



# THE PICTISH ARTS SOCIETY

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Newsletter

Issue 32 Winter 2003/4

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## Journal 16 at last!

Finally, after a gap of several years, we are happy to include Journal 16 in this mailing.

The committee would like to make it very clear that the delays in getting this volume out have been caused by a series of administrative and communications problems. Lloyd Laing and Nick Simpson did sterling work in preparing this issue, and are not responsible for the protracted delay in finally getting this far. We are grateful to them both for all their work.

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## Dunnichen Day Meeting

**22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2004, the Meffan, Forfar**

### Programme

Morning Session – in the Meffan, Forfar:

10.00am	tea/coffee
10.15am	AGM
10.45am	John Borland* – Stones of Angus
11.30am	Stones of Fife

Afternoon Session:

2.00pm	Field trip in the Glamis area & Cossans
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\* John Borland is responsible for drawing the stones in the care of Angus Council for the broadsheet enclosed with this newsletter. The Pictish Arts Society is happy to be involved with the Royal Commission on Ancient and historical Monuments of Scotland and Angus Council in supporting this splendid publication. We hope that in future similar ventures with other councils may be possible. We are delighted that John will join us to talk on Angus stones on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

As Norman points out in this edition's Rolling Stones, some spectacular stones have been found or recognised) in Fife in recent years. Our second talk will be a presentation of recent work on some of these stones.

The field trip will start from the car park in Glamis village. There is a number of stones in and around the church here, and we will make another attempt on the Cossans (St Orland's) stone. We hope that after many thwarted attempts to take a field trip to this particular stone, we will be successful this time!

Any alterations to the field trip plans will be announced in the morning at the Meffan.

**PICTISH ARTS SOCIETY  
NOTICE OF ANNUAL  
GENERAL MEETING ON  
22nd May 2004**

The Annual General Meeting of the Pictish Arts Society will be held at the Meffan, Forfar, on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2004 at 10.15am to consider the following business:

- 1 Apologies for absence.
- 2 Approval of the 2003 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
  - (c) Events Organiser
  - (d) Archivist
- 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.

For further information and nominations please contact Sheila Hainey (PAS Hon. Secretary) Torr of Kedlock Farmhouse, Kedlock Feus, Cupar, KY15 4PY.

Copies of the 2003 AGM minute, Annual Accounts and copies of our Constitution will be available on the 22nd of May. If you would like copies, please send a large (A4) self-addressed envelope with 2 first class stamps to the Honorary Secretary at the above address.



**Pictavia**

**Alteration to programme**

The meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> March will consist of a talk by Strat Halliday on *Beating the Bounds in a Pictish Landscape*

Regulars at the Pictavia lecture series will be aware of the changes taking place there. The building works which have been undertaken to give Pictavia its own access and facilities are now complete, and the centre has a new manager, appointed by Angus District Council. Top priority is to ensure that the building is up to all the safety requirements and that all the practicalities of running the operation are in place for re-opening. Those of you who have been coming to the winter lecture series here since December will be aware of the work that has been going on here. Re-opening is scheduled for early April, barring any major complications.

Late last year we applied for a UVAF grant to fund the setting up of a volunteer programme at Pictavia. Having obtained a grant of £500, we will go ahead with the training of our first volunteers scheduled to begin shortly. The volunteers will be on hand to encourage visitors to enjoy the experience of visiting stones, and we hope that with their help we can expand the range of PAS activities.

## Rolling Stones

After a short break (work keeps getting in the way!), here we go again with the latest news and queries about our ever rolling stones.

The Aberdeenshire stone with the carving of a bird – not a goose, but possibly a grouse, is still in the process of being considered by the Treasure Trove (TT) Legislation. At his recent lecture at Pictavia, Archaeologist Ian Shepherd illustrated the Delnadamph discovery, which caused some debate amongst members.

It is carved on a slab of pinkish granite, in the Pictish tradition, and Ian and others in the audience were convinced of its Pictish authenticity. Some doubts have been cast on its legs, but the stone has been squared, and was then built into the shooting lodge in which it was found.

Having an ornithological background myself, I can live with it being a stylized grouse rather than a longer-necked goose, and I'm sure that a certain whisky producer would be interested in the image!

I'll keep you up to date on the findings of the TT Panel and its eventual (re)location.



Continuing with the ornithological theme, I had no intentions of speaking at the September conference, but had a semi-prepared lecture on Pictish Eagles available if we lost lecturers. Needless to say we lost lecturers, so the Eagle lecture was sharpened up and delivered.

At the time, the only surviving Eagle stone I had not seen was the Walton, Fife fragment, and I am especially grateful to Bob Henery for subsequently letting me see his photograph of the carving, which he took when it was being exhibited in the Laing Museum, Newburgh.

Although discovered at Walton Hill, the carving of the eagle was moved to Crawford Priory, and I tried to locate it here without success.

Can anyone help?

Some doubts have been expressed regarding the authenticity of this carving, and it deserves a critical appraisal. From Bob Henery's photograph, I am pretty well convinced that this is a Pictish carving. Very importantly, it is the only Pictish Eagle Symbol from the South, and although only the head was saved, it would appear to have the characteristics of the White-tailed or Sea Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), rather than the Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetus*), in keeping with the northern examples.

Staying afoot in Fife, two “new” stones have made the headlines in recent months. The Kilduncan stone, previously reported, now in St Andrews Museum, has been moved and is now accessible to visitors.

The September to October 2003 issue of *History Scotland* published photographs of this stone for the first time showing the front (fig 1, p4) with its dinky quadrilobate cross, and the back (fig 4, p5) which has appeared in the local papers. The stone therefore belongs to the small family of Pictish cross-slabs I discussed when I talked to a PAS meeting about the Rossie Priory Cross Slab. It is different to the others, though, in that pointing towards each lobe is a lozenge flanked by two pellets, giving an overall St Andrews cross shape.

The back has two spiral-tailed, dog-headed beasts touching noses, not dissimilar to other pairs of sea-monsters on other stones enclosing a circle with interlace and a triquetra. At the bottom is a different dog-headed beast with a long tail in a submissive pose. The base of the stone has broken off, and there is a small part of the carved area missing.

I did ask if I could take a photograph for personal use but this was denied.

In the January/February 2004 edition of *History Scotland*, an illustration of the Carnbee Fife Cross Slab is also illustrated. Although only recently brought to the attention of the archaeological world, this stone had been known about by locals, and had been built into a farmsteading in 1816.

Although only a fragment, it has most of a ring headed interlace cross with a narrow shaft infilled by interlace, flanked with a panel of

spiral work on each side. The top of the cross head is missing, as is the lower part of the shaft. Who knows what may be carved on the other side?

It seems likely that this little cross slab came from the nearby parish church of Carnbee, which occupies the rather typical early church site of a knoll overlooking a stream. On the north wall of the church is a fragment of 12th-century carving, and a late medieval star is set into the left side of wall at the gate.

*Norman Atkinson*

[It is to be regretted that permission for taking photographs for personal use was so curtly denied. It is a great shame that this museum has joined the small band which denies such access to the public.

We well understand the copyright situation when it comes to reproducing such material in a publication, but a more enlightened approach when it comes to personal and educational use is practiced by the huge majority of Scotland's museums. How else can we encourage an interest in our cultural heritage and foster an attitude in our society which cares about our past? The undoubted improvements which the rights of access to our countryside will bring must be matched by right of access to those collections held in our museums paid for by our taxes. Ed.]

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## Burghead

Last year saw the opening of the visitor centre at Burghead. Congratulations to the volunteers of the Burghead Headland Trust, who have worked hard to realise the dream of providing a centre where visitors may learn more about the remarkable promontory fort, the famous bull sculptures, the enigmatic "well" and the early church, probable source of the other stones from Burghead.

Improvements to the site are planned for this year – the Trust appears by no means content to rest on its laurels. Another individual who has spent much effort on the site is Professor Ian Ralston, whose latest work on the site was during a three-week spell in September. These excavations uncovered part of the early cross rampart, which may date to the pre-Roman Iron Age.

## David Dorward 1931-2003

David Dorward died peacefully at home last Christmas Eve, and a service of thanksgiving for his life took place at Hope Park Church, St Andrews on 31 December.

We remember him delivering a stimulating lecture to this Society on *Place-names of the Angus Glens*, at Pictavia in March 2002. David spurned electronic gadgetry and its inevitable technical hitches, so often the downfall of many a speaker, and we were alarmed when his only prop, a heavy blackboard, suddenly fell on him. Fortunately, David cheerfully survived this disruption and continued unabashed.

David was born and brought up in Dundee. A graduate of the University of St Andrews, he practised as a solicitor for a short time before joining the administrative staff of his old university where he remained for 32 years. He became Secretary to the University, serving with distinction in this post and gaining the respect of staff and students alike. A colleague once aptly described him in this role as "an administrator among scholars, a scholar among administrators".

In 1991 David embarked on a busy and fulfilling retirement – walking, fishing, golfing, music-making, painting, gardening, and travelling. He was a gifted linguist, fluent in French and German and, under the tutelage of Norman McLeod, had learned Gaelic, which he put to good use in his chief pursuit, Scottish name studies, to which he made an outstanding contribution, with four successful and popular books: *Scottish Names; Scotland's Place-names; Dundee: Names, People and Places; The Glens of Angus: Names, Places, People*.

An easy communicator, David's infectious enthusiasm for the subject jumps out from every page, tempting and encouraging the reader to become involved. His own research, though painstaking, was not confined to libraries and map rooms and he relished the fieldwork, walking his beloved hills and glens, testing postulated etymologies in every undulation of the land, in every crook of a burn, or in every rickle of stones.

The crack at the field gate, the tea in the farm kitchen, and the pint in the pub were important

aspects of his holistic approach to onomastics, and such informal social occasions and chance meetings with diverse characters he regarded as just as likely to produce valuable information as any OS map or worthy gazetteer. It is entirely fitting, therefore, that the titles of two of his publications contain a combination of the words: names, places, people.

A fifth book, *The Sidlaw Hills*, was completed shortly before his death, and will be published later this year – a valuable addition to the rich legacy of a man whose name will hold a prominent place in the hearts of many people.

David is survived by his wife, Joy, two sons and grandchildren.

*David Henry*

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## Kettins

Recently the *Blairgowrie Advertiser* reported that Councillor Alan Grant, of Coupar Angus and Meigle, has been in touch with Historic Scotland to see if they can find a home for the Kettins stone in a local museum. The stone, which has suffered not only from weather erosion but from a spell of use as a footbridge across Kettins Burn, was moved to Kettins churchyard around 1865. There, the stone has suffered from the growth of ivy, which can inflict a great deal of damage. Historic Scotland has identified the cross-slab as being in need of conservation, and hopes to find a permanent home for it in a local museum. Both Meigle and Perth museums are being considered.

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## A Roving Pict in Fife

spotted an article on a film made by Jock Ferguson. This is a 15-minute feature about sculptor Ron Henderson, of Bridge of Earn. Ron's work includes reproductions of Pictish animals and symbols. Jock is based near the locations of the film in north-east Fife: Norman's Law, Black Craigs and the enigmatic stone circle at Brunton. The latter is quite unlike any other extant stone circle, including a paved area with two carved stones. A visit to the Brunton circle revealed that the images on these, sadly, bear no resemblance to Pictish motifs. Although they

have been subject to a couple of hundred years of weathering since they were first described, the relief carvings are still clearly recognisable from the sketches published in 1816. These enigmatic objects have puzzled archaeologists and antiquarians since they were first described.

Jock's film, *Foundations in Stone*, features a potted history of the Picts, and was shown in the Rothes Halls, Glenrothes. [We would be interested in hearing from anyone who saw the film. – Ed.]

BINN HILL... from an earlier period, new finds of cup and ring marks on Binn Hill near Burntisland have also been reported recently.

The BENVIE STONE... At a recent talk I gave in Kinross, I showed a slide of my art of the Benvie Stone, with the 'Benvie Boys', the two 'late' Picts on horseback with their drooping moustaches (see below). One of the audience, an antique collector, thought there was some Hebrew script in the margins. I did point out that this is mainly key pattern and random knotwork, but he is convinced it is some lost Hebrew script. Anyone else want to comment?

*Marianna Lines*



*The Benvie Stone*

© Marianna Lines

## Picts and Bobs

A sideways look at the Picts.



Thank you for all the e-mails about my snippets on the Picts. As the winter months become darker do not despair – I know you are out there caring for the stones. For the keen Pict-stickers (ensuring Scottish Parking signs are marked with a friendly sticker) the latest sighting has been broadcast to the nation. One Sunday evening, when one of the committee was relaxing in front of the TV – a Pict sticker was spotted – on the back of a Landrover in Glen Bogle. *Monarch of the Glen* fans – did you see it? Please be on the look out for more of these stickers.

For those of you not wishing to be out at this time of the year, prepare yourself for the draft guidance on Carved Stones in Scotland. This will be a public consultation document and should be available early in 2004. To ensure you get a copy please e-mail (preferably) <[trish.stewart@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:trish.stewart@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)> or write to Trish Stewart, Historic Scotland, Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH

The Carnyx (a Celtic trumpet) comes to your home. You can download and play the carnyx at <[www.carnyx.musicscotland.com/carnyxco/lecture.htm](http://www.carnyx.musicscotland.com/carnyxco/lecture.htm)> Or contact Carnyx & Co on 0131 447 3707 for other carnyx news.

Finally it was reported by BBC Scotland on the 12 September 2003 that:

Crack fears for Skara Brae stones. An investigation has been launched into concerns that increased visitor numbers may be damaging the Stone Age village of Skara Brae on Orkney.

Merry Picting

*Sheila Fraser*

<[Sheilafraser@btinternet.com](mailto:Sheilafraser@btinternet.com)>  
or (01506 650 953)

## Letter to the Editor

In the last issue of the newsletter, Molly Rorke described how PICT stickers adorn many parts of the Highlands. They can be seen around the Lowlands as well. My favourite is on a directions sign a mile before Dunnichen when approaching from the north-west—that's the probable line of Northumbrian advance in 685. If it had been there then, perhaps Ecgfrith would have been a bit more wary when he encountered Bruide's troops a few minutes later! Some PICT stickers are now collectors' items – those which bear the imprint of Planet Wheels at 53, St Leonards Street, Edinburgh, Pictland. This adult comic shop provided a front for the Pictish High Commission, run by Robbie the Pict himself!

*Graeme Cruikshank.*

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## Dunnichen Disclaimer

With regard to the Battle of Dunnichen featuring in two episodes of the recent STV series *The Mysterious Country* (a spiritual history of Scotland), Graeme Cruikshank would like it known that he was not responsible for the subtitles which accompanied the Gaelic commentary, particularly those saying that the Battle occurred more than fourteen centuries ago, and placing Dunnichen in Fife

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## Books to look out for

These will be reviewed at a later date.

*The Art of the Picts* by George Henderson and Isabel Henderson. Published on 2<sup>nd</sup> February by Thames and Hudson at a price of £42.

*Hogback Gravestones at Govan and Beyond* by Anna Ritchie, available from: Friends of Govan Old, Govan Old Parish Church, PO Box 7325, Glasgow G51 3BW at a price of £3.50 including p&p within the UK. (Cheques to 'Friends of Govan Old'.)

## Care of Stones

One of the more practical debates concerning the Picts is that which concerns the best way to preserve the stones. There are those who hold the view that the monuments to the Picts should be left to the natural processes of weathering and so on, but many more take the view that the stones should be treasured objects, to be enjoyed and cared for not only by this generation, but for the future. The questions then centre on what is the best way to set about preserving and displaying the stones. Historic Scotland has a clear view of that organisation's responsibilities to the three hundred and fifty or so stones under its care. Not only does HS seek to adopt the best currently available practises when it comes to conservation, but is very much aware of the need to provide for the future security and maintenance. Sally Foster, in her *Place, Space and Odyssey; Exploring the future of early medieval sculpture* (Groam House, 2001) gives an excellent account of the development of attitudes towards the care of stones under statutory protection.

HS is the organisation responsible for the largest number of stones. Many more are in the care of museums throughout the country – ranging from the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, to small, community-based museums. Many of the smaller museums struggle to survive without any support from government. The problem for these smaller museums is the need to provide security and maintenance for the future, as well as to offer us, the public, reasonable access to our heritage. Most small museums have excellent volunteer networks without whose labours they simply would not survive. We can all help by visiting them, and taking part in their fund-raising activities when we can.

A further group of stones is in the care of local churches; and here the financial problems are no less acute. Declining congregations, especially in rural areas, and a shortage of ministers are resulting in the closure of many country churches. A rise in vandalism has also meant that many isolated churches have to keep their doors locked. How can we help ensure that the stones in the care of cash-strapped churches are protected and suitably displayed and lit so that we can see and appreciate them? What

happens to stones when churches close – who owns them? Who has responsibility for them? More to the point, what can we do about helping to preserve, display and maintain this significant portion of our heritage?

Some stones still remain exposed in the open, sometimes inaccessible on private ground, or in the middle of cultivated fields. What, if anything, should be done about those? Who should be responsible, and how should we pay to see them protected and accessible?

We need to know your views on the care of stones. Write to us, or talk to members of the committee at meetings or on field trips. There are a number of things we, as a Society, can do, but we need the backing and support of the membership. We need to know what you would like to see done.

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## Contributions to PAS publications

We hope that we have finally broken the log-jam as far as the production of PAS journals is concerned. It is the intention of the committee that we should produce three journals this year and ensure that we get back on the twice yearly footing on a regular basis. Anyone wishing to contribute articles to the journal should contact Niall Robertson, the journal editor (contact details overleaf). Please adhere to the style details outlined in Journal 16; this will help reduce the production time and help us to meet our target. Please also contact Niall if you are aware of any new publications that should be reviewed.

The newsletter has been re-established on a four times per year basis. We would appreciate contributions from members – let us know of any events happening in your area, for example, or of any of your general concerns about stones. We can also publish short notes (up to 750 words), which are too small for the journal, on your ideas about stones, symbols, etc. Contributions to the newsletter should either be sent to PAS (newsletter) at the Pictavia address or c/o the Hon Secretary (both addresses overleaf).

## Dates for your Diary

### *Annual Conference*

Our conference this year will be held at the AK Bell library lecture theatre in Perth on Saturday 11th of September. The Field Trip, on Sunday the 12th will take us off into Highland Perthshire.

Perth is well provided with transport links, car parks and accommodation for those who wish to stay overnight.

Details of the programme and booking forms will appear in the next newsletter.

### *Winter programmes 2004-5*

We are currently organising lecture programmes for winter for both Pictavia and Edinburgh. At the moment, the intention is to keep the pattern as it is, Edinburgh on the first Tuesday of the month and Pictavia on the third Friday. More details in the next issue.

### *Groam House Annual Academic Lecture*

This year's Groam House academic lecture will be given by Thomas O Clancy, of the University of Glasgow, on the 28th of May. The topic is *The churches of the Picts: where were they, when were they and who were they for*. The venue is the Gordon Memorial Hall, Rosemarkie, and

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### **Kindrogan Workshop**

A Pictish flavoured workshop is being held in September this year at Kindrogan Field Centre in Perthshire. Entitled 'Natural Dyes in Nature', it is an art workshop with field trips to Pictish stones in the Perthshire/Dunkeld area, and a project inspired by the stones and their symbols, led by Marianna Lines. For more info, contact Kindrogan by e-mail at <enquiries.Kd@field\_studies\_council.org>

## Pictish Arts Society Committee

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Note: there will be some changes to the committee after the AGM. Any queries after the 22nd May should be sent to the Pictavia address:

Pictish Arts Society  
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Angus DD9 6RL