Notice of PAS AGM 2022

The Annual General Meeting of the Pictish Arts Society will be held online via Zoom on Friday 21 October to consider the following business:

1 Apologies for absence
2 Approval of the 2021 AGM Minutes (see PASN 101)
3 President's and Secretary's Joint Report (see this newsletter)
4 Treasurer's Report: Presentation & Approval of Annual Accounts (to be circulated)
5 Appointment of an Independent Examiner
6 Other Honorary Officers' Reports:
a) Membership Secretary
b) Editor
7 Election of Honorary Officers:
a) President
b) Two Vice Presidents
c) Secretary
d) Treasurer
e) Membership Secretary
f) Editor
g) Events Organiser
h) Archivist
8 Election of Committee: minimum six, maximum twelve
9 Any other competent business

Note: Business will begin immediately after that evening's online lecture at approx. 20.45. A link to join the Zoom lecture & AGM will be sent out to members beforehand.

Please send nominations for committee, and notes of any matters you wish to raise, to Honorary Secretary, Jennifer McKay, 119 David Douglas Ave, Scone, Perth PH2 2QG. Alternatively, email: info@thepictishartssociety.org.uk
We would strongly recommend you to contact anyone you intend to nominate beforehand so that they are not called upon out of the blue.

Joint Report from the President and Honorary Secretary 2021-22

The past year has seen PAS further adjust to the Covid situation. If a pandemic can be said to have a silver lining for our society, it is that we have changed the way we organise our meetings and have, consequently, reached a much wider audience; usually at least double the number that attended Brechin Museum talks in pre-covid times.

Committee meetings are now held via Zoom which eliminates the need to travel to Forfar and makes it easier for everyone to attend. It also means that we can have committee members from far and wide. Indeed the committee this past year comprised of members living as far apart as the USA, London, York and Stranraer. The adoption of Zoom has been a boon. The lecture programme has also continued online and once again Zoom has enabled us to access expert speakers from far afield. It is true that online lectures do not allow for in-person socialising but this is a small price to pay when compared to the above benefits.

Among the speakers at the annual conference in October 2021, Prof Gordon Noble of Aberdeen University gave us an update on the Northern Picts Project with all the latest on excavations at Burghead; Elizabeth Alexander shared insights from her PhD research on Old Testament Iconography in Pictland and Prof Jane Geddes discussed the grave markers at St Andrews, recently drawn by John Borland and which she has catalogued. In lieu of a fieldtrip, Jane prepared an excellent video tour of Tullich Church on Deeside, complete with haunting fiddle music soundtrack.

For out autumn 2021 lecture series we enjoyed excellent contributions from Dr Guto Rhys (University of Glasgow) on the Pictish language (Guto actually spoke to us from Brussels); Jennifer Wallace (HES) on the Dupplin Cross; and Prof Emeritus Roger Stalley (Trin-

ity College, Dublin) on Irish High Crosses. The first of our spring lecture series was supposed to be on the plans to rebuild the Loch Tay Crannog but the speaker was indisposed so John Borland stepped in at the last minute. The second talk was delivered from Dublin by Dr Catherine Swift who gave an engrossing account of the Royal Munster Exiles at pre-Norman Scottish courts. In May, Dr Shirley Curtis-Summers spoke about her analyses of bones from Portmahomack in her talk, 'Set in stone and steeped in bone – diet and health in medieval Scotland'.

We must warmly thank Dr Kelly Kilpatrick for identifying and persuading these talented experts to speak to us. The range and quality of contributions has been impressive.

We have enjoyed and valued our collaborative initiatives with other societies. Building on the success of the Conon Stone collaboration with the North of Scotland Archaeological Society and the Scottish Society for Northern Studies in 2021, we joined forces once again with the SSNS to run the online two-day conference in honour of Dr Anna Ritchie in March 2022. A stellar line-up of speakers gave papers on topics dear to Anna's heart. Professor Emeritus Ian Ralston started proceedings, sharing an overview of Anna's long and prolific career. Katherine Forsyth described her debt to the impressive role model that was Anna, before speaking on the 'Ogham Inscriptions of Orkney'. Christine Cowart-Smith spoke about 'Free-standing Cross Development in Pictland' and Dr Alan McNiven turned our attention to place-names in the Western and Northern Isles settled by the Norse, examining what they might tell us about their society. Finally, Dr Kelly Kilpatrick told the story of her detective work on 'Lost and Forgotten Early Inscribed Stones of Pictland'.

The following day, Dr Coleen Batey chaired the first session and introduced Prof Stephen Driscoll who gave us the context of the Govan hogbacks. Stephen was followed by Dr Val Turner from Shetland who spoke on 'Hidden in Plain Sight: Pictish Shetland'. The next session was chaired by Dr Sally Foster who introduced Dr Adrian Maldonado whose subject was the 'Brough of Birsay: A New Look at the Pictish Workshop'. Adrian was followed by Prof Gordon Noble who spoke about the work he and Dr James O'Driscoll had done in the Aberlemno area as part of the Comparative Kingship Project, work that culminated in the discovery of a new incised Pictish symbol stone. This very fitting tribute to Dr Anna Ritchie will be written up in a Festschrift edited by Dr Kelly Kilpatrick.

Another facet of the society's offer is our continuing financial support for conservation projects. After helping to raise funds for the conservation of the Conon Stone and its display in Dingwall Museum, we are now committed to helping with funds for the conservation of that new stone uncovered by Dr James O'Driscoll at Aberlemno. We have also pledged support for a similar project at Old Kilmadock in Stirlingshire.

Now that virtually all Covid-related restrictions have been lifted, PAS members need to decide how the society progresses. If we return to in-person autumn and spring lectures, we would have to re-acquire a venue and ensure that we had enough members living locally to run the evenings (put out chairs, set up the laptop, projector & screen, provide refreshments, handle money and speakers' expenses and tidy everything away at the end). We would also need to ensure that we have a big enough catchment of members prepared to attend. Latterly in Brechin we built up a significant number of non-members who regularly attended. That could be done again but it takes time and requires effort to publicise the events. The disadvantages of this are obvious: our monthly lectures would no longer be accessible to the entire membership and we would not be able to access such a wide range of speakers.

Some have proposed hybrid events – in-person lectures that are either recorded and then posted online or streamed live on Zoom. This sounds like a straightforward solution but it has many drawbacks. In addition to all the requirements listed above to ensure that the actual lecture takes place, we would then need to have the kit and operator to film or stream each talk. And would those members who live within travel

distance of the venue make the effort to attend if they have the option of watching from the comfort of their own armchair? We could end up with a speaker addressing a virtually empty room.

Continuing with our monthly lectures online has much to commend it but ultimately it's up to the membership to decide.

This year's annual conference is online but in future, members may want to return to in-person conferences, complete with the social side of such events, including a Sunday fieldtrip which latterly became a very popular feature of our conferences. But this too would come at a price re accessibility. We need to discuss, debate and decide upon this at the forthcoming AGM too.

This year's AGM will see significant changes to many of the office bearers on the committee. Those standing down do so after a long stint and we should acknowledge their contribution over many years and proffer our thanks.

The Pictish Arts Society emerges from the Covid pandemic in good shape. Our membership numbers are high, our newsletter goes out regularly, indeed output increased during the lockdown period. Our followers on Facebook now exceed 10,000 and attendance of our online lectures, conferences and joint ventures is consistently good. And importantly, our healthy bank balance has enabled us to support the recovery, conservation and display of Pictish sculpture.

Your support makes all of this possible so as it is membership renewal time, please continue to help by renewing your membership. Doing so online via the PAS website is the easiest way, especially if you do it promptly. If you prefer to renew by cheque, contact **info@thepictishartssociety.org.uk** and we'll tell you where to send it.

John Borland & Jennifer McKay

The Kingoldrum conundrum

Below the southern hills of the Mounth in Angus lies Kirkton of Kingoldrum, where there was an ecclesiastical settlement in Pictish times. Two small cross-slabs were discovered when the medieval church was demolished in 1840, and two or three years later a hand-bell, a bronze chalice and a damaged glass cup were dug up in the kirkyard. The significance of these portable artefacts has been overlooked, and it will be suggested here that it was a hoard, buried deliberately to preserve it from harm. The cross-slabs, Kingoldrum 1 and 2, appear to have been trimmed top and bottom for reuse as building material in the medieval church, but hints survive from their carved designs to suggest that both had rounded tops and that those tops contained guardian beasts or rather birds, framing the cross.

The hoard

Adjacent to the graveyard, several cist burials were found in the mid nineteenth century, including one containing a crouched inhumation burial, a short length of bronze chain and a cruciform bronze mount with traces of enamelling, which Patrick Chalmers wrote up briefly for the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* in the session 1852-3 (Chalmers 1854). The two artefacts were later donated by the Reverend James Ogilvy Haldane of Kingoldrum parish to the Society's museum in April 1867 (Donations 1868; FC 151 and 152), and they are currently on display in the Museum of Scotland, attributed to the eleventh or twelfth centuries. Chalmers noted at the end of his article that 'A small glass vessel and other relics were found at the same time, including the Kingoldrum Bell', but he was careful not to imply that they were found in the same cist as the chain and cruciform mount.

The Kingoldrum Bell (Fig. 1) is a large early medieval hand-bell (Goldberg 2012, fig 3.2), which was dug up in the churchyard, presumably in the course of grave-digging, in 1842 or 1843. It was presented to NMAS by the same Reverend Haldane and exhibited at the Society's meeting on 8 December 1851 (*Proc Soc Antiq Scot* 1 (1851-4), 15; X.KA 3). In that same session, 1851-2, Daniel Wilson included the bell in a paper on 'primitive ecclesiastical bells' in Scotland (Wilson 1854, 20). His account is important for its details and for the fact that it was written only nine years after the discovery of the bell. He relates that it was dug up in the churchyard in 1843, and that it 'contained, in addition to its detached tongue, a

bronze chalice, and a glass bowl – the latter imperfect'. He goes on to note that 'unfortunately the value of the discovery was not appreciated, and both the chalice and bowl, it is feared, are now lost'. The bell, chalice and bowl may equate with a disparaging remark in the *New Statistical Account*, written in December 1842, about the discovery of 'several rude relics which may

Fig. 1 Kingoldrum hand-bell c NMS

have been estimed precious in the time of Romish supremacy', in which case we might put the date of discovery back to 1842 (NSA 1845, 616). Some four decades later, Joseph Anderson muddied the waters by referring to the cist with its inhumation, bronze chain and cruciform mount and implying that the glass and bronze vessels were also found in the cist (Anderson 1886, 139): 'At Kingoldrum, in the neighbourhood of Airlie, in or about the year 1843, several interments were found in the course of some operations in the immediate neighbourhood of the old church-yard. In one cist, with an unburnt interment, were found a small chain of S-shaped links of bronze, and a small cruciform mounting of the same metal, its surface showing traces of enamel. At the same time, and in or about the same place, there was found a small glass vessel, which was described to me by Rev. Mr Haldane as having upright sides like a tumbler slightly rounded at the bottom, and a low circular footstand. With these objects there was also found a bronze vessel… .' Unfortunately Anderson's caveat 'in or about the same place' became forgotten, and the four objects were accepted as having been found in the same cist grave (eg Curle 1932, 387).

Patrick Chalmers was a respected antiquarian, and his account makes clear his understanding that only the chain and cross were found in the cist. The Kilmichael Glassary bell-shrine appears to have been suspended by a not dissimi-

lar chain and cross (Caldwell et al 2012, 218-22), but that bell is tiny and the Kingoldrum bell is unlikely to have been suspended in that way. The grave is, however, likely to have been that of a cleric.

Anderson recorded a first-hand description of the missing glass vessel by Rev Haldane 'as having upright sides like a tumbler slightly rounded at the bottom, and a low circular footstand', allowing it to be identified as a Roman cylindrical cup for drinking wine (Ingemark 2014, 64-5, 253 I.2). Although this type of cup was going out of use in Roman Britain by the mid third century, they were still in use in Scotland in the late Iron Age, for examples have been found accompanying burials in long cists and there are fragments from settlement sites (Ingemark 2014, 62-5). Ewan Campbell has made the interesting suggestion (pers comm) that the cup may have been discovered in antiquity in one of the other cists at Kingoldrum and that it acquired the status of a relic in the local community. Sadly we have no description of the copper alloy chalice, but, if it was of early medieval date, it is likely to have taken the form of late Roman chalices, such as the silver vessel in the Traprain Law hoard (Goldberg 2012, fig 3.45), for Early Christian communion vessels were essentially Roman tableware. Such a chalice may be depicted on the Nigg cross-slab (Henderson and Henderson 2004, 139-41). Beyond Scotland, surviving early medieval chalices range in size from the tiny Hexham chalice, about 60mm high, to the elaborate Derrynaflan chalice at 190mm high.

The Kingoldrum bell is large enough to have held a smallish chalice and cup, along with its own detached tongue, for it stands 242mm high and measures 196mm by 176mm at its mouth. The bell and its contents were probably buried in some sort of perishable bag, perhaps made of woollen cloth or leather, and the glass cup was presumably wrapped in cloth. The bell itself could date anytime from the late sixth to tenth centuries (Bourke 1984, 467; 2020, 368-9). It was made of iron with a bronze coating designed to improve its ringing tone – Martin Goldberg described the recreation of the Kingoldrum bell to a Pictish Arts Society conference in 2015 (reported in *Newsletter* 77, 7).

But when and why was this unusual ecclesias-

tical hoard buried in the graveyard of the church it had served? The two cross-slabs, Kingoldrum 1 and 2, described below, had been trimmed for reuse as building material for the church built in the twelfth century, and the bell, chalice and cup relic may have been buried at that time, considered to be too old-fashioned for the new church. The hoard may have been buried earlier to protect it from raids by military forces, of which Angus suffered its share in the tenth century (Woolf 2007, 165, 204), and retrieval at the time may have failed for much the same problem that beset Samuel Pepys when his wife could not remember where in the garden she had buried his wealth. Ewan Campbell has suggested (pers comm) that the likeliest context for its burial might be the Reformation in the sixteenth century, when other bells are known to have been hidden. Whatever the date of its deposition, it seems reasonable to accept that the three objects were indeed a hoard and that the origins of its contents reach back into Pictish and Roman times.

The cross-slabs

There are two relatively small Pictish cross-slabs, part of an even smaller medieval slab (possibly a gable finial), and a font stone from Kingoldrum (all four have been recorded by John Borland: Canmore ID 32255, 32256, 32257, 32254). Kingoldrum 1 (Fig. 2) is a symbol-bearing cross-slab, with a cross filled with diagonal key pattern filling face A. On either side of the shaft of the cross are pairs of serpentine hybrids, each creature with a beaked head and a fishtail, and a median line along its body. The two on the left are head to tail with their own tails, and their bodies form two entwined loops, whereas those on the right are head to each other's tail, and their twisted bodies are secured where they cross by two circles forming a closed circuit pattern. This use of a closed circuit device to give the impression of interlace is common in Anglo-Saxon sculpture (Cramp 1984, xxxii and fig 24) and it was adopted with enthusiasm by Pictish sculptors, particularly in Angus. It may be seen to considerable effect on the recumbent slab, St Vigeans 13, where two serpentine creatures are linked by a series of three closed circuit patterns, each consisting of five twists. They serve to extend the pattern to fill a long narrow panel down the right-hand side of the slab, and the pattern appears to have

been repeated down the partially missing left-hand side (Canmore ID 35564; Geddes 2017, 192-3). Similarly, on either side of the cross-shaft on nearby Kirriemuir 3 (Canmore ID 32301) there is a serpentine hybrid with a dog's head at both ends of its body, and the pattern is extended downwards to fill the panel by using two closed circuit patterns on the left and one on the right.

Returning to Kingoldrum 1, the panels on either side of the upper arm of the cross are left plain, but a spiral expansion to the flat-band border of the slab on either side suggests strongly that this was a zoomorphic frame and that the missing rounded top had confronted heads over the upper arm. Normally a spiral expansion to the frame above the side-arms of the cross would be connected with a limb, but here there is no limb, and the expansions may mark the start of wings instead. Just such a spiral expansion at the shoulder may be seen on the openwork birds on the outside of the terminals of the Viking-
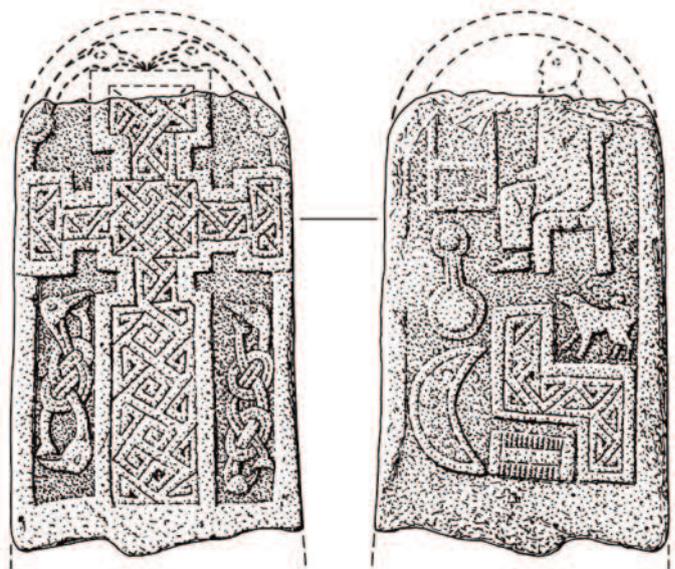

Fig. 2 Kingoldrum 1 with reconstructed round top. Scale 1:10

Age brooch from the Galloway hoard (Goldberg and Davis 2021, 80-81). There would be space above the upper arm of the cross for two beaked heads like those in the panels flanking the shaft, and John Borland has kindly amended his original drawing to show this possible reconstruction. There are two birds eyeballing one another on Monifieth 2, again as framing creatures but this time on face C rather than on the cross-face. They have great hooked beaks

and clawed feet and are clearly eagles, unlike the less than threatening birds on Kingoldrum 1. Beasts with bared teeth are far more common as framing creatures, such as those on Aberlemno 2, Dunfallandy, Farnell and Conan, or beasts with unusually long muzzles like those on Cossins and Meigle 4. Where the frame is complete, the serpentine bodies end in fishtails, as on Dunfallandy and Cossins. On face C of Kingoldrum 1 there would be space for the shoulders and head of the robed person seated on a chair, as reconstructed here. In front of this person is some sort of frame, and the chair back appears to show a zoomorphic terminal. Beneath this scene are an animal and four Pictish symbols: mirror, crescent, step and double-sided comb. The step symbol is filled with the same diagonal key pattern as that filling the cross. The second cross-slab, Kingoldrum 2 (Fig. 3), has lost even more of its upper portion, but the remains of a limb with a clawed foot braced against the side-arm on either side of the upper arm of the cross may indicate that here too there were framing creatures with their missing heads confronted over the top of the upper arm. The cross has a triple spiral in the centre and diagonal key pattern in the arms and shaft, all finely executed. All that survives on face C is an upper panel with, centre stage, a figure seated on a chair with a zoomorphic ter-
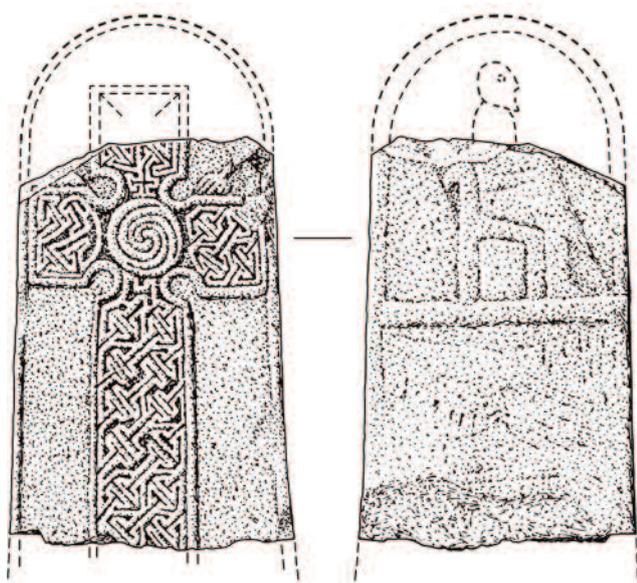

Fig.3 Kingoldrum 2, also reconstructed with a round top

minal to the back. Stuart's drawing shows teeth on the chair terminal and fine interlace on the flat-band moulding separating the figural scene

from the (now plain) panel beneath (Stuart 1856, pl 59, where the chair and figure are reversed). Again a rounded top would allow space for the head and upper torso of the seated figure.

Given the dedications of a well and church to St Meddan at Airlie, some 4km to the south-west of Kingoldrum, and St Meddan's Ridge about 5km to the north, it is tempting to identify these figures at Kingoldrum as St Meddan, especially as there was formerly a well to the south-west of the church that was known as St Meddan's Well. (1)

The conundrum

It is not far short of two hundred years since the carved stones and portable artefacts discussed here were found at Kingoldrum. Over that period the uncertainties surrounding the hand-bell, chalice and glass cup seem to have increased unnecessarily, and the puzzle becomes clearer if one focusses on the records made close to the time of their discovery. The accounts by Patrick Chalmers and Daniel Wilson combine to show that the hand-bell hoard had been buried in the kirkyard, rather than in one of the late Iron Age cist burials beyond the boundary of the kirkyard. The two early medieval cross-slabs would have stood in the kirkyard probably from the ninth century until they were built into the twelfth-century church that was demolished in 1840.

Anna Ritchie

Note

1 The sites mentioned here can be found on the Saints in Scottish Place-names website:

www.saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=182

St Meddan's Well at Kingoldrum was recorded by the Ordnance Survey in the 1970s (Canmore ID 32254), and its unnamed location is shown on the first edition 6-inch map, Forfarshire, sheet XXXI, surveyed 1862, published 1865.

Norman Atkinson is currently working on the St Meddan associations of the churches at Kingoldrum, Airlie and Lintrathen (pers comm).

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Fonts and Footbaths in Pictish Times

In his paper on the sculpture at Tullich Church on Deeside to the PAS 2021conference (see PASN 103 for Sheila Hainey's report), John Borland referred to 'fonts' at the early churches of Tullich, Dull and Fortingall, associating the large hollow stones with 'baptism as part of a conversion ritual'. When proofreading that report for the newsletter, I crossed out the word 'font' and replaced it with 'boulder bowl'. John

Fig 1. Tullich bowl, 1.17m diameter.

duly reinstated the original wording, pointing out that if nothing else it represented an accurate record of his talk but as I was proposing an alternative interpretation, he challenged me to write a riposte.

I would use the term 'boulder bowl' to describe a stone with undressed exterior but hollowed out as a bowl. Boulder bowls fundamentally lack any stylistic dating feature while their wide range in size from the gigantic Tullich rock

(Fig. 1) to something small and portable indicates that they were designed for a variety of different purposes. 'Boulder bowl' thus serves as a neutral term for such an object whose function is uncertain. They form part of a wider categorisation, designated as 'stone basins' by Lacaille in his survey published in 1953. He was concerned about the identification of many basins as fonts/stoups and widened the discussion to include mortars, pot querns, knocking stones, natural rock basins and cross bases. Several of these categories are not mutually exclusive as such stones can accumulate long biographies of secular and holy uses.

There are two problems to sort out. Across Scotland (and Ireland) there are many rough boulders hollowed out to form a bowl. Some are portable while some definitely stay put, too large to move any great distance. Many of these are found at early church sites, others are found in a domestic context. A Canmore search for 'font' produces 139 entries and a detailed sift (which I haven't done) is necessary to separate the finely dressed later medieval liturgical fonts from the other undressed boulders. Further stages would be to produce a graph of their sizes, and to map where they are located: near an old church or elsewhere. So, keeping an open mind, the first question is: 'What might these bowls be used for?'

Leaving aside the presumption of a font for a moment, the second question is: 'How were early baptisms performed?' It may be clearer to review liturgical practice before assuming that all big hollow rocks near churches were for baptism. We should not imagine that, in the first flush of converting adult pagans, our concept of a formal stone font was at hand. After all, Christian baptism began with St John and Christ in the River Jordan. Many of the earliest church sites in Scotland are very close to a river or near a sacred spring or well. The first records of baptism in Scotland concern the missionary activities of St Columba (d.597), while travelling through the pagan countryside. Two were speedy services for old men on the brink of death, by the sea shore on Skye and in the fields of Glen Urquhart. Another was an entire household 'in the province of the Picts', while an infant baptism took place on a journey, beside a rock from which water bubbled out. For

these early rituals of the conversion period neither the formalities of a church nor stone font were required. Originally the Latin word '*fons*' meant 'spring/source' before it came to mean the liturgical vessel. Whitfield (2007) examines narrative accounts, particularly from Ireland, to show that early baptisms frequently took place by rivers or holy wells, and the water was held in a decorated bucket, to be ladled over the neophyte's head with a skillet (a process called 'affusion'). On the broken cross at Kells, John the Baptist is shown ladling water over Christ's head as they stand in the river. On the 11th-century cross-heads, Durham 5-7, the participant bends forwards and a priest pours water over his head with a ladle, the action presumably reflecting contemporary practice, either for baptism or perhaps ordination (*CASSS*, I). Some of the wells were not a simple hole in the ground but a more elaborate octagonal construction with steps leading down to the water, like St Doulagh's well at Balgriffin, detached from its church like an Early Christian baptistery. Could the well at Burghead, Moray, have been used in this way too?

From a period when the church was fully established, there is more evidence about the baptismal rite from Irish sources, in particular the 9th-century Stowe Missal '.. *mittit sacerdos crisma in modum crucis in fontem et quique uoluerit implet vasculum aqua benedictionis ad domos consecrandas et populus pressens aspargitu aqua benedicta.'* (Warren and Stevenson 1987: 215). The priest places the chrism in the form of a cross on the 'fons', and for whoever wishes it, fills a little vessel with the water of blessing for consecrating homes, and asperges those who are present with the blessed water.

This remains ambiguous: was the 'fons' healing water from a spring or font? Blessing the 'fons' before collecting the water suggests it was an unconsecrated source, while the little vessel is clearly a portable object.. Next, '*Descendit in fontem et tingitur ter vel aspergitur postquam baptizaretur oleatur cresmate',* He descends into the 'fons' and he is moistened or asperged three times, then baptized with chrism.' '*Discendit'* could refer to entering a spring or well, but it may also mean 'he stoops or bends over', as seen on the Durham crosses (Warren and Stevenson 1987: xi-xx).

Fig 2. Deerhurst Anglo-Saxon font. Wikimedia Commons (photo by Ethan Doyle White).

In England, Anglo-Saxon stone fonts are noticeable by their absence, with only a few recognizable objects from the later 10th to 11th centuries, their proliferation beginning in the 12th century. The earliest, from Deerhurst, Gloucestershire (Fig. 2) is dated 9th century due to its lavish decoration of paired spirals, which many scholars have compared to Pictish ornament. Among the largest Anglo-Saxon stone fonts, its diameter is 0.75m, far smaller than the Tullich bowl (*CASSS,* X, chap 5, 62-64). The rarity and late emergence of recognizable stone fonts suggests that, in early days, priests may have carried from place to place a portable bowl or bucket made from wood or perhaps lead, or used whatever was available. At the birth of Anglo-Saxon St Rumwold, attendants were urgently ordered to 'fetch a hollow stone lying a little distance away' for the holy water (Foot 1992: 171-72).

Although not performed in the Roman baptismal Office, *pedilavium* or washing the feet formed the completion of the baptismal ceremony in the Stowe Missal, '*Tunc lavantur pedes eius accepto linteo', '*Then his feet are washed with fine linen' (Warren and Stevenson 1987: 217). It was common in the early Gallican church as an aspect of purification. Adamnán mentions that at Iona in the late 7th century it was customary to wash the feet of pilgrims and for the monks to wash their feet before entering the church. In addition, foot washing was performed as a gesture of hospitality and welcome (Adamnán, 1995, chaps 1:4, 2:45). St Cuthbert tenderly washed the feet of a stranger (who turned out to be an angel) at Lindisfarne: 'He gave him the usual sort of kindly welcome… He got him water to wash his hands, washed his feet himself, dried them, put them in his bosom, and humbly chafed them with his hands'. In turn, Cuthbert was received by a bodyguard of the king who 'made him most welcome. After the formal hospitality of having his hands and feet washed, the bishop sat down' (Bede, 1965*,* chaps 7, 29). These documentary accounts suggest two different vessels were required, one convenient for ladling water over the head and another larger one on the ground suitable for washing the feet, the latter used for a stage of baptism and also ritual purification before entering a church. The 8th-century Wirksworth sarcophagus lid in Derbyshire shows Christ washing a disciple's feet, an episode from the Last Supper still enacted liturgically by some Christian churches on Maundy Thursday. The disciple stands in a large bowl on the ground and Christ bends over to wash (*CASSS,* XIII*)*. When I was walking the *Chemin* to Compostela, we ended a weary day at a convent where nuns sat us on a sunny bench beside the west door and washed our feet on the ground. It was a blissful and welcome experience.

So, the liturgy and narrative accounts show that formally designated stone fonts were not mentioned as part of the early baptism ritual whereas the washing of feet definitely took place in numerous circumstances. That brings us back to question one, how were these large, hollowed rocks used? In purely practical terms, big bowls on the ground would be awkward for baptism, an adult perhaps bending their head over the basin with holy water wastefully splashing about, or with a creaky-hipped priest lowering a babe into the water. Situated outside, on the ground, it would be hard to keep
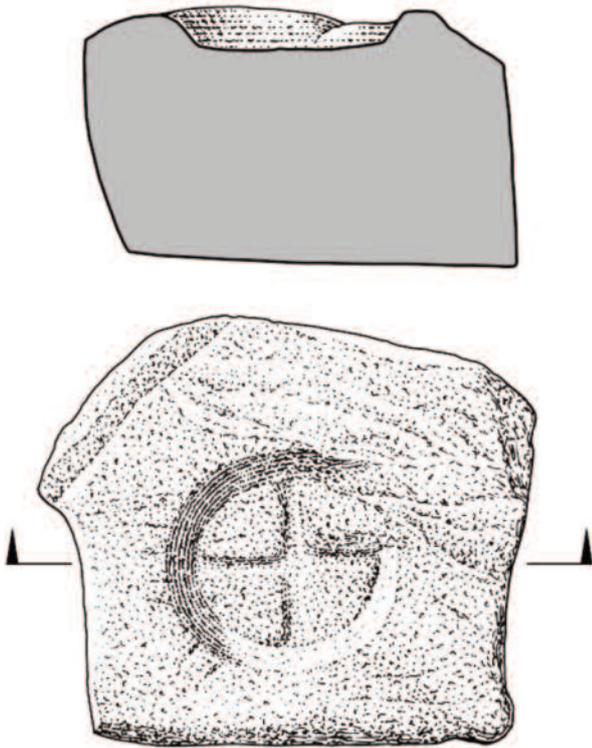
9

Fig 3. Fearnan cross-marked basin. L: 0.5m x W: 0.45m x Th: 0.27m.

their contents sanctified. Smaller Anglo-Saxon bowl fonts might be raised on a plinth for convenience, a step change taking place in the 12th century when the new (and now common) fonts were designed with stems (*CASSS*, X, chap. 5). In Scotland, smaller stone bowls, placed on a stand or table, could also have been used for baptism instead of a wooden bucket. Other functions might be an affusion or aspersion bowl for sprinkling holy water, or a laver for washing communion vessels. At Fearnan church, Loch Tay, on the wall south of the village hall, is a boulder hollowed into a flat bottomed basin, marked with a cross. It is too small for a foot bath and too shallow for a font,

Fig 4. Foot bath outside the west door at Iona Abbey. L: 1.32m x W: 0.55m x Th: 0.4m

but could have been a stoup (Fig. 3). Fearnan church was associated with St Ciaran and may be another pointer to Gaelic practice. The same church had long associated with it a stone said to be the seat of St Ciaran which had a natural hollow that collected rainwater, the drinking of which was regarded as a cure for measles, giving it its alternative name of *Clach-na-Gruich* (the Measles Stone) another signal about changing use for stones with receptacles. In a domestic context, depending on the depth or shape of the bowl, they could be a mortar, hand mill, but-

Fig 5. Fortingall bowl, 1.14m diameter.

ter churn, a kneading trough or any type of feeding/drinking bowl for humans or animals.

The prime example of the foot bath is a shallow rectangular cross-marked granite trough by the west door at Iona where we know foot washing was performed (Fig. 4) (Fisher, 2001: 135, no. 106). There are possible further examples in Ireland at Inishmurray, likewise marked with a cross and at Glendalough (Ó' Sullivan 2008; Ó' Carragáin 2010). In Pictland examples of the great bowls are at Balquidder (Walker 1887:407), Tullich (Illus1), Dull and Fortingall (Fig. 5). The Tullich bowl has a rough drainage hole on one side, possibly a later insertion. It is notable that at both Inishmurray and Glendalough there are smaller circular bowls, the bullauns (at least 30 at Glendalough), in which pilgrims would rotate another round stone as part of a prayer ritual in the hopes of effecting a cure for a malady (Price 1959). Some of the smaller Scottish bowls may also be bullauns, particularly in the western Highlands. At Abercorn, on the south bank of the Firth of Forth, there is an intriguing combination of large

Fig 6. Abercorn. Rectangular bath, L: 0.84m x W: 0.49m x Th: 0.42m. Round bowl, H: 0.37m, diameter 0.54m.

roughly rectangular basin and smaller round boulder bowl standing outside the south-east door (Fig. 6). Although Abercorn was functioning as an Anglian bishopric in 681, Bishop Trumwine retreated to Whitby after the Pictish victory at Dun Nechthain in 685. The surviving 9th-century sculpture displays many Pictish ornamental features like key-pattern as well as Northumbrian vine scroll, reflecting how it stood along the political fault line between the Picts and Northumbrians. The trough could conceivably be remnant of the Gallican feet washing ritual from its Pictish era; at 13cm deep it is too shallow for an animal drinking trough.

After the Reformation, the Presbyterians rejected even the word 'font'. They generally destroyed the well-dressed stone bowl from the later middle ages which had stood at the west end inside the church, replacing it with the approved small 'basin'. Going 'back to basics', there were no directions about the appearance or quality of the vessel, any basin would do. What now mattered was the act of baptism itself, a ritual performed either on the central communion table or attached to a bracket on the pulpit, to symbolize the public and spiritual centrality of baptism, visible and accessible to the entire congregation. That fundamentalist attitude towards using any available vessel, seen from the very start of Scottish Christianity, may explain why *bona fide* early fonts are so difficult to identify.

Jane Geddes

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2022 Pictish Arts Society Annual Conference Online

Saturday 1st October

Victoria Whitworth: *The Bullion Stone in Context*

The National Museum of Scotland does very well out of Bullion Stone merchandise, with its famous "Drink and Drive" image of a man on horseback. But what is the meaning and purpose of this mysterious carving? This paper is a preliminary assessment of the iconography and function of the Bullion Stone in its broader landscape context.

Victoria Thompson Whitworth is a writer and academic who specialises in the early middle ages. She has written extensively on early medieval sculpture, and has a forthcoming monograph on the Book of Kells (Head of Zeus 2023), and is completing a book for OUP on the 'Viking Age' sculpture of southern Scotland, northern England, and the Isle of Man.

Cynthia Thickpenny: *Textile Makers from Early Medieval England and Pictish Artists: Shared Strategies for the Transmutation of Patterns*

Pictish artists frequently used a form of Insular ornament referred to here as the 'transmutation of patterns' (previously 'interpenetration', F. Henry 1967, I. Henderson 1982). Transmutation occurred when an artist altered the deep, geometric structure of at least two adjacent patterns (e.g. interlace, key pattern, spirals, and vine-scroll), so that the first pattern transformed strand by strand into the second. This paper presents current case studies from my postdoctoral project, funded by the Leverhulme Trust (Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship). It outlines Pictish and other Insular artists' strategies for manipulating patterns' internal structures to achieve transmutation, and how these distinguish transmutation from other fascinating but often geometrically simpler forms of hybridity

also seen throughout the art of early medieval Ireland and Britain. Transmutation not only adorned sculpture, metalwork, and manuscripts, but also is found in surviving textiles, which were largely produced by women in the Insular period. By comparing Pictish metalwork and sculpture with a collection of contemporaneous silk and gold embroideries and tablet-woven bands

Megan Kasten: *OG(H)AM: Ancient script in a digital dimension*

A major new collaborative project (2021-24) by scholars from the University of Glasgow and Maynooth University harnesses digital tools from different fields to transform scholarly and popular understanding of ogham - an ancient script unique to Ireland and Britain. The project is digitally documenting all c.640 examples of ogham writing in all media, from the script's origin in the fourth century CE until the dawn of the modern revival c.1850. The overwhelming majority of these are on carved stone monuments, predominantly otherwise unworked pillars of 5th-7th century date, but also Pictish symbol stones, outcrops, cross-slabs, and miscellaneous stones, from the 8th-12th century.

Often positioned on the edge or corner of carved stones, 3D recording provides a clearer understanding of ogham inscriptions. This paper will highlight our recent fieldwork in Scotland and Northern Ireland, particularly the practical considerations and challenges encountered when recording stones in different contexts. The research applications for the resulting 3D models will be discussed, with particular focus on the application of Laila Kitzler Åhfeldt's Groove Analysis to better understand the biography of ogham stone at Newton House, Aberdeenshire.

Megan Kasten is the UK Postdoctoral Researcher on the OG(H)AM project. She holds a PhD in Archaeology from the University of Glasgow (2019), and her research interests lie in digital imaging and its applications in research, particularly in the study of early me-

dieval carved stones and sculpture. In her PhD, she created photogrammetric records of the Govan Stones as a case study to explore a range of research applications, especially in identifying worn decoration and applying Groove Analysis to understand the 'Govan School of Carving'. As a Research Assistant for SPARC (SPatial Archaeometry Research Collaborations), she has developed open-source teaching materials that introduce students to work with 3D data and emphasise the potential underlying archived 3D datasets for archaeological research and outreach. She has acted as digital imaging consultant for the CALC-Rome and the Glen Lyon project. She has also provided support for a range of projects, including the RSE funded projects the im/material network and MERC Manifesto.

Mark Hall: *The Art & Archaeology of Play: Insular Board Games and Beyond*

This paper will seek to review the social role of board games in the early medieval, Insular world and beyond. It will draw on the fresh insights offered in recent years by several detailed studies of both new archaeological finds – the Lindisfarne glass gaming piece is notably the "poster child" for this conference – and a plentiful if neglected corpus of previous archaeological discoveries. The finds form a rich corpus of artistically and materially varied objects, including wood, bone, ivory, antler, jet, stone, glass and amber from a contextually varied array of deposits, domestic, ritual, funerary and religious. Archaeology, art, and text will underpin an exploration of the artistic definition of board games and gaming pieces alongside questions of cultural exchange and hybridity. The nature of the evidence is variable (with literature notably strong for Early Medieval Ireland for example) and the paper will spotlight variations and contrasts across Irish, Pictish, British, Gaelic and Anglo-Saxon case studies (whilst not neglecting the Continental context). Are those "ethnic" labels always helpful, especially with a material culture of play that is fluid and cross-cultural which helps us to address identity in other ways?

Mark A Hall, BA, GC Mus Stud, AMA, PhD, MCIfA, FSA, FSA Scot is an archaeologist and museum curator based at Perth Museum & Art Gallery, Scotland, currently focused on the new museum redevelopment project for Perth. He is an active member on several professional bodies and policy initiatives (including human remains in museums, Scotland's archaeology strategy and treasure trove) and has long-standing research interests in medieval material culture including board games and play, the cult of saints and supernatural interactions, Pictish sculpture, cultural biography and cinematic re-imaginings of the past, on which he has published internationally. Most recently he has been exploring the cultural context of the Tulloch Pictish stone and working on a colourisation project of the St Madoes and Inchyra stone and, with Sally Foster, on how to tackle the biography of the Stone of Scone

Sunday 2nd October

Helen McKay: *The Pictish Beast: analysing its attributes towards an identification*

Ideas abound about the strange creature dubbed the Pictish beast. What is it? What is its significance? Why is it one of the most frequent of all symbols? Why do the Picts have a fantastical beast as a symbol when they otherwise draw beautiful real animals? Let's start to answer these questions by looking at the contextual data of the symbol, its frequency, its use of face, its distribution, art, stories, landscape, names. And in doing so, at the heart of the search, we will come upon the *gabor*, a being 'fraught with mythological meaning', the white mare of kingship.

Helen McKay is a computational linguist, the first person to lead a team creating a natural language translation system for Indonesian, Malaysian and Tagalog, and in their day these machine translation systems opened up the global web for hundreds of millions of peo-

ple. Now she is retired, enjoying nature, researching the Coligny Calendar, and thinking about all things Pictish.

Heather Pulliam: *Books and Bodies on Pictish Carved Stones*

Several Pictish monuments and Insular manuscripts, including the Book of Deer, contain human figures that have been identified, somewhat contentiously, as wearing book-shrines or book-satchels hanging from their necks. This paper examines this suggestion against the broader context of Insular visual culture, specifically manuscripts and surviving book-shrines and satchels. It briefly explores how the Insular tradition maps onto broader Jewish and Christian traditions of wearing sacred texts from the Late Antique period onwards. It focuses on the role of apotropaic prayers and early medieval conceptions of the body as articulated in Latin, Irish and British literary texts and how these might enhance our understanding of the Pictish monuments.

After three years as Head of History of Art at the University of Edinburgh, Heather has a Paul Mellon Senior Fellowship to complete her book *Art and the Living Frame in Early Medieval Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge University Press). Heather is also co-editing a book with Rachel Moss, Trinity College Dublin, *Irish and Scottish Art, c. 900-1900: Survivals and Revivals* (Edinburgh University Press) and co-investigator with Adam Cohen (University of Toronto) on a Leverhulme-supported project investigating how recent development in the digital humanities might facilitate analysis of the Utrecht Psalter and other medieval psalters.

Jo Clements: *The George Bain Collection: a largely untapped resource*

The George Bain Collection held by Groam House Museum is the most complete collection of the work and archive associated with the artist, educator, and advocate for "Celtic art", George Bain (1881-1968). Over the last 24 years, the collection has grown and developed and has inspired craftspeople and members of the public alike through exhibitions, lectures and craft workshops. In many ways, however, the collection remains an untapped research resource. In this talk I will give a flavour of the content of the collection and sketch some potential directions for future research in the hope of inspiring future engagement with PAS members!

Jo Clements has been George Bain Curator at Groam House Museum since 2015. Alongside their work at Groam House they have worked for other heritage organisations in the Highlands and more broadly: Timespan, Ullapool Museum, and Museum Nord. Jo completed their PhD on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century perceptions of early Scottish music history at the University of Glasgow in 2013. The theme which ties all of these activities together is an abiding interest in how and why people engage with, and have previously engaged with, the past.

David McGovern: *Something Old, Something New - Recreating the Conon Stone*

In a workshop in rural Angus, David McGovern is carving a life-size recreation of the Conon Stone, in sandstone, for Highland Council. The original stone was discovered in 2019 and stands some 4 feet tall. The scale of the cross suggests the stone was originally some 8 feet tall. David is working to replicate the existing detail and re-imagine the missing sections. In this pre-recorded presentation, David will explain the processes involved and share images of the project so far.

David McGovern is a heritage stone carver and monumental mason producing museum replicas and public monuments. His public sculpture can be found at Brechin, Forteviot and St Vigeans.
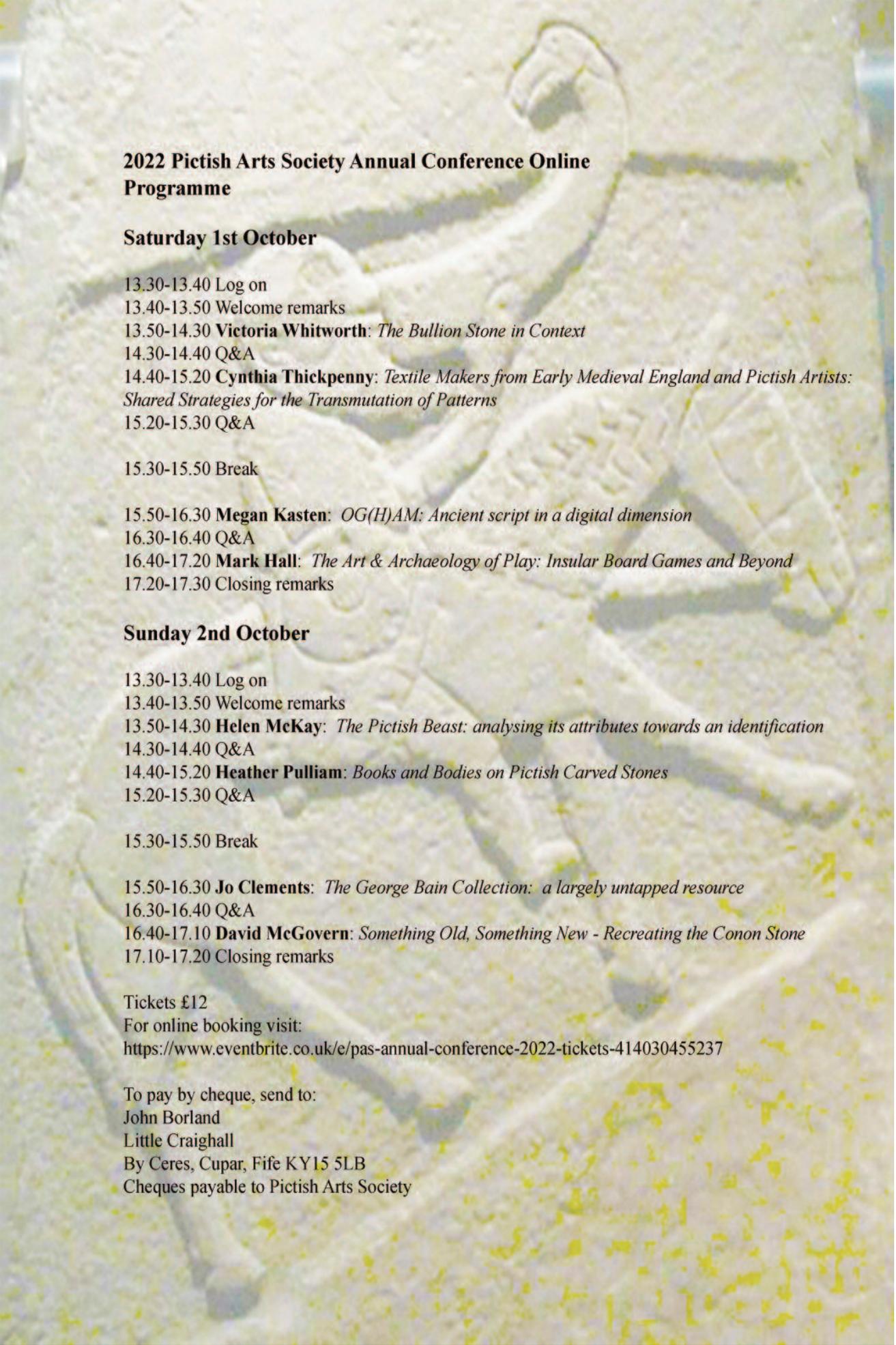
2022 Pictish Arts Society Annual Conference Online Programme

Saturday 1st October

13.30-13.40 Log on
13.40-13.50 Welcome remarks
13.50-14.30 **Victoria Whitworth**: *The Bullion Stone in Context*
14.30-14.40 Q&A
14.40-15.20 **Cynthia Thickpenny**: *Textile Makers from Early Medieval England and Pictish Artists: Shared Strategies for the Transmutation of Patterns*
15.20-15.30 Q&A

15.30-15.50 Break

15.50-16.30 **Megan Kasten**: *OG(H)AM: Ancient script in a digital dimension*
16.30-16.40 Q&A
16.40-17.20 **Mark Hall**: *The Art & Archaeology of Play: Insular Board Games and Beyond*
17.20-17.30 Closing remarks

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17.10-17.20 Closing remarks

Tickets £12
For online booking visit:
https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/pas-annual-conference-2022-tickets-414030455237

To pay by cheque, send to:
John Borland
Little Craighall
By Ceres, Cupar, Fife KY15 5LB
Cheques payable to Pictish Arts Society

It's goodnight from me and it's goodnight from him.

Without really knowing what I was taking on, I agreed to become Editor of the PAS Newsletter at the AGM in October 2011. Since then, I have overseen the production of 42 editions of PASN, all thanks to the many members who sent in their contributions. I was particularly pleased that you responded to the call during lockdown, enabling us to actually increase our output to bi-monthly during 2020.

At the AGM in October 2012 Norman Atkinson asked me if I would take on the role of PAS President. The request was a gracious one so I could hardly refuse. During the past 10 years, I have worked alongside my fellow committee members to deliver for the membership.

But after 11 years as Editor and 10 years as President, I think it's time for a change so.....it's goodnight from me (the Editor) and goodnight from him (the President).

Please support your new PAS Newsletter editor

When PASN 106 drops through your letterbox or pops into your new email, it will herald the arrival of a new Editor. On occasion during the past 11 years I have had to hustle to get copy but more often I have had the good fortune to receive your contributions freely. Please continue to support your newsletter and its new editor.

JB

Forthcoming Events

PAS Annual Conference online 2022

Saturday 1 & Sunday 2 October

Details in this newsletter and on the PAS web-site/Facebook page

PAS Autumn Lecture Series 2022

Friday 21 October –
Professor Elizabeth Okasha
Early medieval stone sundials in Britain and Ireland

Friday 18 November –
Dr James O'Driscoll
Head for the Hills: Native Large Scale Hilltop Settlement in Late Roman Iron Age/Early Medieval Northern Britain

Friday 16 December –
Dr Chris Cooijmans
They Search for Fortune by Ship, and Inhabit the Sea: Viking Hydrarchy in Francia and the North Sea World

Lectures will be online, starting at 7.30pm. Zoom links will be circulated to members in advance. Please note that online lectures will run from October-December this year rather than the usual September-November.

PAS Newsletter 106
Deadline for receipt of material is
Saturday 19 November 2022
Please email contributions to the editor:
kelly.kilpatrick@glasgow.ac.uk