



## PAS Winter Programme 2007–08 at Pictavia near Brechin

### 19 October

Ross Murray

*Culduthel: Excavation of a high status Iron Age settlement*

### 16 November \* see below

Irene Hughson

*The Stones of Govan*

### 14 December

*An Evening of Words and Music*

### 18 January

Emma Sanderson

(title tbc)

### 15 February

Ian Shepherd

*Rhynie Man Reviewed: Saint or Sacral King*

### 14 March

John Sherriff

(title tbc)

All meetings are on Friday evenings. Doors open at 7.00 and lectures begin at 7.30. Tea and coffee are available before and after, at a nominal charge. Talks and question session normally finish around 8.30, with an opportunity for a more informal session afterwards.

### \* Tea-time offer – 16 November

As Brechin Castle Centre, adjoining Pictavia, will be open late for seasonal shopping on 16 November, PAS members will have the opportunity to eat there and browse in the shop before the meeting. A generous 20% off your high tea bill in the Centre's restaurant will be given on production of your PAS membership card.

### Annual subscription reminder

Annual subscriptions are due for renewal on 1 September. Rates: Individual £14; Student/unwaged £12; Couple/family £16; International £25; Corporate/institutional by donation. Please use the enclosed renewal form and return with remittance and SAE to the Membership Secretary at the Pictavia address.

## PAS Annual Conference Saturday 6 October 2007 A K Bell Library, Perth

### Programme

- 9.30 Registration
- 10.15 Welcome
- 10.30 Jennifer Webster  
*Plans for St Vigean's*
- 11.00 Kelly Kilpatrick  
*Symbol Commissioners in Stone: semiotic theory and the origins of Pictish symbol stones*
- 11.45 Prof Steve Driscoll  
*The Strathearn Environs and Royal Forteviot Project: a report on the first season's work*
- 12.30 Lunch
- Pinkfoot Press Book Launch  
*Symbols and Pictures: the Pictish Legacy in Stone*  
by Alastair Mack
- 1.45 tbc
- 2.30 tbc
- 3.15 Alex Woolf  
*Who carved Pictish Sculpture and for Whom?*
- 4.00 Closing remarks

Please book using the enclosed conference application form.

**NB As there may not be enough time to send an acknowledgement, your ticket will be available on registration at the venue, but please return the form as soon as possible as we need to know in advance the numbers to be catered for.**

### PAS Annual General Meeting

The promised report of the AGM has been delayed but we hope it will appear in the next Newsletter.

---

## Caithness conference



*Eileen Brownlee and Emma Sanderson: The organisers of the weekend event in Caithness*

Following a memorable weekend in Dunbeath some years ago, the Pictish Arts Society joined forces with the Dunbeath Heritage Centre and Caithness Archaeology Trust to offer a programme of talks and site visits over the weekend of 1–2 September

On the Saturday, we spent the day in Dunbeath, with a series of talks at the Heritage Centre.



*Lloyd Laing*

The morning began with a public lecture given by Lloyd Laing, who advanced the thesis that many of the relief-carved stones were commissioned by wealthy lay patrons at a period after the example of Charlemagne had begun to influence aristocracies across Europe. The evidence from the Anglo-Saxon areas is stronger, but it was suggested that the later sculptures show that in the 9th–11th centuries lay patrons in Pictland as well as further south had adopted the habit of endowing their local churches with elaborate carvings. The carvings show the move towards a greater degree of lay patronage,

compared with an earlier period when a greater proportion of carvings have been found at monastic sites.

Raymond Lamb began the closed session of the weekend with an informed and detailed consideration of what carved horses can tell us about the way horses were commonly ridden and controlled among the Picts. To an experienced rider, the often exquisite portraits of horses and riders clearly indicate both gait and harness, and can tell something of the relationship between rider and horse. In some cases, there is clear tension between horse and rider; in others, harmony is evident. A number of stones have more of a story to tell: for example, the position of the lady rider on the Hilton of Cadboll stone suggests a role for the scarcely visible male figure behind her. Raymond pointed out that it would be impossible for the lady to have any control over the horse, and that she would need to have a groom controlling the animal on a leading rein. On the Aberlemno kirkyard stone, the fleeing Northumbrian in the top right of the battle scene is galloping away, while the pursuing Picts follow at an extended walk. Clearly, the craftsmen who created such scenes had real-life models in mind.



*Raymond Lamb*

Niall Smith suggested that the earlier part of the king-lists may refer to a period when a solilunar calendar was in use among the Picts. In such a calendar, it is necessary to insert an extra month every two and a half years, in order to keep both the solar and lunar years in cycle. The reign lengths of the early kings may not have been counted in the years used by the Christian clerics who wrote the lists, but rather reflect such a calendar. The argument is a complex one, which we hope Niall may soon find time to publish.



*Niall Smith*

Lunch consisted of a plentiful supply of sandwiches incorporating local produce and delicious home baking. One of the many highlights of our visits to Dunbeath has been the lavish spreads produced at the Heritage Centre.

After lunch, Alex Woolf took us through the early written sources for Caithness and the north. No contemporary records from earlier than the twelfth century survive. However, Caithness was clearly remembered in the Icelandic traditions which gave rise to the Saga literature of that country. Although the earliest of these date to the period after Ari Thorgilsson's *Islendingabök*, written around the middle of the first half of the twelfth century, some include references to ancestors who spent time in Caithness at a much earlier period. Ari's own ancestress, Aud (or



*Alex Woolf*

Unn) left from Caithness to settle in Iceland after the death of her son. Although Icelandic sources were the first to distinguish between the Scots and the Irish, 'Picts' are not mentioned in the Sagas. Indeed, the term 'Pecht' which is found in Norwegian literature, is a borrowing from Anglo-Saxon. Alex suggested that this may point

to Viking settlement in Caithness at a fairly late period. The earliest Viking activity in the British Isles concentrated on raiding, with bases in Ireland and Eastern England representing the first stage of settlement. The Vikings who came to stay in Caithness may have been displaced from such areas, perhaps in the second half of the ninth century.



*Nan Bethune*

Nan Bethune ventured on a short exploration of some Caithness place names. The vexed question of the derivation and meaning of "broch" remains a problem. As Nan pointed out, these buildings were not defensible; their function may have been that of a large farm house. The etymology of the Pentland Firth was challenged: local pronunciation may point rather to a Pictish derivation (Pen Llain) rather than from an earlier equivalent of Pictland, as suggested by the *Historia Norvegiae*. The place names of Caithness offer considerable scope for reflection on the status of Picts in the north.

In the late afternoon a visit to Ballachly allowed Lloyd Laing to explain his excavations undertaken earlier in the summer. Working outside the scheduled area (Lloyd was himself responsible for scheduling part of the site 40 years ago), he has uncovered evidence for massive walls, and an area where there is considerable depth of improved soil. We look forward to the possibility of further work on the Hill of Peace in the near future.

*Sheila Hainey*

**Many thanks to Stewart Mowatt for providing photographs of the speakers and organisers.**

**The great success of this conference and field trip was very much due to the efforts of the organisers, Emma Sanderson and Eileen Brownlee, who deserve our heartiest thanks for ensuring that we spent another memorable weekend in Caithness.**

---

## Promoting PAS

### The oxygen of publicity

Newsletter 41 reported that a new promotional leaflet was in course of preparation to promote the Society and attract more members. I appealed to all members to advise me of any museums, heritage centres and the like in their area that might usefully be approached to ask if they would accept our leaflets and give us the oxygen of publicity.

A copy of the new leaflet was subsequently enclosed with Newsletter 43 and I believe it to be a most attractive publication. Information on possible outlets for the leaflet has, however, been very disappointing and I am again asking that members think about possible places in their locality where our leaflet may be accepted for display to the public.

Information can be sent to me c/o Pictish Arts Society at the Pictavia address. I would be delighted if you could make the approach to ask about accepting copies of the leaflet but if you do not wish to do so, give me the contact details and I will do that.

I cannot myself cover the whole of Scotland but I can combine the delivery of leaflets with my other passion of motorcycling, hopefully before the summer is completely over. We could do with more oxygen.

Stewart Mowatt

---

## TAFAC 2007

The 2007 Tayside and Fife Archaeological Committee Annual Conference will be held at the University of St Andrews (North Haugh) on Saturday 3rd November (9.50am to 4.40pm). Confirmed speakers this year are:

John Lewis (Scotia Archaeology)  
*Survey and excavation at Balmerino Abbey, Fife*

Simon Timoney (Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust)  
*A year of Exploring Perthshire's Past*

Alex Woolf (St Andrews University)  
*The central transit zone of the kingdom of Alba: thinking about the Tay basin in the Viking Age*

Alan Kilpatrick and Richard Craig (RCAHMS)  
*Understanding the landscape in Fife: the Historic Land-use Assessment project*

Moira Greig (Aberdeen Council)  
*Recent Aerial Reconnaissance in Angus*

John Sherriff (RCAHMS)  
*The results of five years fieldwalking in Kinnettles, Angus*

Derek Hall (SUAT Ltd)  
*Recent work in Tayside and Fife*

The Scotland's Rural Past project

The price of the conference is £12.00, which includes the cost of morning and afternoon refreshments. Tickets (and fuller details of the conference) can be obtained from the Hon Treasurer, John R Sherriff, RCAHMS, 16 Bernard Terrace, Edinburgh, EH8 9NX. Tickets will be also be available at the door on the day of the conference.

---

## TAFAJ 13

*Tayside and Fife Archaeological Journal* and *TAFAC Monograph 5 (The Caterthuns)*. Are both to be published in the first week of November 2007.

Two articles in *TAFAJ 13* should be of particular interest to PAS members:

Catriona Gibson  
*Time Team excavations at Wemyss Caves, Fife*

John Borland, Ian Fraser & John Sherriff  
*Eight socketed stones from Eastern Scotland*

The following papers will also appear:

Martin Cook  
*Early Neolithic ritual activity, Bronze Age occupation and Medieval activity at Pitlethie Road, Leuchars, Fife*

Hilary Murray & Charles Murray  
*The excavation of a disturbed Bronze Age cemetery at Ethiebeaton, Angus*

Kirsty Cameron, Alastair Rees, Andrew Dunwell & Sue Anderson  
*Prehistoric pits, Bronze Age round houses, an Iron Age promontory enclosure, Early Historic cist burials and medieval enclosures along the route of the A92, Dundee to Arbroath*

Brendan O'Connor

*Two Late Bronze Age socket axes from Tillycoultry, Clackmannanshire, and similar lost axes in northern Britain*

John Lewis

*Excavations at Bogleys Standing Stone, Kirkcaldy, Fife*

Adrian Cox *et al*

*Excavations at Horse Cross, Perth*

Monograph 5 details the work of the Scottish Field School (Edinburgh University) programme of excavation and survey in the 1990s. The price of each volume is £10.00 plus £2.00 P&P if purchased separately; if purchased together, the price is £15.00 plus £3.00 P&P. Available at the TAFAC conference or by post from JR Sherriff at the address above.

---

### PSAS 136

Ross Trench-Jellicoe has drawn our attention to the following articles of possible interest to PAS members in the recently published *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 136:

Geoffrey R Adams 'Constraints on terminal sounds in the the inscriptions of early Scotland.' (215-26)

John F Potter 'Stone emplacements in early Scottish churches: evidence of Early Christian craftsmanship.' (227-36)

Megan Gondek 'Early Historic sculpture and landscape: a case study of Cladh a'Bhile, Ellary, Mid-Argyll.' (237-58)

---

### Govan stones

The decision of the Church of Scotland to cease using Govan Old Parish Church as a place of worship was reported in the last Newsletter (p7). This extraordinary move has prompted much speculation about the future of the 19th-century building and its renowned collection of carved stones. Irene Hughson will talk about the collection at our meeting on 16 November. As a prelude to this timely lecture and to increase awareness of the collection, Pinkfoot Press has donated copies, for circulation with this Newsletter, of Anna Ritchie's booklet, *Govan and its Carved Stones*, which was commissioned by Friends of Govan Old in 1999. If you already have a copy please pass on the duplicate to spread the word!

---

## The New Edinburgh History of Scotland, Volume 2

**From Pictland to Alba, 789-1070**  
*Alex Woolf*

Publication due October 2007  
400pp Pb 978 0 7486 1234 5 £19.99

In the 780s northern Britain was dominated by two great kingdoms; Pictavia, centred in north-eastern Scotland and Northumbria which straddled the modern Anglo-Scottish border. Within a hundred years both of these kingdoms had been thrown into chaos by the onslaught of the Vikings and within two hundred years they had become distant memories.

This book charts the transformation of the political landscape of northern Britain between the eighth and the eleventh centuries.

Central to this narrative is the mysterious disappearance of the Picts and their language and the sudden rise to prominence of the Gaelic-speaking Scots who would replace them as the rulers of the North. Unlike most other volumes dealing with this period, this is a book which 'shows its workings' and encourages the readers to reach their own conclusions about the origins of Scotland.

Key Features:

- The first book in over twenty years to explain the destruction of the Picts and the rise of the Scottish kingdom from contemporary accounts alone
- Recounts and evaluates modern scholarship developing readers' awareness of recent debates and controversies
- Subjects contemporary sources to rigorous examination
- Locates early Scottish history firmly within a European context

**Discount offer £16.00**

*From Pictland to Alba, 798-1070* – volume 2  
in the *New Edinburgh History of Scotland*

Order from:

Scottish Studies Marketing, Edinburgh  
University Press, 22 George Square,  
Edinburgh EH8 9LF

Telephone Orders: + 44 (0)131 650 4218

Email: [anna.glazier@eup.ed.ac.uk](mailto:anna.glazier@eup.ed.ac.uk)

---

## New equipment

PAS members may be interested in an update on progress in acquiring the equipment for which we received lottery funding.

We now have a laptop computer, a projector, a multi-function printer including scanning and copying facilities, and the software is on order.

The committee has taken the decision to purchase the software that is now the standard in use by museums for recording the materials held in Pictavia. Over the winter months it is intended to catalogue all the books and to list all the articles in the journals and scan and catalogue any photographic material so that our reference facility will be ready for the start of next year's tourist season.

I will let you know through the newsletter how we progress and will also advise you how we intend to deliver the reference element of the project which will include an appeal for volunteers to help staff it.

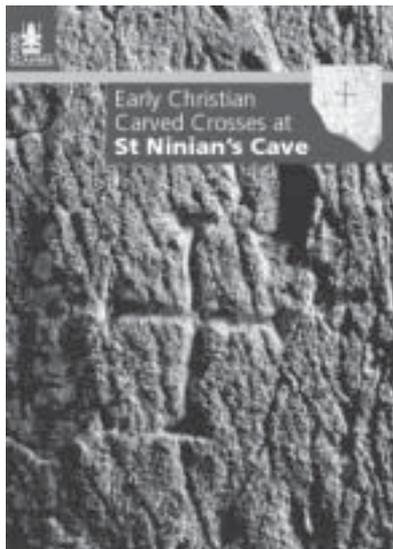
In due course I will be inviting members who may wish to lend items for scanning and recording or who may wish to donate items to PAS to do so. At this stage I would appeal to anyone who is thinking of having a clear out to consider whether your books, journals, photographs or other material would be of interest to other PAS members.

From my own perspective, I have attended events over the last few years and shall be donating photos I have taken and will cede the copyright of these to PAS.

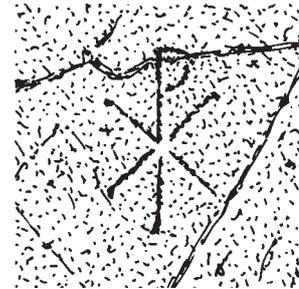
*Joy Mowatt*

---

## St Ninian's Cave crosses



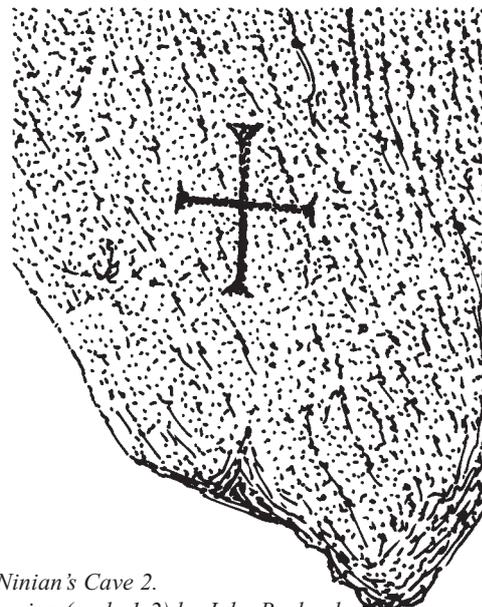
The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland have published an illustrated leaflet, with the assistance of the Whithorn Trust, highlighting the results of its recent survey of St Ninian's Cave, near Whithorn. The cave, which is in the care of Historic Scotland, has been the focus of pilgrimage for well over a thousand years and, in addition to those crosses already known of, the RCAHMS survey identified a number of new and previously unrecorded carvings, including ringed crosses and an early form of the Chi-Rho symbol, formed from the first two letters of the name of Christ in Greek. The leaflet is on sale



© Crown copyright: RCAHMS

at £1.00 from RCAHMS, John Sinclair House, 16 Bernard Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 9NX and The Whithorn Trust, 45-47 George Street, Whithorn, Dumfries and Galloway DG8 8NS

*John Borland*



© Crown copyright: RCAHMS

*St Ninian's Cave 2.  
Drawing (scale 1:2) by John Borland*

---

## Pictavia re-enactment



*The foodstall*

In response to an invitation to represent PAS at a Pictish Re-enactment event on 28 and 29 July this year, Stewart and Joy Mowatt attended. The event was staged by Brechin Castle Centre and Angus Council and took place in Pictavia and the grounds of Brechin Castle Centre just off the A90 outside Brechin.

During a weekend of very mixed weather ranging from very bright sunshine to heavy rain showers, approximately 1500 people came through the doors. The Glasgow Vikings, who have added Pictish battle re-enactments to their repertoire, provided the entertainment. The group set up an encampment to represent how the people of the times lived. Members of the public were able to visit the tents, see tools being made, and leatherwork and weaving and chat to the group and ask many questions.

In an area fenced off for safety there were descriptions and demonstrations of weapons and some battle scenes were staged. The differences in the clothing styles of the Picts and Vikings were illustrated and descriptions of the benefits



*Early metalworker in action*

and disadvantages of both for normal daily life and for battle.

Hundreds of children took the chance to have Pictish symbols painted on their faces, while parents and grandparents had more time to look round Pictavia to find out what it is all about. It was interesting to hear children, who had previously visited as school pupils, explain in detail many of the exhibits to the adults.

Stewart and Joy handed out copies of the PAS leaflet in the hope of attracting new members.

Those who came along seemed to enjoy themselves and hopefully will come back again. This was one example of the relationship being developed between Brechin Castle Centre and PAS and you will note another in our Winter Programme – on 16 November.

*Joy Mowatt*

*The Glasgow Vikings join battle*



---

## Roman frontier latest

Word has reached us of a recent visit of Kinnettles and District Heritage Group to the Roman marching camp at Kirkbuddo in Angus. On site to greet the party, resplendent in his Roman costume, was Gaius Marius Martialis, an ex-military empire official, aka Juris Trede of the Roman Military Research Society. Unfortunately Mr Trede will not forget Kirkbuddo in a hurry, as his bare arms and legs proved to be an irresistible feeding-ground for the swarms of midges about that day. This fine, upstanding figure of a man was almost brought to his knees by the little terrors.

Could the midge hold the secret as to why the frontier of the Empire did not extend north of the Antonine Wall?



© Dave Walsh

*Juris Trede boldly confronting the Kirkbuddo midges*

---

## St Vigeans Museum

Historic Scotland has submitted revised plans for the development of St Vigeans Museum to Angus Council having failed to gain planning consent for their initial proposal.

It has been confirmed that the cross-carved stone (VIG034), currently unceremoniously lying on the ground to the right of the south side-door of the church, will join the collection housed in the museum.

---

## Arbuthnott

The concern about the fate of the carved stone at Arbuthnott (PAS News 43, p8) was unnecessarily alarmist, as the section of the cemetery wall in which it is placed is not at all threatened by collapse, the shored-up section requiring rebuilding being to the east of the kirkyard gate.

---

Ian Shepherd has informed us that Aberdeenshire Council has asked that the dountaking of the collapsed portion of the wall be the subject of an archaeological watching brief, and also intend that the stone pile currently beside the steading, which is presumably from the current collapse, be inspected too.

---

## Groam House Museum

is celebrating the Year of Highland Culture with an exciting exhibition programme featuring the life and work of George Bain.

**George Bain – A Highland Homecoming** brings together selected items from the museum's own collection of Bain's work with previously unseen items. The next venue of the exhibition's Highland tour is:

Timespan, Helmsdale  
from 29 September

### Theory into Practice:

#### George Bain and the Celtic Art Revival

Groam House Museum, Rosemarkie  
1 May 2007 – April 2008

#### Free admission to the museum in 2007

Groam House Museum, High Street,  
Rosemarkie, Ross-shire IV10 8UF  
Tel: Museum 01381 620961  
Office 01463 811883

---

## The Tarbat Discovery Centre

at Portmahomack will be open 10.00–17.00 for September and from 14.00–17.00 throughout October before closing for the winter, a correction to the times printed on older leaflets.

---

## Newsletter contributions

Please keep PAS informed of your news and views – send articles, reviews, pictures etc. by email to

<[pas.news@btconnect.com](mailto:pas.news@btconnect.com)>

or by post to **The Editor, PAS News** at the Pictavia address. The deadline for receipt of contributions to PAS Newsletter 45 is 17 November 2007.

---

## Enclosed PAS forms

Two forms are enclosed with this newsletter – one for the conference the other for subscriptions. **Please note that each is to be returned separately.**

---