



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

Newsletter June 2018

Section AGM March 2018

The Committee

President	Margaret Borland-Stroyan
Vice-President	David Bowler
Secretary	Eva Bennett
Treasurer	Irene Green
Ordinary Members	John Andrews, David Perry, John Jessop, Colin McLeod
Archaeology Adviser	Mark Hall, Perth Museum and Art Gallery

The AGM was followed by a talk by Derek Hall entitled “Whitefriars: an exercise in contemplation”, Derek kindly standing in at short notice when Mark Hall had to call off. We have re-scheduled Mark’s talk for the forthcoming winter session.

John Joyce has had to stand down as Section President for health reasons and we all wish him well for the future. John has been President since 2010, having previously acted as Secretary, and we thank him for all the time and effort he has devoted to the Section over the years.

Summer outings programme

Our next outing could be described as a search for the Picts.

Sat 30th June St Vigeans Stones and Museum, Restenneth Priory, Aberlemno and Eassie stones, and more if time allows.

St Vigeans Museum - Adult £5, concession £4, HES members free

Meet Broxden Park and Ride at 9.15am

Prof Jane Geddes spoke to us in 2015 about “A Sermon in Stone: the Pictish sculpture of St Vigeans 007”. You can also hear her talking about “The Drosten Stone: a cultural hybrid” at the Tafac conference last year at <http://www.tafac.org.uk/category/conferences/>
Since we last visited St Vigeans the museum has been revamped but is not generally open.

Restenneth is a ruined Augustinian priory incorporating earlier features, the earliest dateable masonry dates to around AD 1100.

Sun 15th July Linlithgow Palace and Torphican Preceptory with Adrian Cox of Historic Environment Scotland.

Linlithgow Palace – Adult £6, concession £4.80, HES members free.

James I began work on the new palace in 1424, shortly after his return from captivity in England. A major royal residence of the Stewart dynasty, both James V (1513) and Mary Queen of Scots (1542) were born there.

Torphican Preceptory – Adult £2, concession £1.50, HES members free.

Remains of the medieval headquarters of Scotland’s Knights Hospitaller, founded by David I in the 1100’s but much of what we see now was built in the 1400’s.

If time allows we may visit St Michael’s Church, Linlithgow.

Meet Broxden Park and Ride at 9.15am

Sun 26th August Sites in the Aberfeldy area

Suggestions for the morning - Croftmoraig and Lundin stone circles and St Mary's Church, Grandtully. If anyone has any other suggestions please say.

St Mary's was originally a pre-reformation chapel and has a rare 1630's painted ceiling.



Croftmoraig was excavated by Piggott and Simpson in 1965 and their interpretation is recorded on the information board at the site but further excavations were done by Richard Bradley in 2012 and he has suggested that their conclusions be revised.

Lundin four poster was excavated by Margaret Stewart in 1964 and some of our members at the time were involved. It is now sadly overgrown and off the beaten track but it is close to a road and worth a visit.

Castle Menzies and Old Kirk of Weem 2pm

Ancestral seat of Clan Menzies. The 16th century castle was built on a Z-plan roughly on the site of the previous stronghold, the Place of Weem, built 1488.
Adult £7.00, concession £5.50

The Old Kirk of Weem is a medieval building containing the Menzies Mausoleum with their heraldic hatchments as well as two of the sanctuary crosses from Dull and St Cuthbert's Cross. Price of admission is included in the Castle Menzies ticket.

Meet at either Broxden Park and Ride at 10am or Castle Menzies at 2pm but please let me know which.

Winter lectures 2018

Fri 12th October Dr Alison Sheridan, "Green Treasures from the Magic Mountains"
First Curious Minds talk of the winter session.
Wed 17th October First A & H section talk

Doors Open Days 2018

15-16 September Eastern and Highland Perthshire
22-23 September Strathearn and Kinross-shire
29-30 September Perth City

The PSNS Museum Library will be open on Sunday 30th September. More information later.

Section 70th Anniversary

The Section is celebrating its founding in 1948 starting with the opening talk of the Curious Minds series being given by Dr Alison Sheridan. This is particularly appropriate as our founder, Dr

Margaret Stewart, found one of the axes which featured in the recent National Museums Scotland exhibition.

The photograph below was taken at our 40th Anniversary celebration when we launched our “Pitmiddle Village and Elcho Nunnery” publication and welcomed the then Council of Scottish Archaeology’s Summer School to Perthshire at a Civic reception. I am ashamed to say that my only memory of that evening was the delicious archaeologically-themed cake produced by Alison Reid of Perth Museum and Art Gallery.



Eva Bennett, David Bowler, Alison Reid, John Stewart, Marion Stavert (Secretary), Bob Butchart (Past President), Nancy Boyd (President), Rose Smith (Treasurer), Mrs Coventry, Geoff Waters (Summer School Director)

A special find by David Perry

For the last year or so a group of volunteers from the Society have been doing a stock-take of the Society’s library held in Perth Museum. This is prior to the closure of the museum and removal of its contents to a new collection store to be built as part of Perth and Kinross Council’s proposed cultural programme with the redevelopment of the City Hall. As moving premises is usually an opportunity for items to get lost, we are checking what is present so that we can know if anything is missing at the end of the removal and opening of the new store.

A surprising discovery among the library’s collections is a copy of *Ackermann's Photogenic Drawing Apparatus: Directions for Use*. This 8-page pamphlet was published in April 1839 and it was the first photographic instruction book to be printed. It accompanied a box of paper, a printing frame and chemicals for making ‘photogenic drawings’. The pamphlet explained how to use the apparatus to produce photographs according to Henry Fox Talbot’s pioneering paper negative process. Talbot had been experimenting since 1834 and publicised his experiments in January 1839 to the Royal Society in London after hearing about Louis Daguerre’s parallel experiments in photography in France.

The discovery of the pamphlet in our library doubles the number of known copies in existence from one to two! The only other known copy is in the collection of the Royal Photographic Society, from which a reprint was produced in 1977. Our copy was unknown because it is bound together with another early photographic pamphlet, *Photographic Printing, in Carbon and other Pigments*, by a Perth photographer, William Blair, published in 1869, the title in the binding referring only to Blair’s pamphlet. Both pamphlets and the bound book were presented by Thomas Bourke, a Perth photographer, to the Photographic Section of the PSNS shortly after its formation in 1889, although Ackermann’s pamphlet has the inscription that it was presented to the Photographic Section by James Jackson, presumably a relative of Magnus Jackson, the Perth photographer who was a member of the PSNS and its Vice-President.

Reports of our first Summer 2018 outings by David Perry

Market Knowe

On Wednesday 30 May 11 members and two guests of the Section visited the Market Knowe at Longforgan. We were shown round by Christina Donald and Catherine Smith of the Abertay Historical Society on a warm, dry and sunny evening. The knowe was covered in bluebells.

The Market Knowe is small prehistoric mound within Huntly Wood on the north side of the A90 at Longforgan. It is some 30m diameter and 2m high, surrounded by a broad ditch 2-4m wide. The feature is a Scheduled Monument. Its purpose and date are unknown, but stone cists were recorded in the Old Statistical Account, and two cists were excavated in advance of a new house on its southern edge in 2010-11. One of these cists produced a C14 date of AD420-590.

Formerly the mound was a visible monument in moorland covered in heath and broom but it was enclosed in Huntly Wood planted in the 18th century. It may have been the 'Hundhil of Longforgan', the site of a medieval outdoor barony court mentioned in 1385. When Longforgan was created a barony in 1672 for the Earl of Kinghorn, markets and fairs were held at the mound until 1807, hence its name of Market Knowe. Huntly Wood is now owned by the Woodland Trust.

The mound has been adopted by the Abertay Historical Society as part of the Adopt-a-Monument scheme of Archaeology Scotland. No excavations have been conducted on the mound itself but geophysical, magnetometer and contour surveys have been conducted recently. The depression in the centre of the mound may have been the result of the investigations when the stone cists were found in the 18th century or the interior of a circular walled building.

After visiting the Knowe, we walked round Huntly Wood. Plantation banks underlie the edge of the wood and line both sides of a former road. Some of the beech trees on the banks are of great girth and were probably planted in the late 18th century by George Paterson who bought Castle Huntly in 1777.

“Walking in the bloody footsteps of James I”

On Wednesday 13 June our Vice-President, David Bowler, led 10 members of the Section around central Perth. It was a cool, but dry evening despite the weather forecast. We assembled outside the museum in George Street, near the site of the medieval castle of Perth. The castle lay outside and to the north of the medieval burgh, which was surrounded on three sides by a wall and moat, formed from the tail race of Perth's mill lade (the fourth side was bounded by the River Tay). The castle was swept away in a flood in 1209 and not rebuilt. Instead the Blackfriars monastery was founded by Alexander II about 1231 and endowed with the redundant castle lands. The monastery replaced the castle as a royal residence in Perth until James I's murder there in 1437.

From the museum we went first to Albert Close, the site of a supposed fragment of the medieval town wall. There David explained that about 1990 SUAT conducted excavation on the site of a former lock-up garage and found, at a depth of about 2m, remains of a stone foundation, probably for the medieval town wall, so that the wall fragment in Albert Close, though not itself the town wall, followed its course. Also found were timber foundations, probably for the Red Brig which carried the road from Skinnergate across the lade towards the castle and Blackfriars monastery.

We then walked along Skinnergate, past Skinnergate House, an unusual Arts and Crafts building for a hostel, now run by the Salvation Army. Skinnergate and Kirkgate formed a N/S aligned road between the parish church at the south end and the royal castle at the north end. The intersection of these two streets with the E/W aligned High Street was the site of the medieval market cross, marked by a granite stone set in the roadway. Here the burgh's medieval markets were held.

From there we proceeded west along High Street to Cutlog Vennel, formerly Masterton's Vennel. At the north end of the vennel, beyond the lade, was the Blackfriars monastery. It was possibly along this vennel that the murderers of James I proceeded. The site of the monastery is now occupied by Carpenter Court sheltered housing and the former Christie's pub, recently renamed the King James. Excavation by SUAT in advance of the building of Carpenter Court in the winter of 1983-4 revealed part of the cloister and burial ground of the monastery. The church probably occupied the north side of the cloister, under the pub, where early foundations were found in a building survey last year. It was in the royal apartments, part of the monastery, that James I was murdered, hiding from his attackers in the drain underneath his chambers. He had been unable to escape from the drain because he had himself ordered the exit of the drain to be blocked to prevent the loss of his tennis balls, which had been landing in the drain while he was playing!

We finished our walk at the King James VI Hospital, built in 1750 within the grounds of the Charterhouse or Carthusian monastery. James I was buried in the Charterhouse which he had founded at the SW corner of the burgh of Perth with the intention of creating a royal mausoleum for himself and his successors. Unfortunate, as a result of James' murder, Perth declined as a royal residence and none of his successors were buried in the Charterhouse: the only subsequent royal burials were those of his widow, Joan Beaufort, and James V's widow, Margaret Tudor, sister of Henry VIII of England; she had died in her dower house of Methven Castle. Nothing now remains of the monastery, which was demolished after the Reformation.

As ever, if you have any queries about any PSNS matters please don't hesitate to contact me and I will try to provide the answers.

Regards,
Eva

Eva Bennett
Secretary
Archaeological and Historical Section
Perthshire Society of Natural Science
(Registered Charity Number SC012718)

01738 850489
psns1948@yahoo.co.uk