



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

Newsletter June 2017

A & H Section Forthcoming Outings Summer 2017

Saturday 24th June Brechin Castle & Gardens. A guided tour at 2pm.
Meeting **Scone** Park and Ride at 12.30pm. Suggest bringing a packed lunch and drinks as required.

Brechin Castle stands on a massive bluff of rocks above the River Southesk on the site of a much older fortress belonging to the Scottish kings. The present house was last reconstructed in the early 1700's and incorporates parts of the original Castle dating back to the 13th century. The building has evolved from a defensive role to its present great house style.



Brechin Castle is steeped in history. In 1296 Edward I received the submission of King John Baliol of Scotland there and in 1303 Sir Thomas Maule defended the castle against the English for three weeks until his own death brought about its surrender. In 1643 Patrick Maule, 1st Earl of Panmure, bought the whole of the Brechin Estate from the Earl of Mar. The Castle was at that time a simple L shaped house of three storeys. It was the 4th Earl of Panmure, married to Margaret daughter of the 3rd Duke of Hamilton, who eventually rebuilt the Castle as it is today.

Brechin Castle Gardens is one of the finest private gardens in Scotland. It covers over 40 acres of planted parkland and includes the famous walled garden. The first formal design and creation of the gardens was by Alexander Edward for the 4th Earl of Panmure between 1701 – 1708. Since that period there have been many improvements, including the addition of shrub and woodland gardens in the early 20th century.

Wednesday 28th June, 6.30pm Whitefriars Excavations.
Meeting on site at Riggs Road/Whitefriars Street. Parking available at Clark Thomson office parking.

Following on from our talk in February by Derek Hall "This is ane koull of Tullilum" - excavations at Perth Whitefriars 2014-2016" and our site visit in August last year we are hoping to get one last look and an update on Derek's work before the excavation finishes this summer.

Sunday 30th July Wemyss Caves and Environmental Education Centre.
Meeting Broxden Park and Ride at 12 noon. Suggest bringing a packed lunch and drinks as required.

The caves formed in the sandstone cliffs to the northeast of East Wemyss have been the focus of antiquarian and archaeological interest for over 150 years with their unique collections of Pictish and early Christian carvings. Dr Sue Hamstead, who gave our November 2016 talk, will lead a tour of the caves and another guide will stay with any less able members to visit the Wemyss Environmental Education Centre.

Please wear sensible footwear and clothing appropriate to the weather. **Please note areas of rough and broken ground.**

Saturday 26th August **The Engine Shed, Stirling** Meeting Broxden Park and Ride at 10am.
Café on site.

The Engine Shed, Scotland's dedicated Building Conservation Centre, will enable Historic Environment Scotland to encourage understanding of traditional building materials and skills among the public and professionals and raise standards in conservation for traditional buildings. It is opening to the public on 3rd July and will feature interactive exhibits, 3D theatre, augmented reality experiences and hands-on activities.

The building, used as a goods transfer shed, was built sometime between 1896 and 1913. The exact details of its construction were subject to an information blackout, as it was part of an important military complex.

There is a café and shop. There is no parking at the building but there is a public car park nearby. The Engine Shed, Forthside Way, Stirling, FK8 1QZ

Transport on all outings is by sharing cars.

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 to ensure your health & safety.

Please let me know by email or phone if you think that you may be interested in any of these outings. Eva Bennett 01738 850489 or psns1948@yahoo.co.uk.

I will not be able to attend some of the outings so please contact Irene Green 07746 392308 on the day of the outing if necessary

Report on our recent summer outing to Moredun Top Excavation by David Perry

On Thursday 11 May six members of the Section and two guests attended the excavations at Moredun Top hillfort on Moncreiffe Hill being conducted under the auspices of the Tay Landscape Partnership. We were shown round by Dave Strachan of PKHT on a dry and sunny day. Following on from previous two years' excavations on Moredun, five trenches were being excavated by volunteers and members of AOC Archaeology.

Trench A on the summit was across the outer and inner faces of a very wide wall or platform, some five metres wide. Both faces revealed the sockets of timbers from a timber-laced wall (*murus gallicus* as described by Caesar in his Gallic Wars).

Trench B nearby revealed a possible retaining or enclosure wall relating to a nearby hut circle but was not thought to be itself part of a hut circle.



In Trench C was the intense orange and red burning and charcoal inside the broch or dun found in previous years. Presumably the structure had burned down, though whether deliberately or accidentally is not clear. Remains of possible roof thatching and a collection of bone pins have been found in the interior.

Trench D was over a possible entrance to the hillfort on the steep side of the hillfort below the broch or dun.

David Strachan pointing out the area of burning

Trench E further investigated the presumed ‘well’ excavated last year. The source of the water is a spring bubbling up from the ground. A stone-lined trench may have contained a fence to keep livestock away from the spring, or may even be a much earlier feature.

After several weeks of dry weather the only muddy area of the dig!

Finds from the excavations include shale offcuts suggesting shale working in the fort as well as possible slingshot and spindle whorls.



Doors Open Days: 16 and 17 September

This year again we will have a display in the museum library for Doors Open Day. Please come and support this and the opportunity will be available to pay annual membership subscriptions as well, thus hopefully cutting down on the usual queues at the first meetings of the winter.

PSNS Events

The Photographic Section is to put on a display of photos from 16 to 30 September in the Banking Room of the PKC HQ at No 2 High Street.

The PSNS 150th Anniversary Exhibition in the Museum will open on 7 September. The working title is “The Study of Nature – 150 years of Perthshire Society of Natural Science”.

Further information about these events will be sent out with the Main Secretary’s newsletter later in the summer.

PSNS 150th Anniversary Event: Dame Evelyn Glennie “A Conversation with Dame Evelyn” on Wednesday 4th October 7:30pm, Perth Concert Hall, tickets £16.50 for the public and £14.50 for PSNS members and concessions. Tickets are available at the Concert Hall and at www.horsecross.co.uk

PSNS Winter programmes

Curious Minds opens on Friday 13th October with Dr Alison Sheridan, National Museum of Scotland “Green Treasures from the Magic Mountains” about Jadeite axe heads, one of which was found in Perthshire by Dr Margaret Stewart.

A & H Section

Our first talk this year will be on Wednesday, 18th October, by Ian Hill of HARP Archaeology - ‘In the Footsteps of the Grand Tours: The 18th Century in Perthshire’

Wed 8th November - The Dr Margaret Stewart Lecture

Prof Richard Tipping – University of Stirling - A Dark Age Revival: Pitcarmick Houses, Upland Farming and Climate Change in Glen Shee.

Wed 29th November

Dr Lucy Dean - University of Highlands and Islands - ‘James Stewart and Joan Beaufort: A King and Queen Unleashed, c. 1424 – c. 1437’

All our meetings will be at the Soutar Theatre, AK Bell Library.

And finally....

Here is a photo I found from the recent-ish archives - a Section outing to Claypotts Castle in 2003.



As ever, if you have any queries or suggestions, or want more information about anything I can help with, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Enjoy the summer, and I hope to see some of you soon.

Eva

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