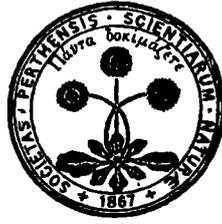


PERTSHIRE SOCIETY OF NATURAL SCIENCE

NEWS



LETTER

MAY 1996

The Society held its Annual General Meeting on Friday, 22 March 1996. The Council for 1996-1997 is:-

President:	Mr John Durran	Past President:	Dr J F Mair
Secretary:	Miss R Fothergill	Treasurer:	Mr A McKenzie

Members of Council: Donald Myles, G S Keay, Mrs Ada Mathieson, Mrs Joanna Thomas, James Herd, Graham Watson, Mrs Mary Cairncross, Miss Esther Taylor.

Following the business meeting Dr Mair gave his Presidential Address. This was entitled "Images of Worship" and gave a fascinating survey of a variety of religious sites and buildings from the stone henges of the Isle of Lewis to the ornate and richly decorated temples and mosques of India and the East. Of particular interest were the views of the Nissen hut church built by Italian prisoners-of-war on Orkney during the Second World War.

The second half of the Winter Programme of Lectures was dogged by several spells of extremely severe wintry weather and, indeed, the visit of Dr Keith Bland, who was to speak on "Insect-Plant Associations" on 9 February, had to be cancelled. We hope to have this lecture in the 1996-97 Programme.

The list of the Parent Body Summer Outings is enclosed with this Newsletter. The Council hopes that there will be a good response to these outings.

Additional Excursion

The Edinburgh Geological Society proposes to mount a field excursion to Perth on 28 September 1996. The itinerary will include a visit to Kinnoull Hill and Campsie Linn. An open invitation is extended to members of PSNS to join this excursion. The leaders will be Mr Bill Baird, Edinburgh and Mr Michael Taylor, Perth Museum. PSNS members should meet the Edinburgh Group at 10.30am in the Old Quarry Car Park, Kinnoull Hill.

100 Years Ago

As we look forward to our Summer Outings Programmes for 1996 it is interesting to look back to Summer 1896. "Field" work was an important department of the activities of our Society then. For Summer 1896 13 outings had been arranged and only one, an excursion to Ben Lawers, had to be cancelled because of a storm of wind and rain. For all the others the weather was fine and bright and "the heat not excessive". The largest attendance at an outing was 21 and average attendance was 11. The outings were held on consecutive Saturdays. On the Queen's Birthday, 21 May, Mr William Barclay led an outing to Invermay. The botanists went in search of plants while the geologists crossed the gravel beds finding a number of stones bearing "more or less evident traces of palaeolithic workmanship". It is noted that the most interesting plant found that day was the toothwort and the saprophyte bird's nest orchis is also included in the list of finds. An excursion to the Den of Pitroddie allowed members to

view the Pitroddie dyke, a wall of volcanic rock thrust through a fracture of the older lavas. This dyke stands as a great black rampart on the eastern side of the glen. In June an excursion to Birnam was led by Mr Charles Macintosh of Inver. Attention was directed to the slate quarries on the side of the hill where veins of quartz, crystals of copper and iron pyrites mingled with the slate. The entomologists in the party collected insects with their hand nets or inverted umbrellas held below the oak branches which were shaken firmly to dislodge a variety of bugs and flies!

Other outings that summer visited Callerfountain Hill, Aberdalgie, Loch Tummel, Methven Loch and Clashbennie Quarry where the beds of Upper Red Sandstone were examined. It was there, some years earlier, that fossil fish had been found. Further afield to Arbroath, Dunblane Cathedral, Doune Castle and Sheriffmuir journeyed our members in late summer 1896. A fairly detailed account is given of an outing in July to Cargill, Meikleour and Delvine thence to Caputh and Murthly. The party of members journeyed by rail to Cargill Station and then walked by the Beech Hedges to Meikleour where the ancient cross was inspected. The old sand quarry beyond the village had a sand-wall where sand martins were observed flitting in and out the numerous holes. Walking to Delvine, members visited the site of the Roman Camp at Inchtuthill with its tumuli. The excursion then proceeded by Caputh Bridge to Murthly Station returning to Perth by train.

Archaeological and Historical Section

Summer Visits. Our Summer Visit Programme is as follows:-

Saturday, 4 May (afternoon). Visit to the reconstructed Crannog at Loch Tay. Meet at Caithness Glass Works Car Park at 1.30pm.

Saturday, 8 June (all day). Visit to Inchcolm Abbey and Deep Sea World, North Queensferry. Telephone the Secretary for details.

Saturday, 27 July. House of Dun, Montrose - Open Day.

It has not been possible to detail arrangements for the 8 June and 27 July visits as yet, but these will be posted on the Museum Noticeboard two weeks before the dates of the visits.

Adopt-a-Monument Scheme. We are still on target for a June Opening of the Stone Circle Trail and this is only the second Adopt-a-Monument Scheme in Scotland to have been finalised. CSA and Historic Scotland are taking great interest in our progress and have been most helpful in guiding us. The occasion will be marked suitably by a Press Release.

The Dupplin Cross. Public interest in the Dupplin Cross Enquiry was such that at times it was standing room only. Much argument for and against was propounded, but at the time of going to press, no decision has yet been announced. The general feeling of the meeting was that although public opinion and that of several learned bodies was against the removal of the Cross to Edinburgh, it might be a close decision at the end of the day.

Perth & Kinross District Council Archaeologist. Representations were made to Perth & Kinross District Council that due cognisance of the need for a full-time Archaeologist on the staff of the new Authority should be taken and, whilst we got a sympathetic reply with agreement in principle, it is feared that lack of finance may prove to be a stumbling block in pursuance of this aim.

A day-long Seminar was held in February in Perth, under the auspices of CSA, to which representatives of District and Regional Councils were invited to discuss this very subject and, again, while there was general agreement on the principles, concern about funding was apparent.

Ornithological Section

We have had another successful season with a welcome increase in membership. The very hard winter was not good for the birds but it certainly was good for bird-watchers as it brought in foreign species seeking refuge, and we were delighted to see such large numbers of the colourful, confident waxwings to name but one.

As each year we issue three bulletins of members' bird sightings, there should be some interesting observations in this year's winter edition. We now also send in reports of small mammals seen. This is of special interest to the museum which has been holding surveys on various mammals in the last few years, current surveys being on squirrels and hares.

The winter meetings were mostly well attended, except for the February one which clashed with other groups. We were taken to quite a few foreign parts this year, starting and finishing in South America, with Moira Hutchison and Ros Grant giving us accounts of their holidays there, while Irene McKinnie and Nan Campbell contributed their slides on New Zealand (and Australia from Nan) at our members' night. In between these we had talks on rather more specialist subjects, 'Birds of Prey', 'RSPB Investigation Work' and about birds 'From Munros to Marine' – a very varied and interesting programme.

House Martin Survey

This continues and the secretary, Miss E Taylor (Tel 621986) would be glad of any reports on successful nesting sites by the end of summer (especially as a follow-up to those found last year but new sites also wanted, please).

Programme of Summer Outings 1996

Wednesday 24 April	Polney Loch, Dunkeld	6.30pm
Sunday 5 May	Killiekrankie, RSPB Reserve	9.00am
Wednesday 22 May	Almondmouth, Perth	6.30pm
Wednesday 5 June	Little Glenshee	6.30pm
Sunday 8 September	Montrose Basin, SWT Visitor Centre	9.00am

Please meet at the Museum car park. Members of RSPB and SWT should remember their membership cards where appropriate. Cars will be shared and petrol money paid to drivers. Please bring a packed lunch to the two whole day outings. Wardens will meet us at the two nature reserves.

Photographic Section

Prize Giving

At the annual presentation of prizes held at the Grampian Hotel, Perth, the following awards were made:

Peter Rourke Salver	–	James Herd
Main Cup	–	David Hay
Grant Cup, Colour Rose Bowl	–	Ron Grandison
Simpson Cup, Stanley Taylor Trophy	–	Michael Nicoll
Ron Crosbee Trophy, Dall Cup	–	Alan Borthwick
Ladies Shield	–	Nan Borthwick
Reid Cup	–	Thomas Calley
PKM Trophy	–	Marion Campbell
JRS Trophy	–	Roben Antoniewicz

Congratulations to all winners.

Committee

After the recent AGM, the new committee is:

President:	Harry Petrie	Competition Secretaries:	Alan Borthwick Sheila Borthwick
Vice-President:	David Hay	Technical Officer:	David Morrice
Secretary:	Michael Nicoll	Ordinary Members:	Ian Swan Marion Campbell
Treasurer:	Ron Grandison		

SPF Slide Championship

At the recent Scottish Photographic Federation Club Slide Championship, the section did exceptionally well and missed out on a place in the final by one point. In the plate competition, for clubs not in the final, the section went on to win by three points from their nearest rivals. A special thanks should go to all members who allowed their slides to be used and to Landel Johnston for co-ordinating this historic victory.

Festival Exhibition

This year's festival exhibition takes place at Perth Theatre between 21 May and 1 June. The festival exhibition will include pictures from our guest exhibitor, Glyn Satterly, who will be exhibiting pictures from his many photographic books. The exhibition is the culmination of the year's work and all are welcome to come along and view the prints.

Summer Outings

This summer's outings are to Auchingarrich Wildlife Centre (5 May), BBQ (8 June), East Neuk, Fife (7 July), Drummond Castle Gardens (11 August) and Deep Sea World (1 September). All members are invited to attend.

Competition Winner

Congratulations to new member Alistair Fyfe who won first prize in the recent Perth Soroptomist Photographic Competition with a picture of the Hermitage. Alistair also won 2nd Prize.

