



### AGM—highlights and lowlights

The Dunnichen Day Meeting and AGM were held on 21 May at the Meffan Institute in Forfar. The chairman reported a mixed year: the Pictavia meetings continue to enjoy success, drawing audiences from as far afield as Aberdeen and Glasgow, while the audience at the Edinburgh series has been disappointing. While the Newsletter is now appearing on a regular basis, the Journal has not yet been put back on track as a biannual publication, and we still have to address the updating of the website. Both will be tackled in the coming year.

Sheila Fraser has been instrumental in obtaining a grant to set up and deliver the training for a volunteer scheme at Pictavia. This has proved highly successful, and will be continued and developed in partnership with Angus Council.

Regrettably, no volunteers to run the Edinburgh lecture series had come forward by the AGM.

Reluctantly, therefore, it was decided that there will be no Edinburgh programme this year. Graeme Cruikshank and Sheila Fraser agreed to take soundings of the membership and see what alternatives might prove more attractive to members in the Edinburgh/central belt area. The aim is to produce a business plan that will allow the delivery of either a regular series or occasional lectures on a cost-effective basis in the central belt. Anyone interested in con-

tributing ideas (and a few hours of time to help run an Edinburgh alternative) should get in touch.

One problem that has been encountered over the years is the difficulty in getting people to take up committee positions. Travelling times, work and family commitments and so on can make it difficult for individuals to turn up regularly to meetings. From this year, we will begin to develop a network of volunteers who can make some contribution to the running of the Society, outwith the committee.

Several committee members stood down this year: Sheila Fraser, Ian Fisher, Craig Lafferty, Iain Fraser and Ron Dutton. Sheila Hainey gave up the role of secretary. The Chairman thanked them all on behalf of the Society. David Henry was elected to the vacant Vice-Chair, Stewart Mowatt to the position of Secretary and Ruth Black to the committee.

John Borland regaled us with an account of his work at St Vigean. We have come to expect lavishly illustrated talks and infectious enthusiasm for stones from John. This talk was well up to his usual high standard, and an excellent preparation for the afternoon's trip. The sun shone on a band of Picts who descended on the museum and church at St Vigean, for a lively viewing and discussion of the stones. *SH*

### Pictavia Winter Programme

<b>21 October</b>	Norman Atkinson	<i>Glenesk and Drostan</i>
<b>11 November</b>	Professor Greg Woolf	<i>Art at the Frontier of Roman Britain</i>
<b>2 December</b>	<i>A Pictish Soiree</i>	
<b>16 December</b>	Marianna Lines	<i>The Intertwining of cultures: Pictland and Easter Island / North Sea / South Sea</i>
<b>20 January</b>	Ruth Black	<i>Embroidering the Past: A textile tour of the Pictish stones of Ross and Cromarty</i>
<b>17 February</b>	James Fraser	Title tbc
<b>17 March</b>	Sally Foster	<i>The Biography of the Hilton of Cadboll Pictish Cross-Slab: What we know and how we know it</i>

All talks begin at 7.30pm, but come early – tea/coffee and biscuits available before and after.

### Conference 2005

Details of the PAS Conference to be held at The Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum on 29 October are enclosed with this Newsletter.

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## Graham Ritchie

1942 – 2005

The last issue of PAS News was about to go to press when we learned of Graham Ritchie's sudden death on 27 April.

Graham was born in Edinburgh and went to school there until he moved to Angus when his father was appointed principal teacher of classics at Arbroath High School. Graham returned to Edinburgh to attend university, initially reading English but transferring to prehistoric archaeology under the inspirational guidance of Charles Thomas and Stuart Piggott. After graduating in 1964 he researched Celtic weapons for his doctorate which he gained in 1968, by which time he was already working as an investigator with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland. In the same year Graham married Anna Bachelier – a union which also became a well respected, formidable archaeological partnership that influenced and informed a whole generation about Scottish archaeology.

Graham remained with the Commission for most of his working life, latterly as head of archaeology, until 1998 when he retired early from the post. Many of his years there were spent conducting field surveys and excavations in Argyll towards publication of the seven-volume 'Inventory of the Monuments' of the county. His expertise in this area was called to service when he edited, and contributed to an important collection of papers, *The Archaeology of Argyll* (EUP, 1996).

During 'holidays', he conducted excavations at the stones of Stenness, Orkney, and at Balbirnie stone circle, Fife. He was also the author of a small monograph, *Brochs of Scotland* (Shire, 1987).

Used to working in a team, many of Graham's publications were the result of fruitful collaboration with others, for instance *Celtic Warriors* (Shire, 1985) with his father, William F Ritchie; *The Chambered Cairns of Sutherland* (EUP, 1995) and *The Chambered Cairns of the Central Highlands* (EUP, 2001) with Audrey Henshall; *Fife and Tayside* (HMSO, 1987) with Bruce Walker; *Argyll and the Western Isles* (HMSO, 1985) with Mary Harman; and the following: *Edinburgh and South-east Scotland* (Heinemann, 1972); *The Ancient Monuments of Orkney* (HMSO, 1978); *Scotland: Archaeology*

*and Early History* (Thames and Hudson, 1981); *Scotland: an Oxford archaeological guide* (OUP, 1988) with his wife, Anna.

Of particular interest to this Society is his work, initially in collaboration with Isabel Henderson, which resulted in the ground-breaking publication, *Pictish Symbol Stones: a handlist* (RCAHMS, 1985; new ed. 1994), which has evolved from the modest format of its first edition into a prestigious well illustrated gazetteer (1999) with an eagerly-awaited new edition in preparation. A noteworthy feature of the handlists is the inclusion of selected historic illustrations, which Graham was enthusiastic about, indeed the subject of the early recording of the stones became a specialism of his and one which he, almost single-handedly, promoted. As depute curator of the National Monument Record of Scotland, housed at the Commission, he was well placed to exploit its resources to create some memorable exhibition displays for RCAHMS, and illustrate his several lectures and publications on the subject, such as the invaluable, *Recording Early Christian Monuments in Scotland* (Groam House Museum, 1998).

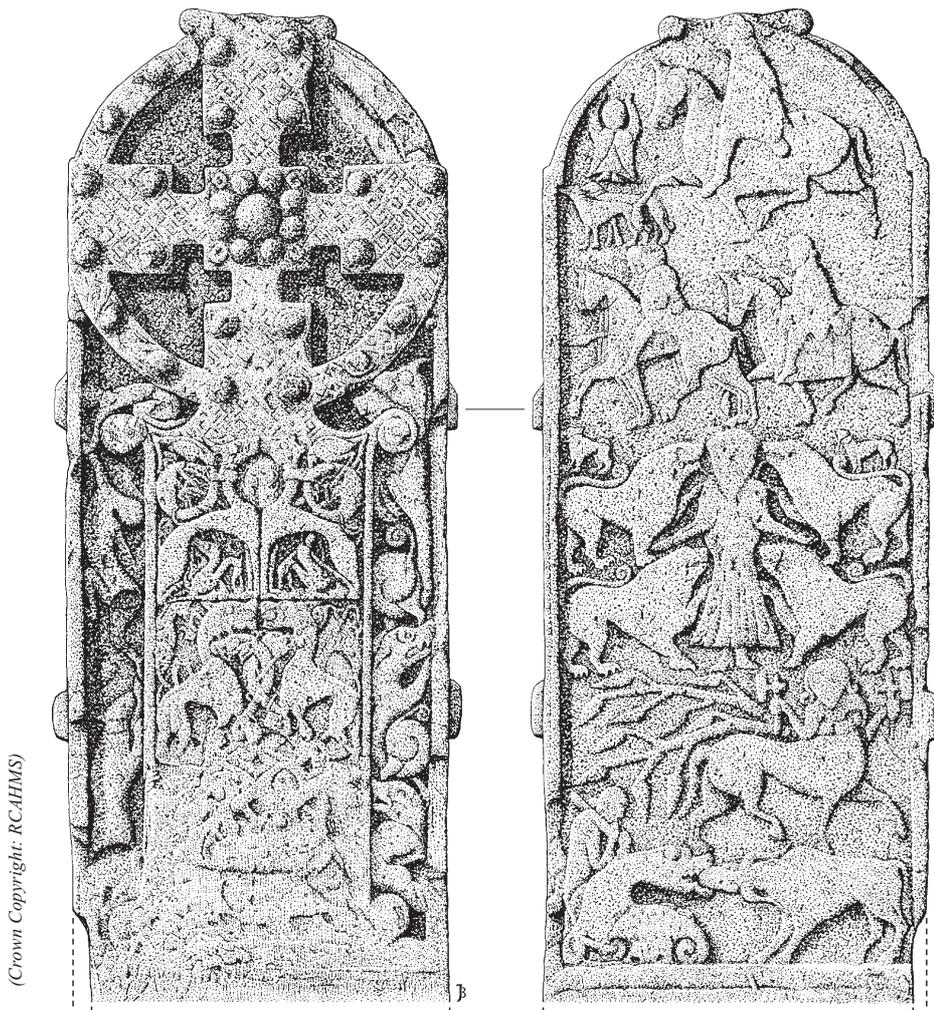
Over the years Graham contributed many papers to the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, and served as president of that society from 1999 to 2002. He lectured to societies and groups the length and breadth of the country and more recently also on cruise-ships on the North Atlantic. Graham's lectures were always immaculately prepared and delivered and invariably were spiced with a lively wit revealing his great sense of humour which he seldom let stray into his published work.

Our Society benefited greatly from his active participation. He was supportive, encouraging and generous, always willing to share his knowledge and often going out of his way to help others, for instance by reading and commenting on draft papers, tracing sources or providing illustrations.

While we were greatly shocked by the news of his untimely death, we are grateful for Graham's life and work and we will cherish the abundant legacy of his scholarship in his many and varied writings.

Our thoughts are with his surviving family, Anna, Matthew and Elspeth.

DH



*Meigle 2 by John Borland (drawing reduced – original scale 1:15)*

### **Graham Ritchie – a personal recollection**

I had the pleasure of working with Graham Ritchie in various arenas during the 1980s and early 90s – surveying prehistoric hillforts, duns and hut-circles in Argyll, a well-preserved Neolithic chambered cairn on Eday in Orkney, and recording the Pictish sculpture in Meigle Museum. Graham’s extensive knowledge and, more importantly his willingness to share it added so much to my early years of archaeological survey.

I recall that our work at Meigle was carried out during the winter months, when the Museum was closed to the public. We were given a set of keys and allowed to come and go as we pleased. It was not until the end of that first Monday, as we emerged out into the November blackness, that the enormity of our responsibility struck Graham. We were responsible for locking

up. What if something untoward happened during the night? What if we were to arrive back the following day to find the door open and something stolen or damaged? Graham was all for finding a local policeman to verify that the door to the Museum was locked and that all was intact. However, after much debate, we all agreed that the nearest ‘local’ policeman was probably in Cupar Angus so we decided that we would all shoogle the door handle and verify that it was indeed locked. That way, we could all back each other up, should the worst happen. Of course, the worst didn’t happen and the process of locking up became less traumatic as the days and weeks passed, although we all still had a shoogle on the locked door, just to make sure!

*John Borland*

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## ‘Embroidering the Past’

is an exhibition of embroideries and felts made by Ruth Black, inspired by the Pictish Stones of Ross & Cromarty.

Many of the stones and all of the locations within the county are represented. Some are representations of the whole stone, others just a detail from part of the design.

There are 25 pieces, all for sale, varying in price from £75 to £600. There are a range of textile techniques – hand stitching, machine appliqué, hand-made felt, batik, silk painting, quilting. Some pieces are framed, others are made as hangings. Some are flat, others are 3-D.

Also on display will be the result of the community art project which Ruth led earlier in the year – ‘Soft Rock’ – a very large felt based on the ‘new’ face of the replica Hilton of Cadboll stone.

3 August – 2 September

INVERNESS – Highland Council Headquarters

*All pieces will be on display in the council chamber foyer (open during normal office hours – access through main reception).*

5 – 30 September

ULLAPOOL – Ullapool Museum,

LOHCARRON – Howard Doris Centre

STRATHPEFFER – Community Centre

PORTMAHOMACK – Tarbat Discovery Centre

CROMARTY – Courthouse

*Each venue displaying a selection from the main exhibition (normal opening times).*



Shandwick panel (55 x 55cm), hand painted silk with machine quilting



Tarbat calf (48 x 22cm), Harris Tweed embroidered with metal threads

3 – 30 October

DINGWALL – Leisure Centre

*All pieces will be displayed together.*

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## Carved Stones Policy

*Carved Stones: Scottish Executive Policy and Guidance* Edinburgh: Historic Scotland, 2005, A4, 42pp, PB, ISBN 1 904966 13 6, Free

Historic Scotland’s strategy document was launched on 11 May by Patricia Ferguson MSP, Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport. It sets out the policies and guidance for the care and protection of carved stones, drawing on 120 years of their and their predecessor bodies’ experience in dealing with carved stones, it was also the subject of a three month consultation period early in 2004.

Carved stone is used as a general term for what in Scotland can be broadly categorised under the headings of:

- Prehistoric rock art
- Roman, early medieval, late medieval and post-Reformation sculpture
- Architectural sculpture and fragments
- Gravestones.

The document concentrates on carved stones that are still physically associated in some way with their place of manufacture or one of their stages of use, rather than carved stones that are now found as artefacts in museums.

To help with the implementation of this policy and guidance contained in this document, Historic Scotland has also produced an agenda, strategy and action plan for the conservation of general and specific categories of carved stone.

This report, as well as the associated action plan, can be downloaded from <[www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/carvedstones](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/carvedstones)>, or the printed version can be requested from Historic Scotland’s TCRE Publications Department.

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## Roman Frontiers

*The Antonine Wall: The North-West Frontier of the Roman Empire: Proposed as a World Heritage Site* David J Breeze, Edinburgh: Historic Scotland and RCAHMS, 2005, 32pp, PB, ISBN 1 902419 44 8

*Frontiers of the Roman Empire* David J Breeze, Sonja Jilek and Andreas Thiel, Edinburgh/Esslingen/Wien: Historic Scotland and Deutsche Limeskommission, 2005, 72pp, PB, ISBN 1 904966 16 0

Two booklets about Roman Frontiers have recently been published. The first deals with the Antonine Wall – the most important surviving Roman monument in Scotland – as part of the process of its nomination as a World Heritage Site. David Breeze, Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Historic Scotland, is responsible for its nomination and here explains the Wall, its importance and its protection.

Several other European countries are also hoping that their sections of the Roman Frontier will gain World Heritage Site status, but the second booklet proposes that ‘it is possible to envisage the creation of a World Heritage Site encompassing all countries which contain parts of the Roman frontier, a single large and unique monument of international importance running through Europe, the Middle East and North Africa’.

David Breeze is one of the authors and the text is printed in English, German, French and Arabic. Both booklets, which are well illustrated, are available from: Historic Scotland, Dr David Breeze, Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh EH9 1SH

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## Volunteers

Following the AGM in May I took over as the volunteer co-ordinator following on from the work started by Sheila Fraser. Although there has not been much done over the summer, there has been some thought given to a number of jobs that would benefit PAS and Pictavia.

The tasks fall into two categories: those specifically relevant to the Society including listing and managing the library resources and general administrative tasks, and those relating to Pictavia and the role of volunteer guide.

In relation to Pictavia, Sheila developed a training pack to be used for any new volunteers who wish to become guides. In a period of continuing uncertainty about the future of tourism facilities we do not know if VisitScotland will still manage the entrance desk. The situation should become clear later this year, but, in the meantime, it would be a good idea for us to make plans for our future involvement.

In relation to PAS tasks I intend to arrange some informal half-day sessions where we can get together and organise all our publications and stock in a way that makes it easier to move about to meetings etc. The committee would like to see the library being used as a study resource in the future and we will be looking for volunteers to attend to allow this to happen.

The committee recognises that there are members who may wish to offer their skills for specific, short-term tasks without taking on a higher profile role within the organisation. In this brief piece I have tried to give a small flavour of the jobs we plan to do and invite anyone who is interested to contact me at our normal address. It would also be useful if you give me an idea of which days and times would suit you for attending any sessions.

I look forward to hearing from you.

*Joy Mowatt*

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## Tales of the Picts

is the title of the latest book from the pen of prolific author Stuart McHardy. It was published following a launch at Edinburgh Castle on 6 August.

Stuart has gathered together stories connected with the Picts and those about or inspired by their symbol stones, which he believes contain folk memories of Scotland’s early inhabitants and are capable of shedding light on our ancient past.

His retelling of these old tales from Shetland to the Borders brings a fresh glimpse into a world of bloody battles, chronicles of warriors and priestesses, saints and supernatural beings.

*Tales of the Picts* Stuart McHardy (Luath Press, Edinburgh) ISBN 1 84282 097 4, PB £5.99 or only £4.99 if you use the SPECIAL OFFER ORDER FORM enclosed with this newsletter.

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## Fife facelift in Dundee

The summer edition of *Scottish Archaeological News* carried an article promising new insight on an individual Pictish woman. The lady in question was in her late 20s or early 30s when she died and was buried in the long cist cemetery at Lundin Links. Radiocarbon dating suggests that the cemetery was in use from the 5th to the 7th centuries AD. Dr Tim Thomson, a forensic anthropologist from the University of Dundee, has examined the skeleton, and concludes that she was well nourished, had kept all her teeth, and had no signs of traumatic injury or of any disease that would have left its mark on her bones. From a young age, she had engaged in some repeated activity which affected the development of her left shoulder, and it may be possible to learn more about the nature of this activity.

Work is being carried out to create a three-dimensional reconstruction of the face of this woman from Pictish Fib, and this will be on display in the refurbished McManus Gallery in Dundee. (Note that none of the stones in the McManus collection will be accessible until the refurbishment is complete.)

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## More from Fife

### Crop circles in the Kingdom

Well, everyone still gets excited at the thought of Crop Circles, but it is usually in the realm of Alien Activity and such sci-fi that they are mentioned these days, at least in my circles of more erudite companions. However, indeed a Crop Circle did appear recently in Fife, visible clearly from the A92 road to Dundee near to Moonzie and Luthrie. It was a flattened circle with two discs either side, which could be interpreted as either the Pictish Cauldron Symbol or a Mickey Mouse in the field.

Although the *Courier* reported this event duly in their dull style with a photo, they did note that the farmer had found this crop circle on a Sunday morning after a jolly good Saturday night revel, no doubt, and found a bunch of poles thrown off in the field, which would certainly prove that it was a human prank.

But there are always diehards – I received a message from someone in Perth who shall be

nameless who wrote about this crop circle and its web site <[www.cropcircleconnector.com/2005/Luthrie/Luthrie2005a.html](http://www.cropcircleconnector.com/2005/Luthrie/Luthrie2005a.html)> would you believe.

This person also writes to say that ‘another new development seems to be some less formally geometric images coming through, including one which looks like a Pictish dog, straight out of one of your pictures, at Marden in Wiltshire on Aug. 9th – which as well as containing the snout of a Pictish creature also had an amazing series of different kinds of corn sculptures (boxes, baskets, braidings, tufts, etc)’ – this is the same site address, just put Marden instead of Luthrie.

On more stable ground, perhaps, are the good old stones themselves and how they are doing in this era of post-Christian, post-Pictish decaying environmentally unsound civilisation. Being the Mormaer of Fife I have to keep them fit and well addressed with visitors of note. Recently took folk out to see the Collessie Man in his glory, near Collessie, and that glory has well faded, I must say. He is hardly there at all, so faded/eroded and covered with various thousand types of lichens, and bird droppings, all but his legs are almost retreated. Good that we found him all those years ago when PAS started, back in '89. He was our man who inspired the Society, from my perspective and involvement. Every time I go to look at the stone I see the Pictish Beastie more clearly, this which I revealed with that now doggedly ‘dangerous’ technique of carving retrieval. That symbol is definitely there, seen with the naked eye, so to speak, along with the arch symbol above, with expanded terminals. Some day the paper I wrote on the Collessie Man will be published from a long ago conference when we can all read the details and take this research forward.

*Marianna Lines*

The Autumnal Equinox, September 2005

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## Books

A few more books for those interested in learning more about the Picts and their art:

Martin Carver’s *Surviving in Symbols: A Visit to the Pictish Nation* (Historic Scotland/Canongate) is one of a series of titles in Historic Scotland’s ‘The Making of Scotland’ series. The series aims at giving accessible introductions to

various periods in Scotland's history, and this volume is a good example. Carver deals with a number of the questions that still exercise the academic community about the Picts, succinctly summarising various theories and not merely asserting a single point of view. He also gives clear examples of the range of evidence available to those studying Pictish history and culture. Evidence from a range of excavations (including a modest contribution from his own work at Portmahomack) is accompanied by well-chosen photographs and diagrams. Perhaps the northern bias shown here is merely a reflection of the very small number of Pictish-period sites that have been excavated in Scotland as a whole. The inclusion of a range of artefacts helps to set the stones in the context of the broader range of Pictish arts and crafts. The sketches of Picts indulging in various activities may not be to everyone's taste (I found them rather too reminiscent of Asterix the Gaul) but on the whole this is a good and affordable introduction to the Picts, and one that could easily be handed to youngsters from early teens onward.

Anna Ritchie's *Picts* (Historic Scotland, HMSO), although deserving of an updated edition, is still available (according to Amazon). The emphasis here is rather more on the art of the stones, with many of them photographed in the landscape. The sites which Ritchie chooses to focus on are drawn from a rather wider geographic area than Carver's archaeological examples, including Aberlemno, Birsay and St Andrews. A wide range of objects decorated by the Picts is illustrated in colour, and shows something of the domestic as well as the monumental scale of the art which has survived since Pictish times. The style is perhaps less accessible for the younger reader, but this is another good introduction to the Picts which has stood the test of time.

Finally, George Henderson and Isabel Henderson produced a beautiful volume *The Art of the Picts* (Thames and Hudson). There is no attempt here to assign meaning to the symbols. Instead, the art of the Picts is placed firmly in the context of the medieval Europe that was the cultural backdrop to the work of Pictish artists in all their media. We have come a long way since the Picts were viewed as a problem who appeared to exist in a vacuum. Again, there is considerable coverage of Pictish art other than in stone. Not a light read for the non-specialist,

but one well worth taking time to digest slowly. This is definitely one for winter evenings, when pondering the influences on (and of) Pictish craftsmen with the aid of the Henderson's lucid text and Tom E Gray's outstanding black and white photographs is a splendid pastime. Perhaps one for your Christmas list?

All three are still available according to Amazon.com. The on-line bookseller offers considerable discounts (about a third off the Henderson's book). I know that some members in the past have complained that they are not on-line and so cannot use Amazon, but many local libraries now offer the facilities to use email and to use on-line ordering, and will help anyone who wants to try this to get started. *SH*

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### **Samhain celebrations**

Looking for a day out with a difference? Why not join the Samhain celebrations at Archaeolink?

The festival will be celebrated with Harvest Games, spooky storytelling and other scary delights, including the burning of a great Wickerman.

Contact Archaeolink on 01464 851500 or check out the website at <[www.archaeolink.co.uk](http://www.archaeolink.co.uk)> for further details.

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### **Groam House Museum**

The museum office has moved to new premises. From 16 September the address is:

Groam House Museum Office  
Rosehaugh Estate  
Avoch  
Ross-shire IV9 8RF  
Tel/fax 01463 811 883

NB The museum itself closes for winter on 12 December and reopens on 4 March 2006

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### **Hilton Second Half**

The cross-face of Barry Grove's new Hilton of Cadboll cross-slab is to be unveiled by his daughter Sam on Saturday 1 October.

A procession led by a piper will leave Hilton pier at 2.30pm bound for the site in the field beside St Mary's chapel where the ceremony will start at 3pm. All welcome.

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## PAS Committee 2005–06

### *President*

Norman Atkinson

### *Vice-presidents*

David Henry; Stuart McHardy

### *Secretary*

Stewart Mowatt

### *Treasurer*

Murray Blair

### *Membership Secretary/Events Organiser*

Eileen Brownlie

### *Journal Editor*

Niall Robertson

### *Committee members*

Ruth Black; Marianna Lines

Sheila Hainey; Joy Mowatt

Membership enquiries to:

<[Eileencbrownlie@hotmail.com](mailto:Eileencbrownlie@hotmail.com)>

All other matters to PAS at address below

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## PAS News 35 Caption Competition



*"I said I wanted an election address  
but it didn't have to be a tablet of stone."*

Winning caption submitted by J McGurk

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## Contributions

to PAS Newsletter are always welcome and can be sent by email to <[pasnews@btconnect.com](mailto:pasnews@btconnect.com)> or by post (marked **PAS News**) to PAS.

Deadline for next issue:

**18 November 2005**

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## Caithness Archaeological Trust

### Scottish Archaeology Month Lectures

*Reading the Class II stones - Books,  
Crosses and literate Picts: an exploration  
of the impact and reception of Christianity  
in Northern Pictland.*

Cait McCullagh gave this talk on behalf of the Trust on 19 September at Thurso .

Many scholars now read the Class II cross-slabs, bearing both 'Pictish' symbols and the sign of the cross as markers for the institution of the Pictish church. By exploring the many contexts surrounding a selection of these slabs: archaeological, topographical, historical, place-naming/ dedications and tradition it is possible to propose who the primary influences in the Christianisation of Northern Pictland might have been, and, indeed, just how involved 'Picts' were in their own conversion.

### Highland Archaeology Fortnight

5 October at 19.30

The Pentland Hotel, Thurso

#### *Pseudohistorians v. Pictomaniaacs*

A fresh look at the Pictish King Lists by Niall Smith on behalf of the Trust.

If anyone is interested in finding out more about the activities of CAT you can become a CAT friend (currently free of charge) and receive mailings of all upcoming events. Just send name and postal/email address to:

Emma Sanderson, Caithness Archaeological Trust, Old School House, Dunbeath, KW6 6ED

Telephone: 01593 731 269

<[email@caithnessarchaeology.org.uk](mailto:email@caithnessarchaeology.org.uk)>

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## Pictavia Dates 2006–07

For those of you who really like to plan ahead, the dates for the 2006–07 Friday evening meetings at Pictavia are as follows:

### 2006

20 October; 17 November; 15 December

### 2007

19 January; 16 February; 15 March

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