



Perthshire Society of Natural Science
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SECTION
(Registered Charity Number SC 012718)

Newsletter August 2016

Section summer outings 2016

Wednesday 3rd August 6.30pm, Whitefriars excavations

Derek Hall has kindly agreed to give us a tour of his Whitefriars excavations. He is giving the Section's January talk "This is ane koull of Tullilum' - excavations at Perth Whitefriars 2014-2016" so it will be interesting to see the actual site beforehand.

We will meet at the site at Riggs Road/Whitefriars Street at 6.30pm, with parking available at the Clark Thomson building across the road.

Please wear suitable footwear – remember this is a working archaeological dig with uneven ground and possible loose stones and mud, and please respect the excavations, only walking where directed.

Please let me know by 5pm on the day if you are planning to come along. Contact details below.

Guests welcome. I attach a location map.

Thursday 22nd September afternoon, Moredun Top Hillfort excavations

The Tay Landscape Partnership and Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust will be running a community dig for a second season at Moredun Top Hillfort on Moncrieffe Hill from the 6th September until 1st October. Last year's dig uncovered large stone walls and defences and a possible broch so it will be interesting to see what more turns up this year.



Walking up from the Tay (north) Car Park should take between ½ - 1 hour so I suggest we go up in two groups, depending on ability, meeting at the top at 2pm where we will meet Sophie Nicol, PKHT Historic Environment Officer. As the car park will be busy with the usual dog walkers as well as the diggers perhaps we could arrange to meet up and leave extra cars at Tesco on Edinburgh Road beforehand. If you are thinking of going please contact me to discuss this. Guests welcome.

Rough ground, long grass and steep stretches so stout footwear required.

Contact Eva Bennett 01738 850489, mobile 07778 619665, email psns1948@yahoo.co.uk

Please note that all Members, their relatives and friends of the PSNS attend excursions at their own risk, and that every reasonable precaution will be taken by the Section and the Society to ensure your health & safety.

A & H Section Winter programme 2016 – 2017

Our first meeting is on Wednesday 12th October 2016 at 7.30pm. All our Section meetings will be held at the Soutar Theatre, A K Bell Library.

I have enclosed the finished programme with this newsletter and it will be sent out officially with the rest of the Society's Main and other Section's programmes in September.

How Culture Perth and Kinross will affect PSNS

With the establishment of Culture Perth and Kinross venue rental charges increased substantially and the Society would not have been able to carry on with our previous arrangements without either bankrupting the Society or having to impose a big rise in the subscriptions (with the likely consequence of losing members) so the Society has had to negotiate a new relationship with CPK.

The Section winter programmes had already been arranged so will continue as usual this winter but the Parent Body Friday evening lectures will be a joint lecture series run in conjunction with CPK and open to the public entitled "Curious Minds", comprising a mix of science topics which showcase contemporary scientific research in Scotland, to appeal to a wide audience and to reflect the founding ethos of the society. They will all take place at the Soutar Theatre on Friday evenings and there will be an entry charge of £6 for the public and £3 for PSNS members with the first lecture on Friday 14th October free. In return CPK will charge a discounted flat rate for all Section meetings.

The PSNS office bearers are satisfied that this is a relatively attractive package which, along with money raised from the lecture series, secures the immediate future of the Society. This will be a trial year and we very much hope that it succeeds as there may not be many other viable alternatives to help keep the PSNS in our present form.

Here is the provisional programme so far:

14 Oct	Mike Robinson	"Climate Past and Present"
28 Oct	Matthew Jarron	"D'Arcy Thompson – Dundee's Pioneer of Life Sciences"
4 Nov	Carol Littlewood	"Barn Owl conservation in Angus"
18 Nov	Dr Steven Brusatte	"Scotland's Jurassic Park: New Dinosaur Discoveries from Skye"
2 Dec	Dr Sabine Dedenbach Salazar	"The Peruvian Highland Clearances" & "Coca is not Cocaine"
9 Dec	Tom Morton	"Mudwall: a Living Tradition for the Carse of Gowrie?"
13 Jan	Irene Hallyburton	"Malaria Drug Discovery in Dundee"
27 Jan	Prof Malcolm McMahon	"The Structure of Minerals under extreme pressures"
10 Feb	Prof Martin Price	"Why Mountains Matter"
24 Feb	Dr Wendy Bickmore	"Current Research at the Human Genome Unit in Edinburgh"
10 Mar	Erik MacEachern	"Empowering sustainability in Scottish communities"
24 Mar	Prof James Hough	"How to detect a gravity wave"

The finalised programme will be sent out in September with the Section programmes and the joining form for 2016 – 17

PSNS Website

www.psns.org.uk The PSNS President Tom Ryan is developing a new website for the Society and this will be going online in the near future. At present the old website is still available but has not been updated since the spring.

Reports of Section Summer Outings so far this year

Dundee - 16th April

In April a small group of members was shown round the University of Dundee Museum Service collections store at Hawkhill House by Curator Matthew Jarron.

The University collections comprise a wide range of material including scientific instruments from the Chemistry, Physics and Engineering Departments as well as the Medical and Dental Schools, several natural history collections and a superb art collection. This is largely of 19th and 20th century Scottish art but also includes works by major English artists such as Gainsborough, Constable and the Pre-Raphaelites. Over the years the University has become the recipient of many differing collections of objects, including textiles and furniture. With little exhibition space available throughout the University buildings these are mostly crammed together in Hawkhill House, a charming little 18th Century three storey house hidden in the middle of the modern university campus. I will long hold the memory of Hamish resting in an original Charles Rennie Macintosh “Willow” chair two feet from Sir Edwin Landseer’s “The Trickster” in a crowded little basement room!

After a pleasant lunch in their cafe we had a walk around the lower floor of Scotland’s Jute Museum@ Verdant Works and we were lucky to be there just in time to see the Boulton and Watt Beam Engine fired up and running in the recently opened High Mill. Also on display there were over eighty panels of the Great Tapestry of Scotland.



Irene and Liz having a go with the “gird and cleek”

Strathearn and Royal Forteviot Project 2nd July

On Saturday 2 July five members of the Section and one guest attended the Open Day at the SERF project. After a shower on arrival in Dunning, the weather cleared up and was sunny.

This year there was only one site being excavated, at Cranberry Cottage, near the barrow at Millhaugh that was previously excavated on the west side of Dunning. The site was the largest area excavation of the project and had been identified by aerial photography. An exhibition on the project with finds from the current excavation, including Neolithic pottery and a chert blade, and previous ones, including the Roman patera or mess tin from the hillfort and broch at Castle Craig, was held in Dunning Parish Church Hall. This provided shelter from the shower! A minibus then took us from the church hall to the site, where we were warmly welcomed and given a guided tour by enthusiastic student diggers. Mrs McKay, the PSNS Secretary, and her husband were also there as volunteer diggers.

Many features were apparent, although lack of stratigraphy and scarcity of finds from some of them means that dating them is a problem. A large ditch enclosing a possible hut floor was cut by a circle of postholes, the latter possibly of Bronze Age date. Elsewhere a palisade trench may have enclosed another hut. A line of postholes contained the post pipes or sockets where the actual posts stood. There were also fire pits, filled with charcoal and burnt stones, and rubbish pits containing pottery and some bone, as well as a pair of small cists, perhaps for cremations. A pit containing stones and Victorian finds may have been a socket for a standing stone removed by a farmer in the 19th century, although no standing stone is recorded there.

After the site tour, we returned in the minibus to the church hall where tea and coffee were available.

David Perry, July

In conclusion

We will send out all the information for the Winter 2016 – 17 session in September but if anyone has any queries beforehand please don't hesitate to get in touch.

I look forward to seeing some of you at the forthcoming outings.

Eva

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