THE PICTISH ARTS SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER 59 SUMMER 2011

PAS Conference 2011

Saturday 1 October

Conference Suite 6,
Carnegie Conference Centre, Dunfermline

The Centre is on Halbeath Road, just over a mile from the railway station and a short distance from the Halbeath roundabout on the M90. A wide range of accommodation is available in Dunfermline and the surrounding area.

The theme of this year's conference is **Picts on the Move**, exploring means of transport in the Pictish world and drawing on evidence from the stones and from archaeological finds. A registration form is enclosed, which should be returned in good time as this is likely to be a very popular event.

Provisional Conference Programme

Registration from 10am

10.25 Welcome remarks

10.30 Jane Geddes
The Rogationtide perambulation: walkers on St Vigeans 11 and elsewhere

11.10 Roger Mercer
The background of boat and ship-building in NW Europe 4000BC–AD1000

11.50 Elizabeth Cole-Hamilton
The Jonathon's Cave boat carving: a question of authenticity

12.30 Lunch

1.30 AGM

2.00 Bob Mowat
Pictish watercraft – an exercise in speculative archaeology

2.40 Ian Ralston
Burghead and other promontories – the Picts and the sea

3.00 Irene Hughson
Picts on horseback: evidence from the sculptured stones

3.40 John Borland
A previously unidentified 'chariot' carving in northern Pictland

4.20 Disscussion and closing remarks

Notice of PAS Annual General Meeting on 1 October 2011

The Annual General Meeting of the Pictish Arts Society will be held at the Carnegie Conference Centre, Dunfermline on Saturday 1 October at 1.45 pm to consider the following business:

1 Apologies for absence

2 Approval of the 2010 AGM minute

3 Annual Report – President

4 Honorary Secretary's Report

5 Treasurer's Report: Presentation and Approval of Annual Accounts

6 Appointment of an Independent Examiner

7 Determination of Subscription Rates

8 Other Honorary Officers' Reports:
- (a) Membership Secretary
- (b) Editor

9 Election of Honorary Officers:
- (a) President
- (b) Two Vice Presidents
- (c) Secretary
- (d) Treasurer
- (e) Membership Secretary
- (f) Editor
- (g) Events Organiser
- (h) Archivist

10 Election of Committee (minimum six, maximum twelve)

11 Any other competent business

Note: business will begin at 1.45pm prompt. Please send nominations for committee members, and note of any matters you wish to raise, to the Honorary Secretary at Pictavia.

This issue of the Newsletter was slightly delayed in order to include details of the Dunfermline conference, plans for which were finalised at a committee meeting in mid-June

Report on the Society's activities – 2010.

The winter programme of talks at Pictavia was once again well attended, despite some problems with the weather both in the early and the later part of the year.

Our speakers in the first three months of the year were Fraser Hunter, who updated us on excavations at Birnie, Alastair Becket who spoke on excavations at Victoria Park, Arbroath, and Norman Atkinson who presented work on the place-names of the Dunnichen area. Norman stood in at short notice for Heather Pulliam, whose postponed talk, 'Spiritual nourishment in the Book of Kells and the Art of the Picts', opened the autumn season. Sarah Winlow gave us some insights obtained from radio-carbon dating of burials from Invergowrie and Inchtuthil, and Jane Geddes gave us the final talk of the year, on St Vigeans 11 and the Drosten Stone.

The annual conference, held on 2 October at the A.K. Bell library in Perth, was once again well attended. Norman Atkinson and Anna Ritchie chaired the sessions, and Adrian Maldonado, Martin Carver, Jill Harden, Strat Halliday, and Steve Thompson spoke on topics relating to early Christian sites in Pictland. Lloyd Laing and Sarah Thomas were unable to attend, but they sent their presentations to be read on their behalf.

The AGM was held at the conference, resulting in a greatly increased attendance.

The Newsletter continues to flourish in the hands of David Henry, whose dedication to producing a high quality publication, with a variety of news, short articles, reviews and general information on Pictish-related matters is greatly appreciated. Once again, the committee would like to record our thanks to the editor and the contributors who continue to make the quarterly publication possible.

Margaret Evans, a long standing member of the Pictish Arts Society, left a sum of money to the Society in her will. The committee felt that this should be used in some way to commemorate Margaret. We hope to be able to report to the forthcoming AGM how this bequest has been spent.

There are ongoing problems with producing a website that can act as a point of contact/information for members. We continue to work on this.

The President and Secretary, whose combined reports have been presented here, would like to thank their fellow committee members, all volunteers and members of the Society for their contributions to the running of the Society over the past year.

Another symbol stone comes to light

Pictish symbol stone, Cotterton Farmhouse, Knockbain, Ross and Cromarty
OS Grid ref: NH 62158 52141

The Cotterton symbol stone, photographed in October 2010

Photographs © Andrew Dowsett

The stone in situ

The carved stone is built sideways into the wall of the farmhouse at Cotterton, not far from Tore on the Black Isle. The stone has an incised Pictish beast, with crescent above, comb underneath and the remains of a mirror to its right. The comb is intact with a double row of seven teeth on each side. Only about one half of the mirror's circumference, the left side, is visible as the rest is obscured by harling, which also conceals the handle but for a small part of its joining ring. Unfortunately, only the horns and the lower arc of the crescent survive, the top of the stone having been removed and squared off, presumably when the stone was built into the wall.

Cait McCullagh, a local archaeologist, has proposed that the lack of weathering apparent on the stone suggests it was previously located inside another building, or possibly buried. Cait also suggests that the stone may have been deliberately placed in this spot in the building, perhaps even gifted for the purpose.

It seems that the stone has been in the wall for over 100 years but has evaded being officially recorded. Local photographer, Andrew Dowsett was photographing the house when the owners brought it to his attention, subsequently he informed George and Isabel Henderson Details of the stone are now in Highland Council's Historic Environment Record (ref: MHG54302)

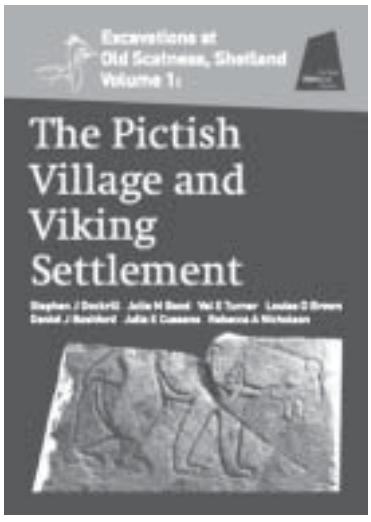
<http://her.highland.gov.uk/home.html>

We are indebted to Andrew Dowsett for giving permission to reproduce his photographs. The colour originals can be viewed online at the url above and Andrew's own gallery of excellent photographs is at

<http://www.andrewdowsett.co.uk>

Pictish Shetland

Despite lying on the far northern fringe of Pictland, the Shetland islands have a surprisingly strong inheritance of early medieval carved stones, ogham inscriptions and sites of early Christian churches. Three recent publications will be of interest to members of the Pictish Arts Society, particularly for information about Pictish symbol stones and cross-slabs.



Traces of Pictish domestic settlement were frustratingly sparse until excavations began in 1995 at the unbelievably well-preserved Old Scatness at the southern tip of mainland Shetland, sponsored by Shetland Amenity Trust's Old Scatness Broch Project. The first volume of the report was published last year as *Excavations at Old Scatness, Shetland, vol 1: The Pictish Village and Viking Settlement*, a major achievement by Steve Dockrill and Julie Bond and their dedicated team. In a sense, with Old Scatness we get insights into two sites, because it helps to make better sense of the nearby settlement of Jarlshof, excavated piecemeal in pre-radiocarbon days but showing a similar sequence spanning the Iron Age and Viking Age.

At Old Scatness the Pictish village was built in and around an earlier broch with its own surrounding village, and the complexity of the task of disentangling the two can be judged from the many photographs and plans. The main Pictish phases span the sixth to ninth centuries AD, when the villagers were living in relatively small cellular houses. One building may have been a shrine and a lightly incised graffito of a boar was found on a slab forming part of the kerb round the hearth, set in such a way that the boar would not have been visible. An exquisite carving of a brown bear was incised on a slab found face down in the floor of a wheelhouse, and the excavators suggest that it was originally part of the inner facing of one of the piers or 'spokes' of the wheel-like plan. As Julie Bond observes, the accuracy of the carving suggests that the artist had seen a live animal (but presumably not in Shetland). Another fragment (found amongst rubble) shows part of an incised salmon and traces of another motif and may have belonged to a two-symbol stone, as indeed may the bear carving have been part of a larger design. Among smaller artefacts from the Pictish village may be noted a pebble incised with an arch and V-rod, which was associated with the possible shrine, a series of intricate graffiti and three painted pebbles (no fewer than eleven more such pebbles came from earlier contexts and will appear in volume 2).

Shetland Amenity Trust's vision for the project, as devised by Val Turner and James Moncrieff, was to break down the barriers between the academic discipline of archaeology and the public, and in this they have succeeded both on the ground and in this volume. Old Scatness is an exciting place to visit, not simply because the site is so well preserved but also because buildings have been reconstructed off-site and aspects of village life can be seen re-enacted. The book is both a scientific report and, with its many reconstruction drawings and clear

discussion, an accessible account of one of the most important excavations undertaken in Scotland.

The carved stones mentioned from Old Scatness are included in a recent survey of the Pictish and Viking-Age carvings from Shetland, which produced the very respectable total for the islands of 131 slabs, pebbles, discs and three-dimensional carvings. The work of Ian G Scott, formerly of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland,

all these carvings are drawn at uniform scales for comparison one with another, from Pictish symbol stones and cross-slabs to the oddly moving little cruciform gravemarkers of Norse times. Unique to Shetland are thirteen decorated stone discs, some carved with Pictish symbols, while the rich collection of corner posts from Early Christian shrines at Papil and St Ninian's Isle is a remarkable contrast with Orkney where none has been found (a volume on Orcadian carved stones is in the pipeline).

New is Ian Scott's illustration of a fragment of interlace carved in relief in the National Museums of Scotland as part of the same stone as a fragment from South Whiteness in the Shetland Museum, the two together belonging to an ogham-inscribed cross-slab of the tenth century. A hard but necessary decision was not to include the large collection of graffiti lightly incised on slate from Jarlshof, partly because they are an entirely different genre from the carvings and partly because they have been studied in detail already by Uaininn O'Meadhra. They must also now be considered in the context of the graffiti from Old Scatness. Similarly painted pebbles were not included, not just because they are painted rather than carved but because the new pebbles from Old Scatness make clear the pre-Pictish origin of these remarkable objects.

The drawings are preceded by discussion of the range and implications of the stones by Anna Ritchie, and a catalogue provides details of provenance, publication and a concordance of the numbering used in this and other works. This includes carved stones known to have existed but now lost, and our knowledge of them derives from the work of a little-known Shetland antiquarian of the nineteenth century, James Thomas Irvine of Midbrake in north Yell. He deserves to be better known, and *A Shetland Antiquarian: James Thomas Irvine of Yell* is the first attempt to make him so, concentrating on his contribution to Shetland archaeology. Like many of his contemporaries, J T Irvine left Shetland as a teenager to seek his fortune farther south, and he became a devoted assistant to the great Victorian architect, Sir Gilbert Scott. As Scott's clerk of work, Irvine was involved in the restoration of a number of English churches and cathedrals, and at the time of his death still in harness in 1900 he had spent many years working on the cathedral at Peterborough. But he never lost his love for Shetland and returned home as often as he could, sketch book in hand to record the antiquities of the islands, particularly Yell, Unst and Fetlar. He published the first excavations at the broch of Clickhimin on the outskirts of Lerwick, where the Shetland Literary and Scientific Society sponsored work in 1861, and he spent hours drawing artefacts in the Society's museum (the contents of which were bought by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1882).

To his uncle Thomas Irvine we owe the preservation of the fragment of relief-carved cross-slab from the tiny island of Uyea, off Unst, and the tantalising record, set down by his nephew, of an elaborately carved stone, subsequently lost, from South Garth in Yell. James Thomas Irvine also recorded another fragment of a cross-slab from Kinwall of Papal on the east coast of Yell, where an old chapel and graveyard had already succumbed to erosion by the sea, as well as a cross-slab from Kirks of Gloup, both subsequently lost. He was aware of the need to record such losses as well to record surviving antiquities, from standing stones to the

carved window lintel in the old church of Lundawick and the coped gravestones at Sandwick in Unst. He was a close friend of the famous antiquary, Sir Henry Dryden, and together they worked on churches and castles in Shetland, donating their drawings and notes to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland for posterity and writing at length in Shetland newspapers to make the islanders aware of their heritage.

All three of these books illustrate the extraordinary vitality of the Shetland islands in Pictish and early Christian times, and it is fitting that Old Scatness has been included on the UK tentative list of new World Heritage sites.

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Dockrill, Stephen J, Bond, Julie M, Turner, Val E, Brown, Louise D, Bashford, Daniel J, Cussans, Julia E & Nicholson, Rebecca A 2010 *Excavations at Old Scatness, Shetland, Volume 1: The Pictish Village and Viking Settlement*. Lerwick: Shetland Heritage Publications. xli +399pp, 202 line drawings, 170 pls. £45.00.

Ritchie, Anna 2011 *A Shetland Antiquarian: James Thomas Irvine of Yell*. Lerwick: Shetland Heritage Publications. 54pp, 8 line drawings. £10.00.

Scott, Ian G & Ritchie, Anna 2009 *Pictish and Viking-Age Carvings from Shetland*. Edinburgh: RCAHMS. 60pp, 144 line drawings. £7.50.

Hilton of Cadboll woman

The Hilton of Cadboll cross-slab has long attracted a great deal of attention. Much of the interest has focused on the hunting scene and, in particular, the uppermost horse rider who is widely, though not exclusively, believed to be female. Numerous suggestions have been made as to the identity of this individual. They include The Virgin Mary, a figure from the classical world, the Celtic goddess Epona, a Pictish noblewoman and, most recently, Christ.

However, perhaps the most important question of all, and one whose answer could provide a crucial clue to the figure's identity, is the one that does not appear to have so far been addressed by any serious studies – was this figure really part of the original design, or was it added at a later date? It is the purpose of this essay to demonstrate that the figure on the horse

1 *Hilton of Cadboll cross slab in the grounds of Invergordon Castle, from a postcard circa 1900.*

was a later addition, made long after the stone was originally completed, and that the rider formerly depicted was of the standard male type, as portrayed elsewhere in this and other hunt scenes. There is much evidence to support this view, and some which puts it beyond doubt.

To the practised eye of an artist, the rider in question stands out like a false note in an otherwise harmonious composition, and so falls under immediate suspicion. Her form clearly differs from the rest of the design in both style and technique, and this alone might imply that the figure was carved by a different sculptor. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that medieval sculptors were craftsmen rather than creative artists, and it was normal procedure for them to copy their designs from some other source. Therefore, without further evidence, we cannot exclude the possibility that the original sculptor has simply produced a composite design adapted from two separate sources – perhaps a seated female figure from a manuscript illustration, superimposed on a standard (and harmoniously composed) hunting scene – and that these original sources were executed in different styles, which the Hilton sculptor faithfully reproduced.

However, this possibility soon evaporates under critical examination. Attention is immediately

2 *Female rider with outline of original male rider superimposed.*

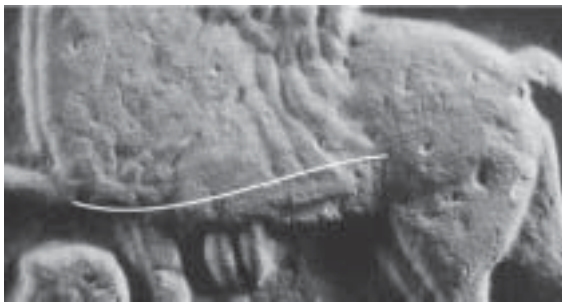
drawn to the fact that the space behind the rider's head has clearly been treated to some extra relief in order to facilitate the carving of her flowing hair, and no attempt has been made to blend the area of increased relief into the original background. Suggestions that this was a deliberate device employed by the original sculptor to enhance the prominence of the female rider are unconvincing. Apart from the fact that she is already sufficiently striking in appearance to make such extravagant measures redundant, other pictorial options for accentuating her presence were available to the sculptor, without compromising the integrity of the carefully choreographed design. This requirement for additional depth, as well as the carving technique employed, suggests a sculptor more accustomed to the Romanesque style than to the Pictish. The enhanced level of relief would not have been necessary if she had been part of the original design and carved in the same style as the rest of the panel.

The elevated position of the lead rider, located above the other riders, is symbolically indicative of her superior status. In any Pictish hunt scene, two further indications of this superiority are to be expected. Rider and horse should be depicted considerably larger in size than any others in the scene, and so they are, and she should also be sitting on a noticeably larger saddlecloth than the accompanying riders, but she is not. While the others are seated on small saddlecloths, hers is almost completely absent – symbolically, an unacceptable state of affairs.

Could there have originally been a large saddlecloth, extending to below the level of the horse's lower body, and could it have been chiselled away by a later hand, together with the surplus male leg, to provide sufficient material to make possible the otherwise difficult task of sculpting the woman's feet? (**2**) If this was the case, it might also explain why they are portrayed on the wrong plane, appearing to be located beneath the horse rather than dangling over its side. It is also worth noting that the feet are carved in a manner not encountered elsewhere in Pictish art, but one which is commonly employed in depictions of female saints right across Europe from the 11th century onwards (**3**).

3 *Base of wooden sculpture of Virgin Mary, carved in Burgundy, 1130-40.*

There is sound evidence to suggest that a large saddlecloth was, in fact, removed. The horses in the hunting scenes on Pictish stones are not naturalistically portrayed – they are highly stylised. One notable feature of the stylisation is that they are relatively deep-chested, but with unnaturally thin abdomens tapering markedly towards the groin area, a feature noticeable in the two lower horses, particularly the one on the left, but not present in the upper one. Removing the saddlecloth would have required the later sculptor to fabricate the horse's previously hidden anatomy, and he appears to have modelled it on the real horses with which he was presumably familiar, rather than following the style rules of the original design. This lower edge of the horse's body, apart from being the wrong shape, is also crudely carved and lacks the smooth rounded finish of the genuine article (**4**).



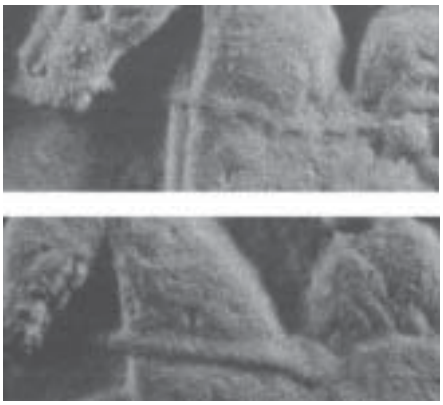
4 *Female rider's horse with correct profile shown.*

The object which the woman is holding on her lap is fortuitously positioned exactly where the original rider's shield would have been located, conveniently providing the material for its carving. Directly below the object, the folds of the lower part of her dress reveal their provenance through the contours which originally described the thigh of the male rider. Some observers have been deceived into interpreting this feature as representing the woman's left forearm curving round beneath the object to support it. The later sculptor also removed the lower edge of the shield, which was larger than the object which replaced it, and was obliged to extend the folds of the clothing into this newly exposed area. His incised lines are still relatively clear and sharp, not having suffered as much erosion as the original carving – a sure indication of their later date.

Turning attention to the woman's left shoulder, it can be seen to be quite substantial and not particularly feminine looking. In total contrast, her right shoulder, despite having apparently appropriated part of the rider behind, is not only slight, it is almost non-existent. Her head, of a shape not usual to Pictish art, is strangely offset to her right, but with most of her hair still to the left. However, this curious state of affairs can be easily understood by comparing her upper body with those of her two companions – the shape of the upper torso is almost identical in all three. She has clearly retained the body, depicted in profile, of her predecessor, the male rider, and her head has been carved exactly where his head would have been, hence the curious offset (**2**).

This is emphasised by another revealing feature which unites the depictions of all three riders. Both male riders have what seem to be the folds of their upper garments rising from behind the tops of their shields and passing diagonally across their chests, appearing to be secured there under some fastening device, possibly a brooch. In a favourable light, the remnants of this same feature are just about visible, in the same position, on the female rider, and appear to contradict the folds which the later sculptor has lightly incised on the left portion of her upper body.

The reins have also been subjected to some major modification, readily apparent when comparing them with those of the horse below. The tight rein of the lower animal extends



5 *Reins of female rider (top) and reins of rider below her (bottom).*

purposefully from the bit to the rider's hand, in a straight, smooth and expertly carved line. On the upper horse, in stark contrast, the rein is represented by a rather ragged line which meanders erratically and tentatively across its neck and into the tiny female hand clasping the object on her lap. It can be seen that this rein has been crudely and inexpertly carved by pecking away the adjacent stone with a relatively coarse chisel. No attempt has been made to achieve a smooth finish (**5**).

From the front of the neck, the original rein of this upper horse appears to have curved back, on a line a little higher than its replacement, to a position just above the woman's hand, where, on close examination, a short portion of the rein can still be seen entering the phantom grasp of the original rider. At a single stroke, this

6 *Virgin Mary and (inset) John the Baptist with their plaques, Paolo Veneziano, circa 1340.*

modification to the rein provides confirmation that the female figure was not the original rider of the horse and that she was carved by the hand of a different and inferior sculptor to the rest of the panel.

Some of the most puzzling aspects of this figure revolve around the intriguing object located on her lap. It is almost certainly intended to be a plaque. This was a pictorial device first adopted by the Christian artists of Byzantium, and which subsequently spread throughout Europe. The plaque was adorned with the principal attribute of the particular saint portrayed, thereby confirming their identity (**6**).

The task of representing, in low-relief, a two-dimensional design painted on a relatively small disc, would have been challenging enough for a Pictish craftsman. It was certainly beyond the capabilities of the later sculptor and he made quite a mess of the job. The effect of his incompetence is to mislead the viewer into thinking that the rider is holding a three-dimensional object, rather than a flat plaque adorned with a two-dimensional design.

There has been considerable debate as to exactly how the plaque is being held. As mentioned earlier, some have suggested that the rider is supporting it on what has been interpreted as her left forearm curving around beneath it (as in the figure **6** examples). However, using this method of support only came into vogue with artists in the Late Medieval, and it is at variance with the fact that on the Hilton plaque there appear to be two small hands, with fingers just about discernable, firmly grasping the plaque, one at each side (**7**). If these are not hands, then why was so much effort expended in redirecting the reins into one of them? That the precise nature of its means of retention has remained a prehensile enigma for so long is no more than a fitting tribute to the ineptitude of the plaque's creator.

In truth, and notwithstanding the eulogising of some commentators, the female rider on this stone is a thoroughly ugly piece of work, incompetently carved. The quality of the craftsmanship is vastly inferior to that of the rest of the stone, and much of the coarseness that has previously been attributed to the ravages of time is, in fact, down to sculptural ineptitude rather than natural erosion. It looks like the work of a journeyman stonemason, and that is what it most probably is – the product of some worker not

7 *Object on the lap of female rider (left), and suggested interpretation (right).*

accustomed to carving anything more complex than the occasional gravestone, and certainly not competent to carve in the sophisticated low-relief style of Pictish art.

In the light of the body of evidence, much of it seemingly irrefutably, it would be difficult to arrive at any conclusion other than the fact that major alterations have been made to this figure. It is equally clear that the modifications were carried out at a later date, and by someone other than the original sculptor, someone rather less skilled.

But does this bring us any closer to learning the identity of the female rider? The date of her creation, now much later than had previously been assumed, certainly excludes some of the possibilities put forward by others, such as Epona or the Pictish noblewoman. Given that there was considerable activity surrounding the stone circa the 12th century, including its re-erection, and accepting that the Marian dedication of the associated chapel probably dates to about this time, the obvious candidate might appear to be the Virgin Mary, an identity already suggested by some. However, this is extremely unlikely, almost to the point of being impossible. In the medieval period it was considered totally unacceptable, if not downright heretical, to portray the Virgin with her hair uncovered, except when illustrating scenes from her childhood, up to and including the annunciation. In the case of this female rider, it is precisely her flagrant display of hair that helps to identify her as a woman, and it is that same hair that also disqualifies her from representing the Virgin Mary or any other female saint – with one exception.

In the entire New Testament there is only one woman of note, only one female saint, whom the medieval Church permitted to be shown with her hair uncovered. Indeed, an abundance of

flowing hair was her principal attribute. That woman was Mary Magdalene, and the hair was a sign of her alleged wantonness.

Throughout western Christendom, the other attributes by which the penitent Mary Magdalene can be positively identified are either an alabaster jar (containing the oil with which she is said to have anointed Christ's feet) or a cross, usually a crucifix. The item depicted on the plaque resting on the lap of the Hilton woman is almost certainly a cross of some kind. A Tau cross has sometimes been suggested, but it looks more like a badly carved crucifix (which would certainly rule out an early date) (**7**). The presence of this cross, taken together with the hair, allows it to be suggested with some confidence that the woman on the horse is likely to be a representation of Mary Magdalene. But why would this particular saint be so rudely carved onto an otherwise redundant Pictish cross slab at Hilton of Cadboll?

It is highly unlikely that the sculptor intended to produce an image of the Virgin Mary and inadvertently copied an illustration of the wrong saint. And though it is not impossible that Saint Mary's chapel was formerly dedicated to Saint Mary Magdalene, and not the Virgin Mary, as is usually assumed, this is almost equally unlikely – it was certainly being referred to as 'Our Lady's Chapel' at an early date. But there is another possibility, and a much more credible one, considering the evidence.

In recent years, archaeological investigations have suggested that the area where the stone was re-erected in the 12th century might have been a burial ground for children, located outside the chapel boundary. Such an arrangement was quite normal in the medieval period. If it was a burial site for children, and possibly other un-baptised individuals, as well as suicides and the executed, then it is quite possible that this otherwise redundant stone, still bearing its cross at this point, was put to use to mark the site. The only thing missing from it, in that age of saintly obsession, was the image of a suitable saint to watch over, and perhaps offer the hope of redemption to, the departed souls of these poor unfortunates and sinners. And there could be no saint more appropriate for this task than the fallen woman redeemed by Christ, and recently restored to Church favour, Mary Magdalene. And carving her image onto a fallen stone which itself had been resurrected would only add to the symbolic significance of the act.

Certainly, the standard of workmanship is suggestive of such a role. If it was never the intention to grace the chapel with a work of art to the glory of God, but simply to discharge a Christian duty to those less fortunate, interred outside the consecrated ground of the chapel, then that could well explain the inferior quality of the work. In those circumstances, it would have seemed reasonable and expeditious to re-use an old cross-slab, employ a journeyman stonemason and to invoke the intercession of Mary Magdalene.

Any art historian wishing to persist with the notion that she is part of the original Pictish design needs to come up with convincing answers to several crucial questions. Why does she have the upper torso of a male rider in profile? Why is her head offset to one side? Why have the reins been altered? Why does the lower body profile of her horse differ from every other Pictish horse?

Those able to escape the prison of their preconceptions, and look at this panel with fresh eyes, must surely realise that the female rider just does not look right. She is guilty of compositional disharmony, she is presented in the wrong style and she is clearly carved by a different and inferior hand, and at a later date. It is blatantly obvious that she was never part of the original design and, whatever her identity, she is certainly not Pictish.

Addendum

This reworking of the hunting scene has consequences for those who are still engaged in trying to piece together the fragments of the cross face, for they now have a further complication to be aware of. Their material may well have been contaminated by a few small pieces from the other face of the stone, as a result of the earlier defilement. They particularly need to look out for pieces of saddlecloth and a spare leg. *Ron Dutton*

PAS Newsletter 60
The deadline for receipt of material is Saturday 20 August
Please email contributions to the editor <pas.news@btconnect.com>

Turbines—fears for Pictish monument

the top of a hill and are there's now no time left tower over our houses not screened by other to lodge an objection—it's and what is clearly a

This disturbing headline ran in a recent edition of *The Courier*.

Its accompanying article outlined a potential threat to a burial cairn, on the Linlathen estate near Monifieth, posed by an application to erect two 47-metre wind turbines less than 400 metres away on Ethiebeaton farm.

Cairn Greg (NO 466 338) is a scheduled ancient monument in the care of Historic Scotland. It was excavated in 1834. Its central cist rested at ground level and a riveted dagger (subsequently lost), and a type S4 beaker, now in Dundee Museum, were found in it. The cist had a large capstone, which was separated from an upper capstone by a layer of soil about 300mm deep. The cairn itself is not a 'Pictish monument', but it seems that it was reused in Pictish times as a fragment of a Pictish symbol stone was also discovered, apparently lying between the capstones.

Linlathen House,
engraving by Gershom Cumming, 1843

The carved stone was recovered in 1864 and removed to Linlathen House, from which it gets its name. The present whereabouts of the Linlathen stone are a mystery. It was illustrated in *Sculptured Stones of Scotland* (ii, 1867, plate 100), and an undated photograph of it exists.

The upright stone in the grounds of Linlathen House

The sandstone fragment, measuring about 650 x 500mm, bears an incised Pictish beast symbol.

The Linlathen stone drawn for PAS by Niall Robertson

This lost stone became an emblem of PAS, symbolising the Society's commitment to preserving Pictish culture and heritage, but the mutilated Linlathen beast somehow evolved into a whole one thanks to the drawing of a close relative, the Strathmartine 1 beast in ECMS (iii, p.209, fig 226).

Mugshot of the PAS usurper, Strathmartine 1

Incidentally, the Linlathen beast (albeit a rather crude rendering of it) was adopted as an element of the badge of Linlathen High School in Dundee long before PAS came into existence. The school

Linlathen High School badge

was located north of the Kingsway to the east of the Forfar road, about three miles from Cairn Greg and a bit more from Linlathen House. It was demolished over 10 years ago and a Morrisons superstore now occupies the 21-acre site. The colourfully stitched badge on a dark ground shows the pale creature overlying a red flaming torch which emanates from an open book framed by yellow ribbon banners proclaiming the motto 'DO GOOD SEEK WISDOM' – how symbolic can you get? *DH*

Warning signs: '*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*'

Mention of school and symbols poignantly reminds me that my own interest in the latter began when I first attended school aged five. Through the mist of tears and emotion of the first days of a reluctant scholar in a hostile environment, I was sustained by the certain knowledge that I would be rewarded for my attendance at that awful place.

At break, I would stare wistfully through the prison bars of the playground railings looking for any sign of the arrival of my saviour. Days passed, perhaps weeks before I realised that the reward might never come. But what had caused such great expectation? Well, on the kerbside not far from the school gates, high up on an alternately banded black and white pole, was a

warning red triangle with an information panel below it, which bore the picture of an ice-cream cone above the word SCHOOL – a sublime pairing of word and image – or so I thought, as schools were for children and children loved ice-cream, therefore I assumed that was where we pupils would assemble when the ice-cream seller arrived. I'm not exactly sure when and how the ice-cream metamorphosed into a flaming torch in my mind, but this early lesson in visual duplicity and betrayal was the starting point of a lifelong interest in signs, symbols and their meaning.

Thus I had unintentionally understood the school road sign's real warning – that the essential nature of symbolism is that nothing is ever quite what it appears to be – memorably illustrated for me in later life in much of the work of that most perceptive visual manipulator, René Magritte.

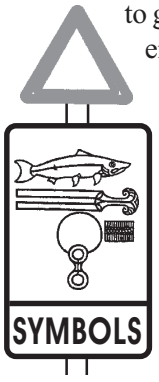
Magritte Der Sprachgebrauch*, 1928*

As to the flaming torch, this symbol of enlightenment through learning would have been more aptly employed in the headmaster's study rather than displayed at the roadside in an attempt to deter the sparse number of drivers on post-war Britain's streets from knocking down school-children. (Indeed, its inefficacy was dramatically exposed when a classmate had his foot crushed by a coal lorry just yards from my school sign. Perhaps the driver had not benefited from a Classical education?)

Stepping out from the 1950s to the present day – the modern couple have been stripped of their redundant accoutrements: the book and satchel; the cap and hat; the boy's short trousers and the kerb

Not long after this incident (and, no doubt, countless others throughout Britain), the 'torch' school sign, which had been introduced in the 1920s, was replaced by a new design. This was a pictogram silhouette of a boy and girl striding away from a kerb, one carrying a book, the other a satchel (sound familiar?) – a direct representation, unencumbered by Classical reference, alerting drivers to exactly what they should be looking out for in the sign's vicinity.

Although it was an immediately recognisable image, it bore too much information for a driver to grasp and these extraneous features, emphasising the children's role in education, have gone. The modern sign, like its figures, has lost its baggage too.



Be on the look out for another symbolic flaming torch which will be making a tour of Britain next year. *DH*

Pictish symbologists beware – you have been warned!

St Andrews Cathedral

Recently, Historic Scotland has held a series of tours of its outstanding collection of early-Christian and medieval carved stones and post-Reformation memorials. Pride of place there is the St Andrews sarcophagus, a masterpiece of 8th-century Pictish sculpture.

Visitors were guided by Niall Robertson, an HS steward at St Andrews, who explained the carvings and some of the stories associated with the site. Niall, an acknowledged expert in Pictish sculpture, commented:

> The Cathedral has one of the finest collections of stone art in Scotland, dating between the 8th and 17th centuries. These stones were in many cases the news outlets of their day, they told the story of individuals, their achievements and the societies which they belonged to.

Meigle Museum

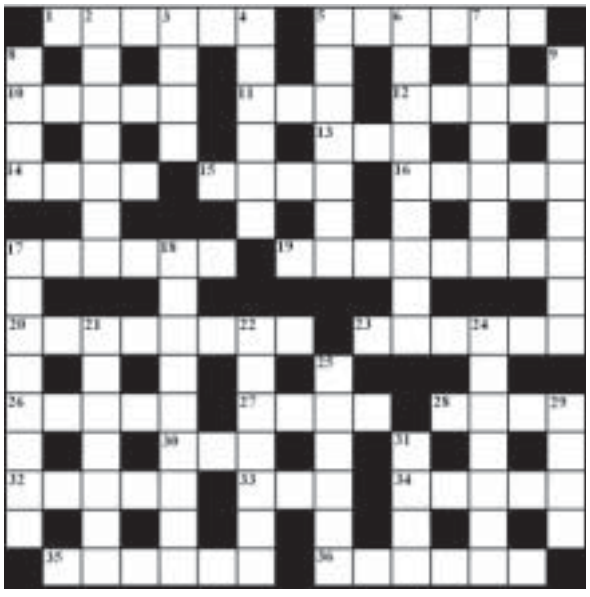
It was reported in same edition of *The Courier* that carried the Cairn Greg piece, that, when a group of 30 members of the Meigle and District History Society visited the museum, some of them admitted that they had never previously been there. Considering that the famed collection of Pictish monuments attracts visitors from all over the world, the lack of curiosity of some locals about an internationally known attraction on their doorstep is worrying. Apparently the visit was a success as many of them have returned bringing their own guests and visitors.

This in no small way must be down to the efforts and enthusiasm of Monument Manager, Lynda McGuigan, who is well qualified to inform visitors about the collection having recently graduated from Aberdeen University with a degree in Celtic Civilisation and who, in addition to her job, is also currently working on a PhD on the subject the Pictish symbol stones in Aberdeenshire.

Celtic design exhibition

Larry Scrimgeour is a designer from Blairgowrie who specialises in circular and Celtic cross designs using one single continuous line. Many of his pieces, which he exhibited at Pictavia from 21 May to 12 June, incorporate elements of wildlife.

Crossword *compiled by Ron Dutton*



ACROSS

1 Hide for the scribes (6)
5 Lead alloy (6)
10 Change in art to teach (5)
11 Law about making holes (3)
12 Do better than expected (5)
13 Tug reverses into alimentary canal (3)
14 Gamble (4)
15 Large hairy mammal (4)
16 Citizen of Arab country (5)
17 Medieval stronghold (6)
19 Diet moms become shameless (8)
20 One who went before (8)
23 Trance provides tipple for the gods (6)
26 Aid in the subcontinent (5)
27 Water vessel (4)
28 Rearmost portion (4)
30 Small (?) measure (3)
32 Sounds produced from lithic object (5)
33 Medieval measure of length (3)
34 Sacred plant of the ancient Egyptians (5)
35 Arboreal symbols of Middle Eastern country (6)
36 Porter gives account (6)

DOWN

2 Rearrange sleep as time passes (7)
3 Solitary (4)
4 Surrounded by water (6)
5 Religious tourist (7)
6 Whose tent sharpens the blades (9)
7 Bar (7)
8 Celestial body (4)
9 Covered walkway (8)
17 Cash it or becomes Pictish vehicles (8)
18 Failed to return from maritime voyage (4,2,3)
21 Can cede to a rhythm (7)
22 Pearl manufacturers (7)
24 Art riot produces backstabber (7)
25 Architectural support (6)
29 Lean over (4)
31 Show appreciation (4)

Solution to crossword in PAS Newsletter 58
ACROSS: 1 Ageism, 5 Furore, 10 Music, 11 Two, 12 Cyclo, 13 Tit, 14 Gael, 15 Ness, 16 Alarm, 17 Insect, 19 Smuggler, 20 Psalters, 23 Relish, 26 Ollie, 27 Foil, 28 Used, 30 Dot, 32 Error, 33 Ear, 34 Isles, 35 Cycles, 36 Reform. **DOWN:** 2 Gospels, 3 Inch, 4 Mitres, 5 Flotsam, 6 Rectangle, 7 Rockall, 8 Smog, 9 Zoomorph, 17 Implodes, 18 Cathedral, 21 Allergy, 22 Rafters, 24 Insular, 25 Mirror, 29 Disc, 31 Tiff.