



Pictavia Lectures

While we regret the (hopefully temporary) demise of the Edinburgh Lectures, we are pleased to report that the 2005-06 Lecture Series at Pictavia has been an undoubted success. All talks have been well attended and numbers overall are well up on previous years.

Ruth Black's presentation of her work derived from the Pictish stones of Ross and Cromarty drew a big crowd, not least because of the presence of some members of active embroidery groups in Angus who also draw inspiration from local Pictish sources.

The latest meeting on 17 February had an attendance of over 40 to hear James Fraser's stimulating and thought-provoking talk on Pictish Warfare.

New faces have been seen at all the talks and new members have been recruited. The 'Soirée' at the beginning of December was extremely enjoyable (despite the atrocious weather on the night which must have kept many at home), and, as an effective exercise in 'outreach', further informal social events are bound to become part of our established programme.

Meanwhile we look forward to 17 March and our last lecture of the series – Sally Foster's talk on the 'Biography of the Hilton of Cadboll Cross-slab' which promises to be a rousing finale to a very successful season.

A Pictish Soirée

Around twenty gathered at Pictavia on 2 December for the first of our Pictish soirées. The aim of the evening was to provide a series of brief samples of Pictish art and life, in a more social setting than we can usually achieve with the lecture format. David Moir, our Mormaer of Mar with Buchan showed a rare collection of slides of illustrations of the stones in Stuart's *Sculptured Stones of Scotland* interspersed with shots from early PAS field trips.

A short break allowed the audience to mingle and sample a range of brews and tastes that would have been well within the scope of a

Pictish kitchen. Readings of poetry, inspired by things Pictish, from the works of two great poetesses, Violet Jacob and Marion Angus, were followed by music and song provided by Donna Kincaid and David Moir.

It is all too easy to forget that the sculptors who carved the musicians on the stones were used to hearing fine music. By the time that the great cross-slabs were being carved, church music was achieving a degree of sophistication and complexity that is still admired today. In secular contexts, many of the airs of the folk repertoire of northern Europe were probably current in Pictish times. Donna's splendid performance brought home the point that the Picts, as well as the present generation, would have enjoyed the purity of the human voice as an instrument, singing some of these ancient tunes. Dave's guitar accompaniment was a perfect foil for a memorable performance, and the committee would like to thank both of them for a splendid evening's entertainment.

Having learned from this first attempt to provide a rather different evening, the committee hopes to build on the experience and offer other evenings of a similarly informal nature. We would be interested in hearing from any members who might wish to contribute. SH

Kettins

Since last we reported news of the Kettins stone (Newsletter 32, p5) significant progress has been made. Thanks to Mark Hall of Perth Museum and Art Gallery we enclose with this Newsletter a copy of the new leaflet about the stone written by Mark and jointly produced and published by Perth and Kinross Council, Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust and Historic Scotland.

For the time-being the cross-slab will remain *in situ*. Conservation work has been carried out by Historic Scotland which mainly consisted of painstakingly removing the invasive ivy that was adhering strongly to and undermining much of the stone's already severely worn surface. Perth and Kinross Council will be responsible for keeping further vegetation at bay.

**Eric H Nicoll, CBE, FSA Scot,
BsC (Hons), FICE, FWICEM (Dip)
1925–2006**

Chairman, Pictish Arts Society 1992–1995

The death of our former Chairman Eric Nicoll occurred on 2006.

Eric was born in Edinburgh and attended George Heriot's School then Edinburgh University where he graduated in Civil Engineering. He held a succession of prestigious posts with bodies such as Edinburgh Corporation and Midlothian County Council, and from 1976 until his retirement in 1985 he was Deputy Chief Engineer at the Scottish Development Department.

Eric was the author of *Small Water Pollution Control Works: Design and Practice* (1988), which became a best-seller in its field, and he was the prime-mover behind our society's major publication *A Pictish Panorama* (1995), which he also edited. His interest in the arts in general led him to conceive and compile another publication *A Pictish Pageant*, a round-up of the

Picts as they appear in literature, painting and music, but this has yet to be published. Eric's distinctive and immaculately finished wood carvings drew inspiration from his love of Pictish sculpture



'Aberlemno Reviviscent'
wood sculpture by Eric H Nicoll (from *A Pictish Panorama, Frontispiece*)

Eric Nicoll – an Appreciation

I'd known Eric from the early days of the Pictish Arts Society, we shared an interest in art/sculpture and early medieval history and prehistory. We had regular meetings in his house or mine, to discuss PAS business such as the early talks on the projected *Pictish Panorama*, and which photo illustrations of mine would be required. Such meetings became little social occasions and chat about all sorts of subjects which must have bored his friendly wife Helen at times!

Eric was a highly successful Chairman of PAS, during which time membership rose to over 400, with regular production of the *PAS Journal*, working with others (notably Nick Simpson) to make this as attractive and modern in appearance as we could.

Outside of PAS, Eric was a member of the Edinburgh Recorded Music Society and was for a time its Chairman. His major recreational interest was wood-sculpture and he was good enough to have exhibited and made significant sales. He was elected Professional Member of the Society of Scottish Artists and Artist Craftsmen and also became a committee member.

At the point where he was waiting for a major heart operation, he was working hard on a carving which he was going to call 'Pictish Princess'; we had a meeting to discuss what photography he wanted of it before it reached the point where it would be oiled; once oiled and photographed he was going to use it to support an application to join another arts body. It was a Sunday when we did the photography of the as yet un-oiled piece, the following day he went into hospital and on the Friday he died. It was typical of Eric that he should have been physically and mentally active as long as possible.

I greatly enjoyed the friendship of Eric and Helen for the best part of twenty years. Whilst to me it is a great personal loss it will be a loss to a wider range of friends. Our sympathies are with Helen, son Jeremy, daughter Stephanie, and grandsons Christopher and Henry.

T E Gray

PAS Merchandise

Following a recent stocktaking of merchandise at Pictavia the committee agreed to offer a postal service on some items.

The following can be ordered by sending a request to Pictavia, together with your cheque made out to the Pictish Arts Society. All prices include postage and packing to UK addresses.

Journals – £5.00

numbers 3– 10 and 12–16 available

Field Guides – £3.50

- 1 *Lindores to Glamis*, 1993
- 2 *Easter Ross*, 1994
- 3 *Fife*, 1996
- 4 *Abernethy and North Fife*, 1997
- 5 ~~*Angus and Mearns*, 1998~~ out of print
- 6 *Aberdeenshire*, 1999
- 7 *Moray*, 2002
- 8 *Firthlands of Easter Ross*, 2003
- 9 *Highland Perthshire*, 2004

Pict Stickers – £1.50

T-shirts – £6.00

Sizes M, L and XL available

Keyrings – £2.50

Mail is normally collected from Pictavia only at weekends, so please do not assume orders will be dispatched by return.

Rulers and mugs will be for sale at Pictavia lectures, Conferences and the AGM.

Joy Mowatt

Aberlemno leaflets

The four excellent information panels displayed on the boxes covering the Aberlemno stones in the winter (PAS News 34, p4) are available to download as leaflets in PDF format from the Historic Scotland website:

<www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/properties>

Art on the Rocks

is the subject this year of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland's Rhind Lectures which will be delivered by Paul Bahn on 17– 19 March at the Lecture Theatre, Royal Museum, Chambers Street, Edinburgh. Fri 6pm; Sat 11am, 2pm, 3.30pm; Sun 2pm, 3.30pm.

Glamis Pictish Stones

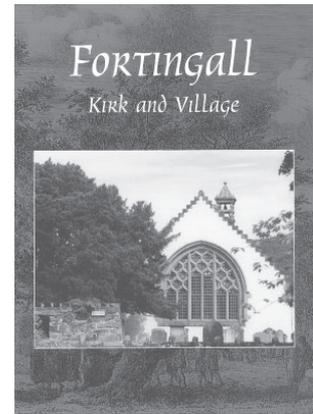
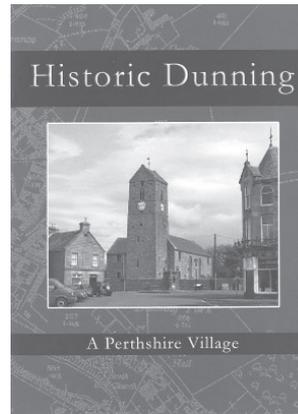
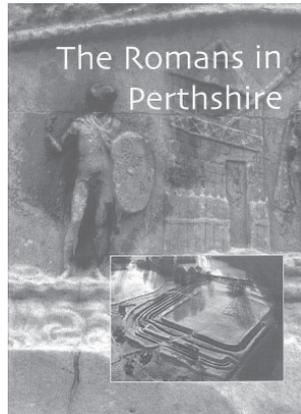
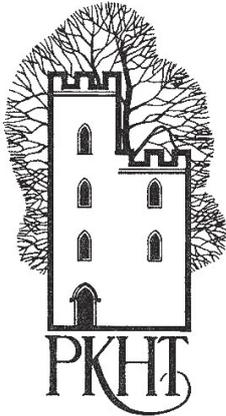
Members should note that Glamis manse has now been sold by the Church of Scotland, and will soon be occupied by the new owners. While the manse stone is managed by Historic Scotland as part of a guardianship agreement, and is accessible to the public, we would urge all members who intend to visit the Glamis Manse stone to show all courtesy to the new owners. While Historic Scotland may well put in place new access arrangements, we would ask all members to stay strictly to the path and the immediate surrounding of the stone when they visit. Members should ensure that the gate is kept closed at all times, especially when a group visits. The garden is private, and visits to the stone should be to it alone! The Pictish Arts Society has a good reputation for sensible and considerate access to the countryside, and I would ask that you do all you can to keep that reputation.

The church itself is also often visited by members, since it houses a further four fragments of carved stones from the early medieval period, all of which were discovered in the adjacent kirkyard or the manse rockery. Until last year it has been open daily, but due to incidents in recent months it has had to review this policy, and may not be open until the spring when it can be staffed by the church.

What will be of interest to members is that these four fragments will be displayed in the Meffan as part of an exhibition 'PICTS!' during May, and will be on display when we hold our AGM there on Saturday 20 May.

Angus Council, Cultural Services is very grateful to Glamis Church for making the fragments available, and we will take the opportunity to create plinths for their display on their return to the church. This will ensure that they can be seen to better effect by visitors, without the temptation of lifting them to see whether there are carvings on the other side which can result in physical damage. Your committee has agreed to contribute towards the costs of the plinth construction, and is willing to do so in other churches which have early Christian carved stones.

Norman Atkinson



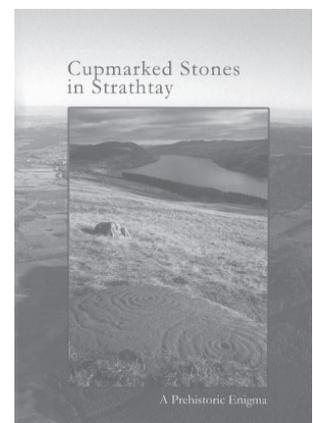
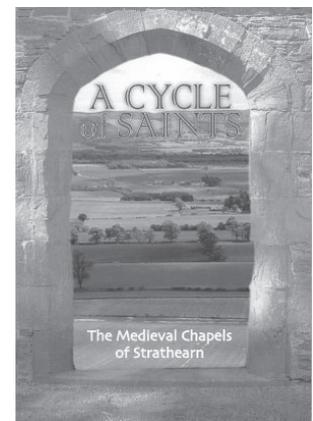
Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust

are building up quite a collection in their splendid series of titles on different aspects of the local heritage which they publish mainly in association with local historical or archaeological societies. The booklets in A5 format, from 16–28pp each, are attractively designed and well illustrated and represent excellent value at £2 each, a non-commercial rate which surely reflects generous subsidy.

A Cycle of Saints: The Medieval Chapels of Strathearn PKHT

This is a very useful guide to the many Christian sites associated with early saints in Strathearn and other places of historic interest in the vicinity. Several saints have been venerated in the district: Ethernan at Madderty; Bean at Fowlis Wester and Kinkell; Kessog at Auchterarder; Cattan at Aberuthven; Serf at Dunning. Also some striking examples of early medieval sculpture are to be found on the route: The Dupplin Cross at St Serfs, Dunning and the cross-slabs housed in the church at Fowlis Wester (a detour to the Tolbooth in Crieff would be well worth the effort to take in the 'Burgh Cross' as well).

Playing on the title, the route round the sites is recommended as a 'cycle' trail and a clear map shows them linked mainly by quiet country roads which meander through the broad strath. To visit all in a day would be 'an ambitious undertaking' but it would make an ideal excuse for taking a weekend break or longer to explore a very attractive area armed with this illuminating guide.



Cupmarked Stones in Strathtay: A Prehistoric Enigma Breadalbane Heritage Society

This is a survey of cup and cup-and-ring marked stones identified and recorded by Breadalbane Heritage Society between the early 1960s and mid 1980s. The area covered stretches on both sides of the Tay from Fearnan on Loch Tay to Balnaguard below Grandtully, and the main part of the booklet comprises an illustrated Gazetteer of some 70 sites giving number and name of each, its grid reference and a brief description of its stone or rockface carvings and situation.

The publication is a worthy tribute to Sonia Yellowlees, the first Chairman of the Breadalbane Society and instigator of the cupmarked stones project, who died in 2003.

Other titles available at local sites or from the Trust are: *The Romans in Perthshire* David Woolliscroft and Birgitta Hoffmann; *Historic Dunning: A Perthshire Village* Dunning Parish Historical Society; *Fortingall: Kirk and Village*. Further information on the Trust's website: <www.pkht.org.uk>

Able Minds and Practised Hands: Scotland's Early Medieval Sculpture in the 21st Century Sally M Foster and Morag Cross (eds) (Leeds: Historic Scotland and The Society for Medieval Archaeology, 2005) (= Soc Med Arch Monograph 23, Series ed: C M Gerrard) ISBN 1 904350 74 7 246 x 175mm, pp xii, 434; 155 b/w illuss & maps; hbk £44

One hundred years on from J Romilly Allen and Joseph Anderson's 1903 landmark publication, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, twenty-six essays explore the current state of knowledge of early medieval sculpture in Scotland. They demonstrate the unique value of this material in contributing to our understanding of the society and people that created it between 1000 to 1500 years ago. Today's approaches and techniques offer new insights, as well as great hope, for what might be learnt from future study of 'familiar' and new material alike. The essays exemplify the ever-diversifying, interdisciplinary approaches that are being taken to the study of early medieval sculpture. Key themes that emerge include: the interdependence of conservation, research and access; the need for a 21st-century inventory of the sculpture; the breadth and value of the wide range of the research tools that now exist; conservation issues, including the politics of how and where sculpture should be protected, and the pressing need to identify priorities for action; and, what is probably the most important development over the last 100 years, the increase in awareness of the range of values and significances that attaches to early medieval sculpture, including appreciation of context.

In future issues of the Newsletter we hope to examine more closely some of the themes and issues presented by the diverse papers in this collection. Meanwhile a list of contents should suffice to give some idea of the breadth and depth of this goldmine of a publication most ably edited by Sally Foster and Morag Cross.

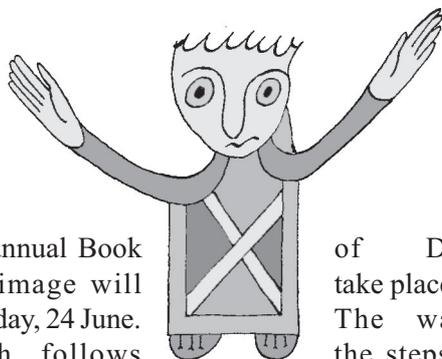
Sally Foster was also the organiser of the two-day seminar, held in April 2003 at The Hub in Edinburgh, where most of the papers were first aired. Over the last few years Sally has become the standard-bearer for advancement in the study, research and display of early medieval sculpture in Scotland and it is due in no small part to her passionate interest, dedication and motivational powers that the next 100 years' studies have got off to a flying start.

Able Minds Contents:

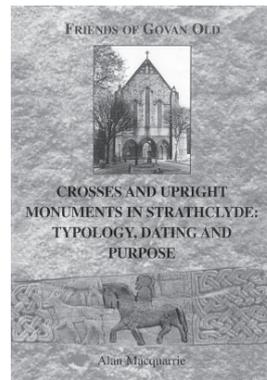
- 1 Introduction. *Able Minds and Practised Hands*: historical fact, 21st-century aspiration
Sally M Foster
- 2 Sculpture in action: contexts for stone carving on the Tarbat peninsula, Easter Ross
Martin Carver
- 3 'The stone was born here and that's where it belongs': Hilton of Cadboll and the negotiation of identity, ownership and belonging
Siân Jones
- 4 'Just an ald steen': reverence, reuse, revulsion and rediscovery
Iain Fraser
- 5 Fragments of significance: the whole picture
Isabel Henderson
- 6 Christ's Cross down into the earth: some cross-bases and their problems
Ian Fisher
- 7 Pictish cross-slabs: an examination of their original archaeological context
Heather F James
- 8 *Hic memoria perpetua*: the early inscribed stones of southern Scotland in context
Katherine Forsyth
- 9 The Govan School revisited: searching for meaning in the early medieval sculpture of Strathclyde
Stephen T Driscoll, Oliver O'Grady and Katherine Forsyth
- 10 Scotland's early medieval sculpture in the 21st century: a strategic overview of conservation problems, maintenance and replication methods
Ingval Maxwell
- 11 The containment of Scottish carved stones *in situ*: an environmental study of the efficacy of glazed enclosures
Colin Muir
- 12 The runic inscriptions of Scotland: preservation, documentation and interpretation
Michael Barnes and R I Page
- 13 Understanding what we see, or seeing what we understand: graphic recording past and present, the early medieval sculpture at St Vigean
John Borland
- 14 The bulls of Burghead and Allen's technique of illustration
Ian G Scott
- 15 'A perfect accuracy of delineation': Charlotte Wilhelmina Hibbert's drawings of early medieval carved stones in Scotland
David Henry and Ross Trench-Jellicoe
- 16 Bird, beast or fish? Problems of identification and interpretation of the iconography carved on the Tarbat peninsula cross-slabs
Kellie S Meyer

- 17 Figuring Salvation: an excursus into the iconography of the Iona crosses *Jane Hawkes*
- 18 The role of geological analysis of monuments: a case study from St Vigean and related sites *Suzanne Miller and Nigel Ruckley*
- 19 The early medieval sculptures from Murthly, Perth and Kinross: an interdisciplinary look at people, politics and monumental art *Mark Hall, Isabel Henderson and Ian G Scott*
- 20 Know your properties, recognise the possibilities: Historic Scotland's strategy for the interpretation of early medieval sculpture in its care *Sally M Foster*
- 21 Proposals for the re-display of the early medieval sculpture collection at Whithorn: the evolution of an interpretative approach *Peter Yeoman*
- 22 Curators of the last resort: the role of a local museum service in the preservation and interpretation of early medieval sculptured stones *Norman Atkinson*
- 23 A museum curator's adventures in Pictland *Mark Hall*
- 24 The missing dimension: future directions in digital recording of early medieval sculptured stone *Stuart Jeffrey*
- 25 Three-dimensional recording of Pictish sculpture *Alistair Carty*
- 26 Towards a 'New ECMS' the proposal for a new *Corpus of Early Medieval Sculpture in Scotland* *John Higgitt*

Book of Deer Pilgrimage



The annual Book of Deer Pilgrimage will take place on Saturday, 24 June, which follows the steps of St Olaf, leaves St James Church car park in Cruden Bay after a blessing at 7.45 am. The route runs from Cruden Bay through Mintlaw's Aden Country Park to the Book of Deer Centre. Contact 01771 613 666.



Crosses and Upright Monuments in Strathclyde: typology, dating and purpose

Alan Macquarrie
(Glasgow: Friends of Govan Old, 2006).

26pp

ISBN 0 9545321 4 7

This is the fourth of the Govan Lecture

Series published by the Friends of Govan Old, and is a descriptive survey of the four early medieval crosses at Govan and related monuments in Strathclyde with a discussion of their typology, dating and purpose. The stones comprising this 'Govan group' are illustrated with a very varied selection of drawings and photographs old and new. Particularly interesting are the photographs showing crosses at former sites: the Jordanhill cross in the sunken garden at Jordanhill House – now in Govan Old Kirk; the Barrochan cross and base – since moved to Paisley Abbey; and the little-known Stanely cross and base – the fragment of the cross-shaft now stored by Scottish Water and difficult of access, but the base appears to remain in its original position as attested by the inclusion of a colour photograph of it. This is a welcome addition to the now well-established Govan Lecture Series.

Friends of Govan Old: <www.govanold.org.uk>

Kilmartin House Museum

01546 510 278

museum@kilmartin.org

www.kilmartin.org

The Museum re-opened on 1 March. Below is a selection from their list of forthcoming events:

25–28 March, time tbc

Walk-over survey Barnluasgen Dun

14–16 April, time tbc

Open days at Barnluasgen Dun

10 May, 7.30pm

Rock Art – talk by Stan Beckensall

10 June, 10am–4pm

Prehistoric technology workshop –

John and Val Lord

11 June, time tbc

Prehistory open day

Dunnichen Day Meeting and AGM

will be held at the Meffan, 20 West High Street, Forfar on **Saturday 20 May** (no excuse for any member forgetting this date!) from 10am–1pm. Speaker(s) to be confirmed. This coincides with an exhibition ‘PICTS!’ at the Meffan where members can view some Pictish stones from Angus rarely on public display. Remember adequate **FREE** parking available nearby, and throughout Angus too!

Groam House Museum 2006

High Street, Rosemarkie, Ross-shire, IV10 8UF
01381 620 961 Office 01463 811 883
groamhouse@ecosse.net

OPENS 4 MARCH

TALKS

All talks in Fortrose Community Theatre
at 7.30pm (01381 621 252)
Admission £3 (Members £1.50)

Thursday 27 April

Annual Academic Lecture

*Playtime in Pictland: the material culture of
gaming in early medieval Scotland*

Mark Hall, Curator of Archaeology, Perth
Museum and Art Gallery

Thursday 29 June

*Unique Rock Art from a Bronze Age Context
at Balblair, Beaulay: some further thoughts*

Andrew Dutton, Headland Archaeology Ltd

Thursday 5 October

Dealing with the Romans –

latest news from the Birnie trenches

Dr Fraser Hunter, Department of Archaeology,
National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh.

EXHIBITIONS

in Groam House Museum

1 May 2006 – April 2007

*Don't sniff at history – the intriguing tale of
a local worthy* featuring items loaned from the
National Museum of Scotland, as well as
objects from our own collection

FREE Admission to Museum for 2006

Opening hours

Easter week 8–17 Apr Daily 14.00–16.30

1 May–31 Oct Mon–Sat 10.00–17.00

Sun 14.00–16.30

1 Nov–mid Dec Sat Sun 14.00–16.00

Eassie-piecey

A Pictish-inspired garden design

A memorial garden for the Queen Mother is being developed in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh. Funded by the Queen Mother's Memorial Fund for Scotland and designed by architect Lachlan Stewart, the memorial will feature a traditional labyrinth inspired by interlocking Celtic patterns; secret gardens and an antique grotto. It will be sited in the Silver Garden – a sensitive area off the beaten track which will be a place for quiet contemplation.



The Eassie cross-slab (ECMS, III, fig)

The knot garden uses its structure to contain areas of formal and informal planting and will retain interest at all times of the year because of the pattern of its hedges. Inspired by Celtic interlocking patterns found in Scotland since Pictish times, and particularly from the Eassie cross-slab in Angus near Glamis, the design shows one central circle and four smaller circles set evenly about it. The outline of all five circles is defined by a tall hedge grown to above eye line, to form a series of secret gardens, the large central circle contains the labyrinth. Patterns formed of bog-myrtle hedges grown to no more than 150cm trace the interlocking pattern of the stone. There are all the false starts and misleading directions necessary to give the feeling of being lost before solving the puzzle and finding the way through. The paths will be wide enough for children to run about and wheelchairs to pass.

The shell grotto at one end will provide a sheltered meeting place. Its sand-castle shape and shell decoration, reminiscent of 18th-century garden features, will not just appeal to younger visitors but it is hoped that some children from all over Scotland may be involved in the making of the grotto by collecting the shells that will decorate it.

Construction is now well advanced and it is planned to have a Royal Opening early in July.

Caithness Archaeological Trust

01593 731 269

email@caithnessarchaeology.org.uk

www.caithnessarchaeology.org.uk

Wag of Forse – NOSAS survey weekend, 11 and 12 March. Starting Saturday morning at Dunbeath Heritage Centre to view the temporary display on the Wag of Forse followed by a guided walk around the landscape. This is followed by a survey of newly discovered elements in the landscape and a resurvey where needed of other sites. Saturday night at The Portland Arms for a place-name talk by Annie Bethune. The survey continues on the Sunday.

Spittal Cairn & Broch Project – Continuing on from last year's successful season, John Barber will be back in the county to build. The overall aim of the project is to relive a community project carried out by our Caithness ancestors over 6000 years ago! The project hopes to involve as much of the community as possible. Ideally, we hope that people of ALL ages and strengths will help us in every stage of the project, from collecting the stone, right through to building the cairn. Though the exact dates aren't fixed the project will begin in the last week of June and continue for about four weeks. As well as the building of the Cairns and Broch we are also planning a demolition day to take place on 8 July. A date you will want to put in your diaries.

The Prehistoric Society will be visiting Caithness from 2–6 June for field-trips around the county during the day and talks in the evening.

Apologies to Emma and CAT as a delay in production of this Newsletter means that it will not be distributed until after the Wag of Forse weekend.

Picts and Bobs

Heather Ale

*From the bonny bells of heather,
They brewed a drink long syne,
Was sweeter far than honey,
Was stronger far than wine.*

And too much of this brew might lead you to sing *Several Species of Small Furry Animals Gathered Together in a Cave and Grooving With a Pict* – the title of one of Pink Floyd's more esoteric album tracks in the seventies.

See the full range of Pictish jewellery available from Tain Silver on the new web site:

[<www.tainsilver.com/>](http://www.tainsilver.com/)

And more jewels can be found at:

[<www.rainnea.com/celtic_jewelry.htm>](http://www.rainnea.com/celtic_jewelry.htm)

Time Team is back on TV and on 9 April you can see them explore a broch at Applecross.

The Scotsman in partnership with the National Trust for Scotland have launched a poll to find the 'Seven Wonders of Scotland'. Pictish stones don't feature in the shortlist of 30, however you can vote for something that doesn't appear on the list so I suggest that you go online and vote. I voted for 'The prehistoric treasures of Orkney' (supported by Lesley Riddoch) and 'Iona', and, as a member of the Charles Rennie Macintosh Society, I also voted for his architecture. Choose your seven by 4 April:

[<http://heritage.scotsman.com/wonders.cfm>](http://heritage.scotsman.com/wonders.cfm)

Rock Café Edinburgh

A group of us met on 29 January for a chat about Picts and things. We all brought along something to stimulate the discussion – pictures, articles and even a DVD. The group has decided to have an outing to Perthshire to see some of the stones on 9 April – if you are interested in joining us contact: sheilafraser@btinternet.com. or 01506 650 953.

Sheila Fraser

Contributions

The deadline for receipt of contributions to PAS Newsletter 39 is **20 May**.

Email to [<pasnews@btconnect.com>](mailto:pasnews@btconnect.com)
or post to: **The Editor, PAS News** –
at the Pictavia address.

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