include animals, but usually this is pretty obvious when a bull starts raging towards you and picking up his heels. Other hazards are bees swarming, wasps, and birds with eggs or young underfoot, or guard-dogs roaming loose as reported at Mugdrum. Following the current fixation with 'risk assessment', it is a good idea to think about potential dangers before you take to the roads and risk the pathways to your favourite hidden Pictish stone.

Wemyss Team

The Wemyss Caves have been the subject of great media attention in Fife of late, for *Time Team*, with all its lovely and well kent characters were actually there on site on our very own coastline in June – Tony, Phil, Carenza *et al*, *Time Team* superstars who looked just like they do on TV! They have been filming a new series which is scheduled to be aired next year, so don't hold your breath, but all will be revealed then in the Channel 4 programme, for, as is usual, most results of the excavations were not apparent at the time of the dig.

Also on site was our Pictish star, Anna Ritchie, who was commenting on the caves and their significance. Stone-carver Alan Reid was demonstrating carving techniques and working on some new stones for camera, while PAS man and electronic-scanning wizard, Alistair Carty of Archaeoptics, was recording all the carvings in the caves for posterity.

There were excavations inside and outside Jonathan's Cave, and in Well and Sloping (or Sliding) Caves. The most exciting find of the three-day television excavation was a new carving in Sloping Cave, that of a very clear Pictish serpent, but with no Z-rod in sight. It was found just below ground-level on the cave wall on the east side opposite the double disc symbol.

The *Time Team* event was well attended by local people, including SWAC's (Save the Wemyss Caves) notables, Ann Waters and Bill Barker; veteran Pictish Arts Society member, George Fraser and others; and Fife Council Archaeologist, Douglas Spiers, who was looking after the local requirements of the TV crew and conducting his own medieval midden dig. Historic Scotland's man on the scene was Rod McCullagh who as Inspector of Monuments has responsibility for Fife in his remit.

The national media coverage should bring wide attention to the plight of the Wemyss Caves, and hopefully will resolve the lack of government care which many feel is needed to preserve this important aspect of our heritage.

Marianna Lines

Furthering education

This last year I have taught a nine-week course at Edinburgh University's Lifelong Learning, following in the illustrious footsteps of Graeme Cruikshank. This attracted such a good number of students – and a couple of new PAS members – that I will be teaching it again in the January term next year. Might other members be interested in offering similar courses to Dundee and Aberdeen Universities Extracurricular departments? If so I will gladly send outlines of my approach to anyone who fancies a go.

It has long been an aim of the Society to further awareness of the Picts in education and to that end Ewan McVicar and myself are running a Pictish storytelling workshop for teachers in September called, Caledonians, Picts and Scots. Our intention, if this is successful, is to develop the idea further, create resource material and approach the relevant bodies to try and have the topic included in the primary school curriculum. We have some hopes of success and it widnae be afore time! Our children are still being taught about the Romans - very important in English history – they were only here relatively briefly in historical terms on less than a handful of occasions and their importance in the development of Scotland has been grossly exaggerated for far too long! Time to send the legions hame!

I am currently writing a small volume of Pictish Tales and Legends (for Luath Press) and in the research for this have come across some very interesting stuff anent mid-8th century battles which I will submit to the Journal in time. I keep being surprised by how much more there is still to find in the folklore and intend to keep looking.

SMcH

Pictavia Update

It has been suggested that members of the Pictish Arts Society might like an update on developments at Pictavia. I hope that most members know that Pictavia is Angus Council's Pictish visitor attraction situated at Brechin Castle Centre, Haughmuir, just off the A90 outside Brechin. It is intended not only to be a visitor attraction in its own right but also to raise the level of interest in all things Pictish and encourage visitors to explore Pictish stones in the local area, both in local museums and in the countryside.

In February of this year I was given a new job, which includes looking after Pictavia. Although PAS members may well think of me as 'Angus Council's Pictavia man', it may be worth pointing out that it is not my only responsibility. My predecessor, Craig Lafferty, now has a new post, not involving Pictavia. He did continue to do work relating to Pictavia although this was by no means his main area of responsibility. Craig continues to be an active member of the PAS and is one of our volunteer helpers for Pictavia.

Pictavia was closed from October 2003 through to April 2004 due to the works to install toilets and an access door to enable Pictavia to open independently of Brechin Castle Centre for events such as PAS evening meetings. A list of repairs, refurbishments and renewals, too numerous to mention here, had to be seen to, including a new Tourist Information Centre desk, recommencing the cleaning contract, arranging all the basic 'nuts and bolts' of making a facility run. Suffice it to say that a large number of things that weren't working are working now and a lot of things that needed fixing have been fixed.

Perhaps one of the most important tasks was the employment of 'Support Staff'. We have been lucky enough to secure the services, for this season at least, of Steven Paton, who worked at Pictavia in 2003. Those of you who have met Steven will be aware of his enthusiasm for and knowledge of all things Pictish.

We have also benefited from those PAS members who have volunteered to become involved in various ways, for example, guiding and giving information to visiting groups and arranging and assisting at events.

Despite a very limited marketing budget, a number of activities have recently been undertaken to publicise and promote Pictavia. Some are repeats or continuations of what has been done previously and some are new. The folded A4 leaflet has been reprinted and distributed. I am currently updating the 'Pictish Trail' leaflet, and have introduced a 'one child goes free with a full price paying adult' voucher scheme. These vouchers have been distributed at various events and in various locations such as libraries and museums as well as in Brechin Castle Centre. I have arranged a variety of advertising and written to every school in Angus, Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Dundee and Perth & Kinross telling them that Pictavia is open again and about the special rates for groups from educational establishments. Photographs and articles have appeared in local and regional newspapers as well as in 'The View', a newsletter for Angus schoolteachers. Perhaps, as a result of all this activity, visitor numbers have begun to move up towards last year's levels.

I have also been considering some ideas to enhance 'The Pictavia Experience'. There seems to be a consensus that one of the most important features we could introduce would be additional people. This is unlikely to happen, other than with volunteers. Other suggestions have included: a mannequin in Pictish garb, a mockup or model of a dwelling or settlement, a selection of reproduction weaponry, a mirror to allow children wearing Pictish clothes to see themselves.

All of these suggestions have potential. I need to consider the practicalities of available space, safety and finance, and would wish to consult the Council's museums service in order to utilise their experience and expertise on these matters.

There have been many suggestions for events that might be held at Pictavia. Many of these have been very good suggestions. I would be really grateful if any willing PAS members would be able to give some help with investigating the implications of implementing their suggestions by checking with me about dates, finding out who could supply whatever is needed for the suggested event and how to contact them and, perhaps most importantly, the potential cost implications of the event. Obviously these and perhaps other considerations will need to be borne in mind before we can commit to an event going ahead. Finally, I would like to conclude by thanking the PAS and many of its individual members for the support and help they have given to me and to Pictavia. I look forward to a continuing, mutually beneficial, relationship.

> Dave Rennie Marketing Officer, Angus Council, Economic Development Unit

LATEST NEWS: Pictavia has received a Four Star Visitor Attraction Award from the VisitScotland quality assurance scheme. [Ed]

Letter to the President

Dear Mr Atkinson

You ask for our views on the preservation or otherwise of our Pictish heritage. This is a tricky argument and can easily tumble into dogma. By this I mean that there must be very strongly held views on both sides and it is this that helps me to make my suggestions.

The point is to have the best of both worlds. In the life of any individual person, the discovery of, the unexpected arrival at, the stumbling upon an unexpected work of art is the most direct source of personal enrichment, of – basically – wonder and awe. This is the basis of my case for leaving the stones that are in the countryside (not connected to village or church) in situ.

A very complete photographic record should be made of all the detail that remains in each case, this could easily be substantiated by accurate drawings.

It is obvious that all artefacts have a life span. That objects have a moment of creation, a period of value or of use, a high point of appreciation, and a decline – is something we should learn to value in itself. Frantically to try to conserve everything has a Canute concept to it. We should use our common sense and see that the best, the most typical, the most bizarre are preserved in the most appropriate way and let the rest live out their separate existences. Each generation, each century brings its different approach to the artefacts of its history. Our proper responsibility must be to record appropriately what we have left of this, our earliest heritage, and be content to assemble the imagery that will be needed now and in the future for scholarship.

In an age where context is moving up the appreciation scale and old-fashioned museum mores are moving down, we should remember that the context left to us of the Pictish heritage is the relation to the land. In the case of those stones which have been moved to kirkyard or village, there is a secondary, but equally strong, sense of context.

The stones that lie in villages or churches are, however, those that run the risk of vandalism: in each case, those who are responsible for them, or who consider themselves the possessors and therefore responsible for them, should be given the option; please would they either permit a cast to be taken and to replace the original or would they provide protective covering (glass?) up to an agreed security level.

We have a Scottish Parliament and it is here that the most obvious and appropriate recognisance should take place. These stones, our first cultural heritage, should form the proper subject of recognition and acceptance by our own Parliament. They should, consequently, make sufficient financial provision to smaller organisations direct or to Historic Scotland to enable this total record to be undertaken. If we can achieve a National Audit of what is in our Museums as we have, we can surely achieve a National Audit of our earliest works of national importance.

In England, in north Herefordshire, or perhaps, Wiltshire, at Shobden there is a good exemplar, The mediaeval church is replaced by a Strawberry Hill Gothic one; the chancel arch carried up the hill and erected as some sort of pretty folly, its originally sharp sculptural detail eroding in all weathers. I understand English Heritage have now done something but I don't know what. Perhaps you can find out and see what useful pointers might be used in political argument?

Yours etc Matilda Mitchell MA FSA Sco

Groam House

On 9 September, Alex Woolf will talk on 'The World turned upside Down: Dun Nechtain, Fortriu and the North of Scoltand', at 7.30 in the Gordon Memorial Hall in Rosemarkie (admission £3).

Our temporary exhibition is *Rich Pickings – archaeology from the Black Isle*. This exhibition will run through the season until March/April 2005. The theme of the exhibition is our local archaeology – much of which has not been seen within the area since its discovery! We are fortunate to have loans from the National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh, Marischal Museum Aberdeen, Inverness Museum and Art Gallery; several as yet unallocated Treasure Trove items, as well as some recent acquisitions from our own collection.

Highlights you will be able to see include: the Bishop's crozier, discovered in a tomb in Fortrose Cathedral in 1797 together with wellpreserved fragments of some of his vestments; finds from the caves at Rosemarkie; recently discovered metal artefacts from near Fortrose; prehistoric vessels uncovered in Rosemarkie, Blackstand, Flowerburn and Findon, and other local items.

Please note this year we will close from 13 December 2004 – 5 March 2005

Picts and Bobs

A sideways look at the Picts

Early Christian carved stones at Whithorn are not accessible over this summer (except by special arrangement) as there is work going on for a new display section. However there is to be guided tours of the Priory every second Saturday. Contact 01387 770 244 for more details.

This is a new site that has popped up this year **<http://www.scotlandspast.org/pictscot.cfm>** There is a nice list of the Pictish books that are available. Ideal to email to friend and relatives so they can order a book or two for your birthday. Mine is 21 June by the way and I don't have a copy of *The Picts and their Symbols* by W A Cummins.

Has anyone heard the band called The Picts? See **<http://www.picts.co.uk/thepicts.html>** for more information. Are they any good? If they are you could send me a tape for my birthday!

I found out recently that James Young Simpson (pioneer of the use of chloroform in anaesthesia), from my hometown of Bathgate, recorded many of the Scottish cup and ring marks – can any one tell me more?* And I don't mean about the effects of Fraoch Heather Ale being similar to chloroform!

As the weather is getting warmer and stone viewing will be on the increase, can you write us a wee article for the next newsletter about your trip?

Sheila Fraser

<Sheilafraser@btinternet.com> or (01506 650 953)

The Pictish Internet

The Web is a wonderful thing; billions of pages of diverse information, and freely available to all. But, by the very nature of its design, it is devoid of any obvious structure, and, what's more, it has no index - a serious shortcoming indeed.

It is also largely uncensored, and totally unedited. This is fine for those who wish to distribute or access the more dubious types of information, be it pornography, extreme political views or just wacky science. But it's not so fine for those of us who are trying to do serious research. It is frustrating to invest precious time locating and accessing a promising Pictish site, only to be informed that the double disc and Zrod has its origins in Atlantis, and Sueno's stone was erected by aliens (I note that it's still in its interstellar packaging).

The problems are exacerbated by the fact that Pictish research usually requires a multidisciplinary approach. Many of the recognised experts in the field work in, or first trained in, a variety of disciplines, such as archaeology, art history, linguistics, etc. Consequently, it's hardly surprising to learn that some of the most useful information is to be found on sites devoted to this type of topic, rather than those specifically aimed at Pictophiles. Simply typing 'pictish' into Google is unlikely to direct you to many of these valuable sources.

Navigating a course through this morass of information and misinformation can be something of a nightmare. The purpose of this column, then, is to review any interesting and potentially useful sites that could be of relevance to Pictish enthusiasts and researchers. If you know of a site that might be of interest to fellow members, and it doesn't appear here over the next few issues, then please let us know and we'll be happy to include it.

One site that will not be recommended for a while is our very own PAS site. Unfortunately, and much to the embarrassment of the committee, it has been sadly neglected for many months and is nowhere near to fulfilling its true potential. The good news is that matters have now been taken in hand, and it is expected that it will be updated and fully functional before too long. At some point in the future, it might

^{*} Simpson's drawings of the carvings in the Wemyss Caves (see above p.3) were used to illustrate Christian Maclagan's paper, 'Notes on the sculptured caves near Dysart, in Fife...' (*Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, 11 (1874–76), 107–20). Ed.

even be possible to recommend it as 'the best Pictish site on the planet'.

Returning to the present (and reality), let's take a look at what is available on the web right now. Many Pict-related sites are privately owned, constructed and maintained by individuals with a special interest in the subject. A number of these are models of concision and scholarship, and can prove extremely useful, while others are just the insane ramblings of some poor misguided soul without a clue about either the Picts or the rudiments of web design. The majority fall somewhere in between, perhaps offering reliable information, but not well presented, or else having questionable content, but presented in a misleadingly slick and professional manner.

<www.s-gabriel.org/names/tangwystyl/ pictnames> is a good example of a privatelyowned site displaying a reasoned and scholarly approach. It is authored by Heather Rose Jones and deals with the subject of Pictish place-names and personal names, using information derived from manuscript sources, ranging from Ptolemy to the Pictish Chronicles. Unusually for an American site on the subject, the discussion is generally well informed and sensible, although the reference to probable non-Indo-European elements in the Pictish language will not meet with universal approval. Nevertheless, the site is interesting and worth a visit.

Dr Jones's survey of the available material, however, is not as exhaustive as it might first appear. Notable omissions include the lack of any consideration of post Roman toponymic evidence and the absence of any reference to the Ravenna Cosmography. This latter work, although largely duplicating Ptolemy's names, does add a few new ones, as well as providing additional information about them.

<www.romanmap.com> is a site that deals with this important document. This is another privately owned site, developed by Tom Ikins. It discusses and attempts to identify the locations of the names mentioned in the cosmography, and tries to relate them to their modern counterparts. It provides a useful illustration of Ptolemy's map and also offers a possible explanation (more rational than some other accounts) for the fact that Scotland is rotated through 90 degrees on the Ptolemy map. The main shortcoming with this site is its structure. It's not that it hasn't got one, but simply that it intrudes too much. In fact, the structure is often more apparent than the content. Anyone with an aversion to spreadsheets and databases will find it particularly daunting. Some of the lower-level pages on the site are made up almost entirely of empty cells. There is an art to presenting information on the web, and this is one site that does not possess that art. Nevertheless, it is still a useful site for anyone with an interest in the geography of the early Pictish period.

www.st-and.ac.uk/institutes/sassi/spns> is the home page of the Scottish Place-Names Society, and has links to a great deal of information. It is part of the St. Andrews University site and its layout and range of services provides an interesting contrast to the privately owned sites. There is not enough space here to do it justice on this occasion, but we will return to it at a later date.

In fact, all the introductory waffle has ensured that there is very little space to seriously review any sites in this edition of the newsletter. It will be different next time.

Ron Dutton

Caption Competition



Barbed wit required to counteract the barbed wire! This photograph was taken at Cossans during our field-trip on 22 May. A PAS T-shirt for the writer of the best caption. Send entry (+size S/M/L/XL) to 'Caption Competition', PAS Pictavia (address overleaf). Closing date for receipt – 30 September 2004. Winning caption will be published in the next issue.

Eric Nicoll's carvings on show

Some of Eric's spectacular Pictish-inspired woodcarvings are included in the mixed summer exhibition at **Just Scottish**, the gallery at the top of The Mound in Edinburgh (Mon–Sat 10–6; Sun 12–5, until 31 August).

Edderton

A grant has been obtained for work on the conservation and restoration of the church at Edderton. The cross-slab, which was leaning at a dangerous angle, has been reset after some conservation work. A decision will be taken in the future as to whether or not it should remain outside in the churchyard or be moved into the church. The stone, in its new setting will be unveiled soon; Ian Fisher will describe the additional carving visible below 'ground level' in his talks during the winter season.

Between the covers

A copy of The Ancient Sculptured Monuments of Angus... by Patrick Chalmers was on view at an antiquarian book fair held at Glamis at the beginning of August. Displayed by a local Angus dealer, who has had three other copies in stock recently, it was offered for sale with a princely price-tag of £750. Justifying this price on the rare-book market, it had been publicised as one of around 50 copies. However this is misleading as, although the exact edition total is not known, it is likely to have been about 150, as the Bannatyne Club, to which Chalmers presented the work, then had 99 members and he also donated copies to archaeological societies and some libraries in Britain and abroad, and to local institutes, fellow antiquarians and others.

Of course 'price' and 'value' are not the same and perhaps the real value of this particular copy is its informative MS inscriptions and their interesting juxtaposition: one, on the front-board endpaper, written and signed by Chalmers confirming his gift of that copy to 'The Archaeological Society of Great Britain and Ireland' in June 1849, another, on the flyleaf opposite, giving the name and address of a subsequent owner, W Douglas Simpson, who in addition had scrupulously recorded the date of repairs done to the volume. DH

Reg Brit meets Rex Pict

During her recent trip to Angus, the Queen visited the 'Gateway to the Glens Museum' in Kirriemuir, where she was shown round by Angus Council's Cultural Services Manager, Norman Atkinson. Of great interest to her was the restored cross-slab, Kirriemuir 18.

Local sculptor, Bruce Walker, has carved a minireconstruction of this stone mounted with an engraved glass plaque commemorating the visit. The Queen unveiled this sculpture, which was donated by The Friends of the museum, and it will be one of the key features in a display about the Queen's visit.

Bruce's workshop and showroom is in Cumberland Close just over the road from the museum.

New Committee

The AGM was held on 22 May at the Meffan in Forfar. The new committee, duly elected at the meeting, is as follows:

President – Norman Atkinson
Vice Presidents –
Sheila Fraser; Stuart McHardy
Honorary Secretary – Sheila Hainey
Honorary Treasurer – Murray Blair
Editor – Niall M Robertson
Membership Secretary – Eileen Brownlie
Events Organiser – Craig Lafferty
Archivist – Iain Fraser
Committee Members –
Ian Fisher; Ron Dutton; Marianna Lines;
Joy Mowatt; Stewart Mowatt
All can be contacted by mail to:

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

Electronic Newsletter

We will shortly be in a position to allow members to access the newsletter electronically, and will detail the arrangements for that in the next newsletter. Meanwhile, keep a note of the password issued with your membership card!