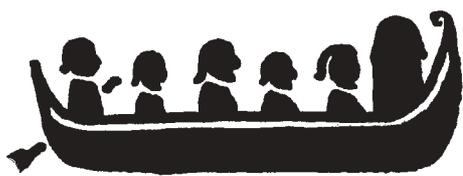


in search of a pictish revival

It's the start of another year and already the festival listings for 1994 are clattering off the presses. Looking around Scotland this year you may notice an increase in the number of festivals boasting a Celtic theme to their events. Yes, it's revival time again! The year started with an impressive line up at the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, with a festival which called itself *Celtic Connections*. An event which attracted a lot of media attention and featured musicians, artists, entertainers and speakers from as far afield as Scotland, Ireland, Wales, the Isles (which I assume to be Orkney and Shetland), Northumbria, Brittany, Galicia, the USA and Canada.



But who are these Celts and where are they from, or more importantly, where's it all going? Personally I cannot accept Canada or the USA as Celtic countries, although many of their inhabitants may continue to embrace the Celtic heritage their forebears left behind. The others are all plausible candidates for the title and although the *Celtic Connections* festival was a truly

international affair, even it failed to lure artists from all the aspiring Celtic nations. For obvious reasons these well funded events will probably remain the only festivals at which international artists will be found to any great extent. But what of the smaller festivals who cannot afford such guests? These events must draw their talent from areas closer to home, namely Scotland, Ireland and the Isles. With awareness of Gaelic culture growing across Scotland it isn't surprising to see an increase in the number of both traditional and contemporary artists who find recognition, and draw inspiration from within these areas.

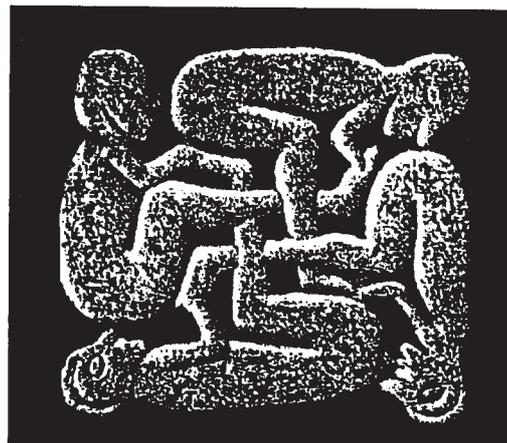
Where do the Picts fit into all this? Can there be a distinction between what is Scottish and what is Pictish - or will we be relegated to the sidelines while Gaelic culture sweeps across Scotland on a rising tide of European funding? Those of us who heard John Purser's talk in Bridge of Earn came away feeling as if Pictish music were alive, but sadly, this is not the case. We may, quite justifiably, believe the clarsach to be a Pictish invention, and that the last remnants of the Pictish dialect may be lurking in old Gaelic songs, but the culture vultures who seek all that is traditional do not. It's not really surprising when you consider the average tourist's impression of Scottish traditional music is of poorly produced pipe bands and Gaelic choirs, available on cassette in numerous "gift" shops throughout Scotland (you know the ones). So perhaps such musical distinction will be impossible, at least for now.

However, on an artistic front the distinction should be relatively simple, if it weren't for the numerous artists who see all Celtic art as of Irish stock. Some craftworkers in Ireland have begun to include Pictish symbols in their work which no doubt confuses the poor tourist even further. I believe that if we are to preserve any form of interest in Pictish culture, that is not purely academic, then it will be through the arts and crafts. Celtic art has many elusive forms and anyone who has studied the varied continental designs will realise that the intricate knotwork characteristic of the illuminated scripts is but the latest in a long history of artistic development (the occurrence of knotwork is relatively absent in the various continental Celtic styles). Surely, if the Irish and Gaelic artists can draw on the rich artistic heritage left to us, for example, in the books of Kells & Durrow, as their own indigenous form of Celtic art, then we can say the Picts are truly as Celtic. The intricate stone carved "Celtic" designs found on many Class II stones are easily comparable to the illuminated manuscripts. Yet there are no distinctly Pictish festivals on the popular front. Not yet anyway.

Next year the third *Slainte* festival of *Contemporary Celtic Culture* in Cumbernauld has hit on a first by including a decidedly Pictish slant. This will probably include workshops, talks and exhibitions based on Pictish history and arts as well as the usual impressive line up of musicians, arts and crafts. Here's hoping the Carnyx will make an appearance as part of someone's musical line up, a job I think, having heard the beast at work, destined for one of our more youthful bands.

Nick.S

'A very Celtic motif and a common theme in the illuminated manuscripts, from a Pictish stone at Meigle, Perthshire'.



candlelight at CRICHTON

Those of you in the Edinburgh area who thought there wasn't much to see around the city may be missing out on the delights of our local sites. The Crichton souterrain is situated about 2 miles from Pathhead off the main Lauder/Coldstream road (A68). The site lies in the middle of an arable field just to the left of the pylon line, and although unmarked is relatively easy to find. Its location is marked on the Edinburgh OS map, sheet 66 (NT 400 619). This monument abounds in features cobbled together from Scotlands past. Its structure has been reworked during its lifetime and incorporates several stone blocks of Roman origin, which exhibit characteristic diamond broaching, (a form of cross-hatching to take mortar).

Standing before the low entrance on a cold wet day with the light fading fast I must admit thinking I was mad, especially as no-one had brought a torch. Some primitive visitor had kindly left a candle by the door, which resembles yer average hole in the ground. So sputtering candle in hand we crawled through the narrow entrance way. A low passageway slopes gently downward before widening into a sizable gallery about 15m long and 2m wide. The length of the gallery is adorned with small candles, strategically placed in natural crevices in the walls, which provide an eerie light once you've found and lit them all, but beware of puddles. The entrance lintels are original but the arched roof is more modern in its construction, although some of the original lintels still remain. The site is described in **Stuart Piggot's** book *Scotland Before History*, which mentions a carving supposedly in the form of a Pegasus, but I must admit that we didn't know about it at the time and will have to return at a later date to find it.

So if you're bored over the next few weeks why not dig out a couple of Lothian maps and see what you can find, you might be surprised.

Nick.S

Scottish Book Collector

February-March 1994

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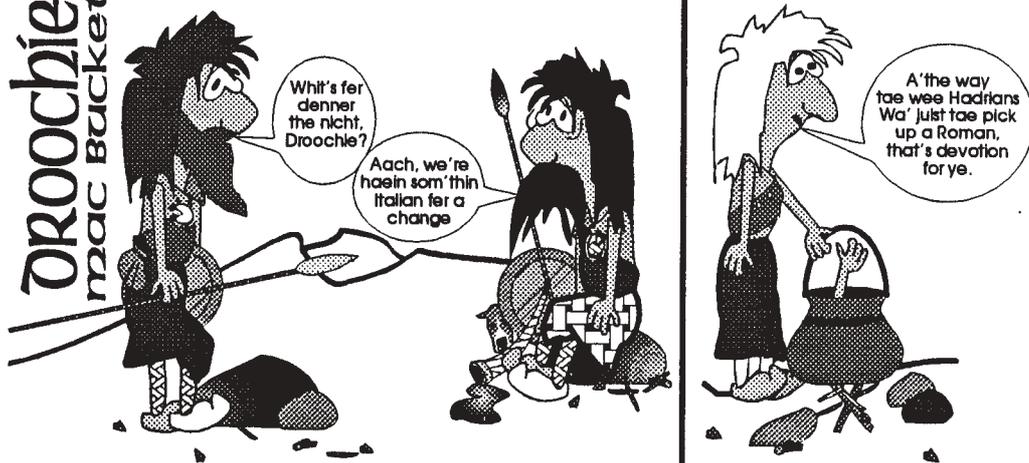
picts go digital

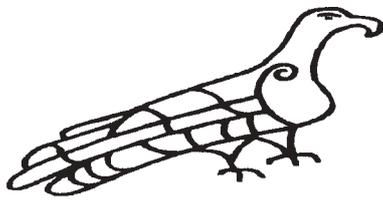
In order to speed up our mailing, the PAS has placed all membership details on computer file. This list will be held by the Subscription Secretary, and will facilitate the production of mailing lists and address labels. To comply with data protection legislation under the Data Protection Act, we must ask if you object to your name and address being held in this way. If you do, please contact in writing - **Edith Bowman, Subscription Secretary, 22 Howdenhall Court, Edinburgh, EH16 6UT.**



exploring
the pictish
mysteries

DROOCHIE
mac BUCKET





the fine art world of pictish art

It's hard not to notice the greater use of Pictish and early Celtic themes in the art world today. Most are aware of the resurgence of Celticism in all art forms in the crafts industry, but recently a finer tuning has taken place with the Picts and their legacy.

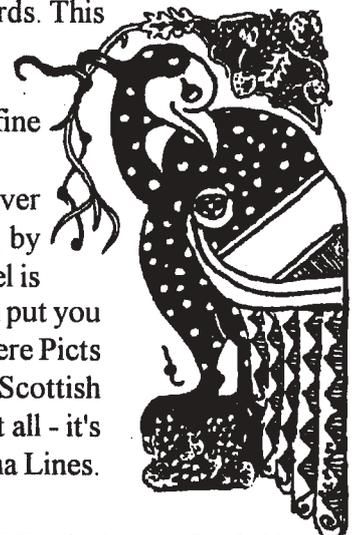
The annual December exhibition of SAAC, Scottish Artists and Artist Craftsmen, held at the Royal Scottish Academy on Edinburgh's Mound, included some exciting new work. **Hazel Sutherland** of Edinburgh has two prints of Dark Age inspiration - "*Pictish Figure*", an interesting use of double etched plates cut out and printed on paper, the figure being the more Irish 'Celtic' figure from Colonsay (circa 9th C ?); a second paper work, entitled "*Journey's End, Jarlshof*" is most evocative of Viking times. **Susan M. McEwan**, also Edinburgh based, has created an exquisite range of Pictish symbol 'textile jewellery', which involves silk paints on paper, fabric, embroidery, and metallic threads wrapped around tiny rods or 'stick pins'. Originally from Shetland, she regards these designs as part of her heritage, and enjoys the naiveté and simple lines of the Pictish art. As an embroidery artist, she has created this new line of art jewellery for the SAAC show this past year, which is the culmination of years of sketches made on numerous visits to the stones. Her next exhibition will be at the Peter Potter Gallery in Haddington opening on March 6th 1994.

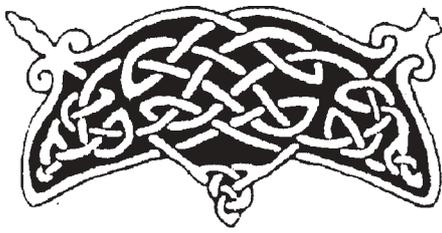
Another fine piece from this show was a large embroidery collage by **Emma Colvin**, also Edinburgh, entitled "*Beyond us lies no Nation, nothing but Waves and Rocks*". This symbolic depiction of a Saint's Voyage includes Pictish symbols floating through a painted silk and sequined sea, as well as Gospel birds and other creatures throughout, which may well have been inspired by the Illuminated Manuscripts. One of the more stunning exhibits was a sculptural chair in the form of wrought iron spiral waves by **Jois Hamilton Hunter** of Ratho, entitled "*Big Wave Chair*". It was fit for a Pictish King or Princess any day, or any neolithic tomb artist reincarnate.

Outwith Edinburgh, the William Hardy Gallery in Glasgow has recently held an exhibition of a rarely seen Scottish painter, **John Gardiner Crawford**. Celebrated in Canada, where his work is regularly shown and sold by the Beckett Gallery in Hamilton, Ontario, although living in Arbroath, this master of realism has several Pictish stones as the focus of his Glasgow exhibition. Out of the three great paintings in Pictish mode, "*The Old Kingdom*", featuring the Dunnichen Stone in snow before a pine wood, may be the most magnificent, but it was only possible to appreciate this work from the catalogue, as it is now owned by the MP Alan Clark in London. A second great Pictish stone, the Aberlemno 'serpent' stone (roadside), is the featured subject of an acrylic work entitled "*Eclipse*", with a full moon looming just behind the right side of the stone. An interesting point about Crawford's work in these two pictures is the background settings. The Dunnichen stone is shown with the atmospheric wood behind, rather than the actual parish church and battle monument, while the Aberlemno roadside re-creation has dispensed with the stone wall surround and moved it right into the field, both of which seem to 'free up' the stone. The attention to detail is phenomenal, and it's no wonder that Crawford is known as the master of High Realism in the same league with **Andrew Wyeth** (Pennsylvania, USA) and **William Dyce** (Aberdeen). The third stone in the Glasgow exhibition was entitled "*Horse Soldiers*", acrylic on masonite, which presents a detail from the Aberlemno Battle stone, in the churchyard, of the two opposing horsemen, but leaving the fallen warrior and hoodie crow out of the picture completely - an interesting edit on reality. The striking contrast of sandstone-sculpted combat against the stark white snow enveloping the stone brings the picture to life in a surreal way. All carry price tags from £6000 upwards. This is not a man to be spoken of lightly. His artistic CV takes up six full pages in the catalogue and forms an impressive read. His work is powerful and monumental on a large scale, and we modern-day Pictish lovers will surely take great inspiration from John Crawford's fine renderings of our beloved sculptured stones.

A final note, of quite a diminutive opposite, is a wine bottle label I came across over the festive season for Oak Leaf Wine. **Carn o' Mhor** is a creative little winery in Errol, by Perth (where the Pictish long boat canoe came from, now in Dundee museum). The label is a superb original rendering of a pair of Pictish-style birds. Don't let the Polka-dot pattern put you off, and the wine's not that bad either. To wind up this taste of the commercial world, where Picts still try to help their descendents make a crust of bread, has anyone run across 'Clokies' Scottish Sea Vegetables'? Basically, it's dried seaweed from Easter Ross, but the label is worth it all - it's the Meigle 'Merman', now endowed with seaweed tresses for hair!

Marianna Lines.





groam house news

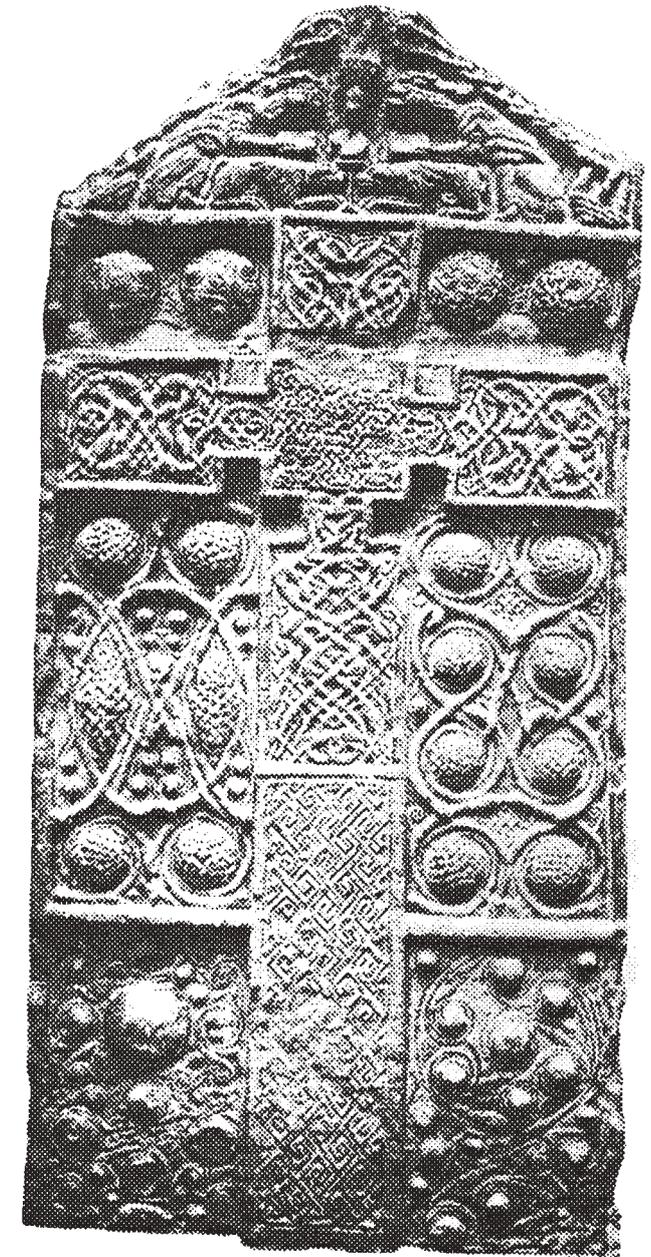
It is with pleasure that I write my first news report from Groam House museum as its new curator. Since taking over from Elizabeth Marshall in October I have been very busy what with arranging Groam House's local winter talks, preparing the museum's forward plan and seeking Grant-aid from the Scottish Museums Council for conservation work within the museum.

I have just finished laying out and typesetting the text of last year's Academic Lecture *Perceptions of the Picts: from Eumenius to John Buchan* as given by **Anna Ritchie**. Anna managed to get **Dr. Jack Burt** to draw the cover illustration and we are both very grateful to him for his contributions. (But you'll have to buy a copy to fully appreciate it, on sale from Groam House Museum. The price is expected to be £3.95 or £4.50 including postage and packing.) The next step is to let Anna see the final layout before it goes to press. The publication will be launched at our 1994 Academic Lecture.

I am happy to be able to confirm that our 1994 Lecture will be held in the **Gordon Memorial Hall, Rosemarkie on Friday 13th May at 7.30pm**. This years speaker will be **Dr. Barbara Crawford** of St. Andrew's University. The talk will be entitled *Earl and Mormaer: Norse-Pictish Relationships in Northern Scotland*. Our little museum is very proud to have such an established event as the Academic Lecture and it's subsequent publication - all credit and thanks go to those who initially set it up. The welcome participation of such eminent scholars has resulted in the Picts finally receiving the attention and study that they deserve. This is reflected by Groam House's published texts being in demand world wide.

Should any members of the PAS intend coming to this lecture, and require accommodation, if you telephone Groam House Museum we can help with booking either B&B (min. £12), or Hotel accommodation (c.£20) in the nearby village of Fortrose. For those travelling by train, the last bus to Rosemarkie leaves Inverness at 5.45pm - arriving at 6.15pm.

It is with much sadness that I report the recent death of **Mr. Douglas Budge**. For many years Mr. Budge was the backbone of the Nigg Stone Trust, the group who brought about the restoration and repair of the Old Parish Kirk, where the magnificent Nigg Cross Slab is now safely housed. Mr. Budge would tirelessly admit visitors into the church to view the stone, all at the same time as running his busy farm. He was a great source of inspiration to all those who met him, as well as being a fund of information for visitors and locals alike. His charm and presence will be sorely missed.



The Nigg Stone (front), this cross slab now stands in the Old Parish Church at Nigg, on the Cromarty Firth. Whilst being moved, at the end of the last century, it was accidentally broken. When finally re-assembled one of the fragments was found to be missing. The stone has now been properly set, to show the missing fragment. Illustration from the ECMS.

Susan Seright, Groam House Museum, Rosemarkie.

what's on

insular art

For those of you who are interested in early artistic styles the **Third International Conference on Insular Art** is to be held at the Ulster Museum, Belfast, from Thursday 7th - Monday 11th April. The conference will feature a range of talks on British insular art c.500-1500 AD, an exhibition and shop. The event will also include a field-trip titled *"The Crosses of Armagh and Tyrone"*.

The conference fee is £38 (£24 concession) and accommodation is available from the university at £15 per person per night. Details are available from the conference co-ordinator **J. Hagan**, Dept. of Antiquities, Ulster Museum, Botanic Gardens, Belfast, BT9 5AB or Tel 0232-381251 ext. 260

other societies

Lanark & District Archaeology Society

All meetings start 7.30pm at the YMCA Lanark.

March 14th - Anne Crone, AOC Scotland Ltd.

"Buiston crannog and the crannogs of SW Scotland"

Glasgow Archaeological Society

March 17th - Dr. Richard Jones, Glasgow University

*"Trade in the second millennium BC,
new light on old questions"*

The society meets at 7.30pm in Lecture Theatre II of the Boyd Orr Building, University of Glasgow.

Edinburgh Archaeological Field Society

The Society meets at the Cine & Video Society 23b Fettes Row, Edinburgh at 7.30pm.

March 9th - Patrick Ashmore, Historic Scotland

"The neolithic and bronze age in Scotland"

Society of Antiquaries of Scotland

Lectures held at 6pm in the Lecture Theatre of the Royal Museum of Scotland in Chambers Street, Edinburgh.

March 14th - Dr. Thomas O Clancy

"Adomnán, Iona, and the cult of the saints"

One of this years **Buchan Lectures** sponsored by the SAS will be *"Vikings - Raiders, Traders or Settlers?"* On Benbecula, **March 17th**, by **Prof. Chris Morris**. Details from - D. Omand, Centre for Continuing Education, Braal, Halkirk, Caithness, KW12 6XR.

Scottish Trust for Underwater Archaeology

April 21st - Mark Hoilly, Edinburgh University

"The Crannogs of Mull, Coll & Tiree"

Meetings on Thursday at 5.30pm in the Archaeology Dept, 19 George Square, Edinburgh. Non-members £1.

festivals & fairs

sláinte

The second Celtic Arts Festival to be held by the Cumbernauld Theatre will take place between Friday March 4th - 26th. This year's offerings will include music by, among others, The Humpff Family, Gaberlunzie, The Whistlebinkies, Dougie McLean, Iron Horse and Mac-Talla. This year sees the introduction of a strong Irish element into the festival, with the last week featuring a range of story, music and verse designed to cater for everyone's taste. There will also be a Celtic Craft Fair on Saturday 5th, March. This will feature exhibits from, among others; Marianna Lines (Stoneline Designs), James Gillon-Fergusson, the Scottish Pewter Mill, Russ McGill and Nick Simpson. For more details of the events on offer contact - **Cumbernauld Theatre, Freepost, Glasgow, G67 1BR Tel 0236- 732887**



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Edwina Proudfoot.

Copies of this invaluable work are still available to PAS members at the reduced cost of £42 (£46 including delivery).

To order your copy please contact -
The Pinkfoot Press, Balgavies, Forfar, Angus
DD8 2HT Tel & Fax (0307) 818669

pictish arts society programme

Thursday, 3rd March 1994

Professor Gillies, University of Edinburgh
"The Language of the Picts"

Thursday, 5th May 1994

Ian Ralston, University of Edinburgh
"Settlement Archaeology"

All meetings held at the School of Scottish Studies,
27 George Square, Edinburgh at 7.30pm

paisley museum

The joint meeting of the PAS with the **Renfrewshire Local History Forum** will be on **Saturday, 16th April**, at the Lecture Room of Paisley Museum. Starting at 11am the day will consist of talks in the morning, free time for lunch and then those wishing to attend the field trip should meet at Paisley Abbey. A coach has been provided and we intend visiting various sites before ending at Govan Church, from there the bus will return to Paisley. For those of you who wish to use public transport, there's an Underground Station close to Govan Church, which provides transport to the city centre, where there is easy access to both bus and train stations. Please return the separate leaflet enclosed if you intend coming along as the organisers need to know how many of us to expect. For further details contact **Eileen Brownlie**, Tel 031-332-0277.

inchcolm field trip

This Society's Spring Field Trip will be on **Saturday, April 30th**, when we'll be visiting one of Scotlands' less accessible ecclesiastic sites, Inchcolm Island. Situated in the Forth estuary this site is one of our best preserved medieval abbeys. Access to the Island is by ferry, or more accurately, on the *'Maid of the Forth'*. The journey takes about a half hour each way, which gives us about an hour and a half on the island. Those attending should meet on the pier at South Queensferry, (under the Forth Rail Bridge), not later than 1.45pm. There are plenty of parking facilities in the area and a nearby rail link, at Dalmeny, which is a short walk away. Prices for the day are as follows - **Adults - £6.25, Children - £3.25**

OAP's / Students - £5.00

Anyone wishing to attend should send their names and fees, before 15th April, to - **Niall M Robertson**,
22 Letham Road, Perth, PH1 2AP.
Tel. 0738-21172

summer meeting

The PAS summer meeting will take place on **Saturday, 21st May**, at the Meffan Institute, Forfar.

10am for 10.30am start - Tea & Coffee available.

10.30 - 11.30 Norman Atkinson *"The Picts in Angus"*

11.45 - 12.45 Niall M Robertson

"Reading the Stones - A graphic approach to the meaning of the Pictish Symbols".

Numbers for the event will be limited to 60 people, so please book early if you'd like to attend, contact **Eileen Brownlie** at **24 Dean Park Mews, Edinburgh, EH4 1ED** - Tel **031-332-0277**.

We hope, at lunchtime, to receive civic hospitality from **Angus District Council**. Although there are no formal plans for the afternoon **Norman Atkinson** has kindly offered to lead several cars around some of the local sites, - again contact **Eileen** if you require more details.

war & peace pas conference

Details of the next PAS conference are slowly gelling into what should prove to be an interesting weekend. This year sees the Society's conference moving into Highland territory for the first time. The event will be held in the **National Hotel, Dingwall on June 4th & 5th**.

Saturday, 4th June -

10am - 10.45am Registration, Tea and Coffee will be provided.

10.45 - 11.00 Introduction by PAS Chairman.

11.00 - 12.00 Dr. Sally Foster, Inspector of Ancient Monuments.

*"The Evolution of the Pictish State:
was the pen mightier than the sword?"*

12.00 - 1.00pm Ian Fisher, RCAHMS.

*"The Dove of the Church?
- some relics of Columba"*

1.00 - 2.30 Lunch Break

2.30 - 3.30 Elizabeth Marshall, Author & Folklorist.
"The Kings of Pictland"

3.30 - 4.15 Coffee break.

4.15 - 5.15 Dr. Graham Ritchie, RCAHMS.
"The Picts at War"

5.15 - 6.00 Open Forum and Closing remarks.

Pictish & Celtic Crafts Exhibition

In giving artists their own venue, we hope to be able to expand the range of crafts on display as well as providing an informative exhibition on the Picts and their art. The exhibition will be open to the public and there should be plenty of time for conference folk to visit the display during the lunch break.

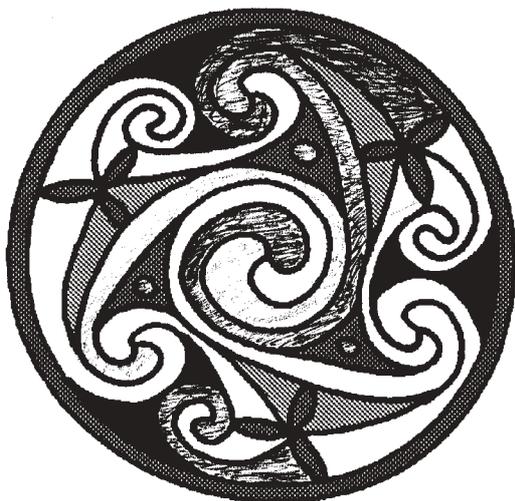
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Sunday, 5th June

"In and Around Ross-shire" PAS field trip.

The route for this year's Conference Field Trip is still to be finalised but will probably include visits to Groam House Museum, Rosemarkie; the Edderton Class I stone pillar and Bronze Age settlement (where we hope Doug Scott will be onsite to guide us over the various stone alignments) and the Pictish stone at Nigg. Light refreshments will be available at Groam where we also plan a short informal talk. Further details of the trip will be announced shortly.



● **How to get there:** Dingwall, the centre of Ross & Cromarty, is 20 minutes drive from Inverness and is readily accessible by rail and bus services.

● **Accommodation:** There are hotels and B & B places around the town, there is also a well serviced campsite within a few minutes walk of the venue. There is a Youth Hostel in Strathpeffer, approximately 5 miles away. Further accommodation enquiries to **Ross & Cromarty Tourist Centre, North Kessock, Ross & Cromarty, IV1 1XB. Tel 0463-73505**

● **Tickets:** All tickets are available in advance from the secretary: Eileen Brownlie, 24 Dean Park Mews, Edinburgh, EH4 1ED. Tel 031-332-0277

Saturday: (half day) £5 / £4 concession.
(full day) £10 / £8 concession.

All conference prices include light refreshments.

Sunday: (field trip) Price to be confirmed

Please make all cheques and Postal Orders payable to the Pictish Arts Society, thank you.

● **Further Information:** For further information and pre-conference enquiries contact - Nick Simpson, Events Organiser, 5 St Peter's Place, Viewforth, Edinburgh, EH3 9PJ. Tel 031-228-3812



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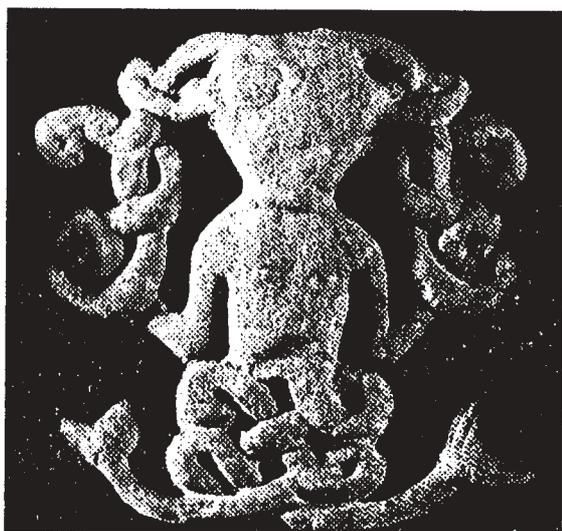
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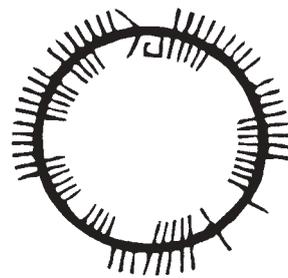
who, where & when, the pas

How It All Began.....

Recently several members have asked me how the PAS came about. Well, far back in the mists of time in 1985 there was a Conference on the Picts in Dundee. During a field trip to Ardestie souterrain at that conference I made the acquaintance of an American lady, who turned out to be the artist Marianna Lines. She introduced me to a couple of other people she had met including George Fraser, a lawyer, Bob Bryden, an ethnologist and David Clement, a linguist at the School of Scottish Studies. We soon discovered we all had a strong interest in the heritage of the Pechs, all lived in Edinburgh (apart from Marianna who soon moved down from the north) and over the next few years we continued to meet socially. During this period we regularly met and often discussed the varied interests we had in our tribal ancestors. I can't be sure exactly when it was decided that we should formalise our occasional get together and form a society (although I think it was in Marianna's house over a glass of some reddish liquid) but by 1988 we knew we had to do something. So that year, with the assistance of historian and archaeologist Graeme (Nechtan's no mere man) Cruickshank we decided to bite the bullet. If memory serves me well the first meeting of the PAS took place in the Theosophical Society's building in Great King Street in May. There were about forty people there and lo the PAS was born with the above mentioned people and myself on the original committee. The first couple of years the membership went up and down but we were all sure from the very start that there was enough interest particularly in the artistic side of the Picts to sustain such an organisation. With the PAS now having 300 or so members it looks like we were right. Stuart McHardy



The Meigle 'Merman', detail from Meigle no.22 : This is often thought to be a Pictish representation of the Celtic god, Cernunnos, cross-legged, but with entwining fish tails for legs.



pictish arts society T-shirts £9 incl. p&p (UK only)

Featuring, on the front - The Linathen Stone 'beastie' (this stone has been 'lost' and was chosen to emphasise our commitment to preserving our unique Pictish heritage). The reverse shows the PAS Ogham, the circular design being unique to Pictland.

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Contact - Eileen Brownlie, 24 Dean Park Mews,
Edinburgh, EH4 1ED. Tel. 031-332-0277

editorial note

There must be more going on out there in Pictland than you're letting on. Poor Droochie's hardly had any mail at all (no wonder he's looking miserable). So if you know of other events which may be of interest, or if you've got something you'd like to tell other members about, let me know. Members who wish to send in contributions for the next Journal, due out sometime around the conference in June, should note that our editor Niall M. Robertson has moved to - 22 Letham Road, Perth, PH1 2AP. Any contributions for the Newsletter, or information on other events should be sent to - Nick Simpson,
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