

ALGAO:Scotland *news*



*The newsletter of the
Association of Local Government
Archaeological Officers:Scotland*

Welcome

Welcome to the first annual newsletter of ALGAO:Scotland, the association for archaeologists working for, or on behalf of, local government in Scotland. Our members carry out a very wide range of tasks, from working with planning officers (ensuring necessary archaeological work occurs in advance of development) to community interpretation and outreach projects. ALGAO:Scotland news is an annual review of the highlights of the activities of ALGAO:Scotland members through the year – in this first edition, the theme is community archaeology, outreach and education



Above: Learning for all ages through Exploring Perthshire's Past! © PKHT

What is ALGAO:Scotland?

ALGAO:Scotland represents Local Authority and National Park archaeological services in Scotland. It was formed in 2006 and is part of the UK-wide organisation, ALGAO:UK (www.algao.org.uk). ALGAO members' interests embrace all aspects of the historic environment including archaeology, maritime, built environment and historic landscapes.



What do we do?

ALGAO:Scotland members have four key functions in order to encourage the identification, recording, protection, management, interpretation and promotion of archaeological sites and monuments:

- To develop and maintain comprehensive public information records of the historic environment (Sites and Monuments Records or Historic Environment Records).
- To ensure that all development and other land-use change takes into account the need properly to conserve the archaeological heritage.
- To conserve the historic environment through improved land management, using, for example, agri-environment schemes.
- To promote awareness, understanding and enjoyment of Scotland's historic environment through education and outreach programmes.

More About SMRs and HERs...

Sites and Monuments Records (SMR) or Historic Environment Records (HER) are essentially a record of all archaeological and historic sites and landscapes within a local authority area. They usually consist of a computer data-base and a map system recording where sites are and what we know about them. They are central to the work of ALGAO:Scotland members, informing much of the work they carry out.

All that glistens. . . . Detecting and the SMR in Dumfries and Galloway

Over the last four years the Dumfries and Galloway SMR has built up a good working relationship with a number of metal detectorists in and around Dumfries. There is no formal detecting club in the area, so contact has been built up with individuals, and through co-ordination with the Councils Museum Service. Detectorists commonly come into the SMR to obtain maps prior to going into the field. As well as being advised about scheduled areas, they are also given maps showing the location of unscheduled sites, with a summary SMR extract indicating site-type and period – to provide a historical background to their work. In addition to agreeing not to detect on the known archaeology, they have also agreed to collect pottery, fired clay, ironwork, glass and other materials, to provide a better context for the metal finds they recover. The SMR is given exact locations of any finds, in order to assist casework, though we agree not to publish any locations to more than the nearest km square.

A recent success, work still in progress, was the location of a later 14th century coin hoard near Dumfries. The coins had been dispersed by ploughing, but a plot of find locations made by the detecting team indicated that the original hoard deposition was in one corner of the field – where the SMR has records for a bi-vallate settlement. The detectorists have not searched over the settlement at the request of the SMR officer, but have agreed to assist in a number of trial excavations to see if the deposition point could be determined. Nick Holmes from the NMS came down to assist in the initial trenches, since some of the coins recovered were quite unusual for a hoard of this period. The first two trenches were unsuccessful, but further works are intended in late spring, in co-ordination with the SMR. The collaboration sees all sides benefit from each others experience and knowledge, and helps us acknowledge that we all have something to contribute to the wider appreciation of our historic environment.

Jane Brann, Dumfries & Galloway Council



Nick Holmes of the NMS searching for the hoard deposit (inset: a portion of the medieval silver hoard).

The Tron Kirk, Edinburgh



The Tron Kirk on Edinburgh's Royal Mile was constructed between 1637 and 1655 to house the dispossessed congregation of St Giles' Church when it became the city's cathedral. In the 1970s and early 1980s excavations in the central area of the Kirk's interior uncovered the sealed remains of late-medieval tenements on either side of Marlyn's Wynd. The current regeneration scheme provided an opportunity to conserve both the church and these nationally important remains whilst breathing new life into the building and creating an up to date visitor attraction. The 2006/7 excavation led to new discoveries including perhaps the oldest section of Edinburgh's medieval High Street incorporating a shop frontage and associated cellars. The project has also allowed for the re-assessment of the previously excavated material. The excavations were open to the public throughout the excavation and attracted over 1,500 visitors.

On completion of the excavation, the entire site was subject to a Laser Scan by AOC Archaeology Group, which surveyed both the archaeological deposits and the surrounding church structure to millimetre accuracy to give a highly accurate digital 3D record representation. The 3D scan negated the need for the majority of the individual plans and elevations usually required on a site, producing a survey which was useful to both the archaeological team and the architects and will be used to aid the final design of the internal superstructure. When completed visitors to the new ground floor interpretation centre will be able to view and 'walk over' the medieval remains via a central glass floor. New construction within the Tron will be designed with conservation in mind from the outset, with foundations and new floors designed to avoid the sensitive historic fabric. The proposed new interpretation centre will tell the story of the conservation of the Tron, explore the history of the site and also interpret the wider archaeology and heritage of Edinburgh's World Heritage site.

John Lawson, City of Edinburgh Council



Prestongrange Community Archaeology project

The Prestongrange Community Archaeological Project is a heritage project developed and co-ordinated by the East Lothian Council Archaeological Service and Museums Service. Thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic Scotland, the Society of Antiquaries, Scottish Power, the Friends of Prestongrange and East Lothian Council,

Phase 2 of the project was launched in June 2007. Prestongrange is an open air colliery museum located between Musselburgh and Prestonpans. Standing remains of the 19th century colliery predominate the site but also visually disguise the fact that the site has had a lengthy and highly significant social and economic past since the 13th century.

The main over-riding aim of the project is to identify what survives of that pre-colliery industrial archaeology. Complimenting the archaeological fieldwork are programmes of historical research, local oral reminiscence and young person projects, all of which are either being led or partly involve members of the project volunteer task force. The project will culminate in on site interpretation, publications and a community archaeology conference (to be held in February 2009 in East Lothian in conjunction with the Council for Scottish Archaeology).

Biddy Simpson, East Lothian Council

www.prestongrange.org/pcap



Volunteers excavating a 17th Century glassworks air flue at Prestongrange

Exploring Perthshire's Past!

Exploring Perthshire's Past! (EPP) is an exciting outreach project run by Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust (PKHT) focusing on archaeology and historic buildings in the region. Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Exploring Perthshire's Past! has run since September 2006, and builds on the success of PKHT's two existing outreach events, Doors Open Day and Perthshire Archaeology Month. The project provides a range of opportunities for members of local communities and visitors to the area to discover more about the past and get involved in a varied programme of activities. Activities include guided walks and talks throughout the region covering a wide variety of topics and locales, such as 'the landscape of Pitcarmick': a look at the area which gave its name to this monument type, and Dunsinnan Hill: best known for its association with Shakespeare's Macbeth.

The project has also provided numerous practical 'hands-on' activities, giving members of the public opportunities to try out archaeological excavation, geophysical survey and historic building recording amongst other things, both through projects run by the Trust, such as excavations of the Black Spout homestead, and with partner organisations, including the Medieval Abbey Survey Scone (MASS) and the Strathearn Environs and Royal Forteviot (SERF) projects. In 2008 EPP will continue to provide opportunities for members of the public to find out more about the past of the area, promoting knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the historic environment.

David Strachan, Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust.

www.pkht.org.uk



Local volunteers involved in archaeological excavation with Glasgow University's SERF project © PKHT

Discovering Viking Shetland

As an outsourced archaeological service, Shetland Amenity Trusts archaeological objectives are wider than purely development control. Our Strategic Objectives are to curate Shetlands archaeology for the benefit of the public and to develop Shetlands archaeology as a resource for educational purposes and for the enjoyment of the public.

At present we are running a major project looking at Viking settlement in Unst, Britains most northerly island. Here the density of extant rural Viking settlement is greater than anywhere else (including Scandinavia). Shetland is very proud of its Viking heritage and the legacy is clear in the dialect and land tenure as well as the archaeology, however surprisingly little is actually known about it. Shetland Amenity Trust has engaged the University of Bradford and Roskilde Viking Ship Museum/Copenhagen University in the excavation of three longhouse sites in the island. This summer will be the third season of excavation and will focus on work at Underhoull where, last year, a previously undisturbed longhouse was discovered to be covered with peat which formed after it was abandoned. The potential for the discovery of organic material is exciting the whole team. The principal funders are the Heritage Lottery Fund and the European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund, with smaller contributions from a variety of sources including Historic Scotland.

Val Turner, Shetland Amenity Trust

www.shetland-heritage.co.uk/amenitytrust



Members of the Unst Archaeology Group, Margaret Hunter and Davy Leask, helping out on the longhouse excavations at Hamar, Unst © Shetland Amenity Trust

Archaeology beneath our feet

Since May 2007 the Stirling & Clackmannanshire SMR has been available online to the public through the Stirling Council website, so we can all now find out what archaeologists have been digging up in the area or what folks have found in their back gardens. It contains details of around 5,750 known archaeological sites and some 780 recorded find-spots in the Stirling and Clackmannanshire Council areas, from the earliest period of human activity in the area, around 7500 years ago, to structures which survive from the Second World War. The SMR is updated and expanded with information from a variety of sources, including archaeological fieldwork which has taken place as a result of planning decisions as well as reports of finds from local societies and interested individuals. An example of the latter is the 17th century sundial, from Chartershall, re-used in a more modern farm outbuilding. The Record forms a valuable resource for research, education, and community development. Since it also provides access to maps it has given walks round Stirlingshire an historic dimension by helping you check out the history of an area before you go!



Lorna Main, Stirling Council

www.stirling.gov.uk/index/services/planning/archaeology



Re-used 17th century sundial from Chartershall © Stirling Council

The Masons' Marks Project

The Archaeology Service of Aberdeenshire Council, which also provides services to Moray Council & Angus Council, is working with local heritage groups throughout the north-east of Scotland to record masons' marks on as many buildings as possible, from the medieval period up to the late 18th century. Although marks have been noted in a number of publications on castles little has been done on a large scale. This project will create a database of marks, which may help towards dating some buildings.

When a stonemason finished his apprenticeship he became a master mason, and was either given, or chose a mark, which he carved in the dressed stones to define his work. This may have been for payment, depending on the number of stones he had carved in a day or week. They were the symbolic signatures that master masons cut into the stone wherever they worked. Masons' marks are one of the most enigmatic features of Scotland's medieval churches, castles and bridges. We do, however, know they moved around quite a large area, as the same medieval mason's mark has been noted on a castle in Northumberland, in Jedburgh Abbey in the Borders, in Drum Castle on Deeside and in St Machar's Cathedral in Aberdeen.

All the groups taking part have been given a short presentation and pack showing them how to record the marks and so far the majority of groups have been very enthusiastic and want to help. The aim of the project is to record as many marks as possible and see if we can make any sense of them. In a very few cases we may even be able to put a mason's name to a mark. In one specific case we have a dated 16th century document giving the names of two masons and describing the work they did and how they were paid and at the bottom of the document are their marks. As a note of interest during recent work on Lower Northwater Bridge, between Aberdeenshire and Angus, which is an A-Listed structure dated 1770-77, an archaeological survey of two spans recorded around 645 masons' marks, which could be broken down into the work of 16 different masons.

Moira Greig, Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/archaeology/index.asp



Archaeology and the M74

For the last two years, the West of Scotland Archaeology Service has been the Consultant's Representative for the archaeological mitigation component of the M74 Completion Project, a partnership project between Transport Scotland, Glasgow City Council, South Lanarkshire Council, and Renfrewshire Council. The fieldwork element of this £5 million archaeological contract, which is now complete, was undertaken by HAPCA, a joint venture between Headland Archaeology Ltd and Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. It involved a major programme of standing building recording, large-scale open area excavation of three sites, and the investigation of numerous other sites along the course of the five mile stretch of new road. Sites excavated during the course of this work included part of the Govan Iron Works, founded in 1837, the Caledonian Pottery, one of Glasgow's great industrial potteries, a group of tenement buildings off Pollokshaws Road, the Glasgow-Paisley-Ardrossan Canal close to its terminus at Port Eglinton in Glasgow, and the Falfield cotton mills. The principal focus of this fieldwork was to investigate and document the industrial and social history of areas of Glasgow and South Lanarkshire located along the line of the road. Associated with the M74 Dig is an ambitious Public Archaeology Programme, which both presents the results of the fieldwork to the wider community and gives members of the public the opportunity to get involved and help to uncover the area's heritage.



Carol Swanson, West of Scotland Archaeology Service

www.transportscotland.gov.uk/projects/headline-projects/m74-completion/m74-dig



*Excavation at the site of the Caledonian Pottery, South Lanarkshire has revealed much new information about the Pottery's customers
© HAPCA (Headland Archaeology Ltd and Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd)*



Hebrides Archaeology Interpretation Programme

This three-year partnership project, funded by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and the Highlands and Islands Special Transitional Programme, is almost complete, the culmination of work by the project officer, Carol Knott, and community groups, common grazings, crofters, estates, artists, builders, stonemasons, designers, landscape architects, and authors. The programme aimed to maximise social, economic and environmental benefits from the development and promotion of archaeological interpretation. The Outer Hebrides contains a rich, diverse archaeological heritage, with many internationally important sites. The quality of the cultural and historic assets give it world class potential for attracting and keeping visitors; this project goes far in developing that potential.

Some sites were chosen for on-site interpretation, in consultation with local groups. The chosen sites cover the whole of the islands, from Barra to Lewis, and also cover the whole range of the islands' past history. Three guidebooks have also been written, covering Barra, the Uists, and Lewis and Harris, with a brief outline of the archaeology of each area, with details of sites to visit.

Two new web-sites are also part of the project. ArchaeologyHebrides - www.ArchaeologyHebrides.com - with links to the VisitHebrides site, is a user-friendly introduction to the archaeology of the islands, with information about selected sites, illustrations and other interpretation. It is linked to the new, on-line version of the Western Isles SMR, which is a record maintained by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar of all that is known about the sites and monuments of the island - <http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/smr>. The SMR is regularly updated with the latest information. The purpose of this project was to increase awareness and understanding of the rich archaeological and historical heritage of the Outer Hebrides. The results will benefit the community and our visitors for many years.

Mary Macleod, Western Isles Council (Comhairle nan Eilean)
www.cne-siar.gov.uk/archaeology/

AIRD MA-RUIBHE SQUARE CAIRN, BERNERAY

THIS IS A NATIONALLY IMPORTANT ANCIENT MONUMENT. PLEASE TAKE CARE NOT TO DISTURB THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS OF THE STRUCTURE AROUND THEM IN ANY WAY!

In fact you do the right amount of a...
The monument is the remains of an...
It is located on the... 1930s...

This is a very important...
The monument is the remains of an...
It is located on the... 1930s...

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Highland Archaeology



Over the past couple of years, the Highland Council Archaeology Unit has been busy upgrading its Sites and Monuments Record. We are now pleased to announce that we are the proud owners of a fully-fledged and fully digitised Historic Environment Record, running on Exegesis's HBSMR software. The next stage in the project will be the launch of our new web-pages later this year. New features will include an online version of our full HER database, complete with a searchable mapping facility, themed articles, and opportunities for the public to contribute.

Our successful Highland Archaeology Fortnight will be running again this year from the 4th to the 19th October. Nearly 6,000 people took part last year, with over 160 events running across Highland, and we hope to top those figures this year. Events will include guided walks, talks and other outreach activities, and the fortnight will culminate with the ever popular seminar in Inverness.

Dorothy Maxwell, Highland Council
archaeology@highland.gov.uk



One of the more unusual additions to the Highland Historic Environment Record

ALGAO:Scotland Membership

The ALGAO:Scotland committee (as per April 2008):

Chair

John Lawson, City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service
john.lawson@cecas.freemove.co.uk

Vice-Chair

David Strachan, Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust
DLStrachan@pkc.gov.uk

Lorna Main, Stirling Council
mainl@stirling.gov.uk

Dorothy Maxwell, Highland Council
Dorothy.Maxwell@highland.gov.uk

Admin

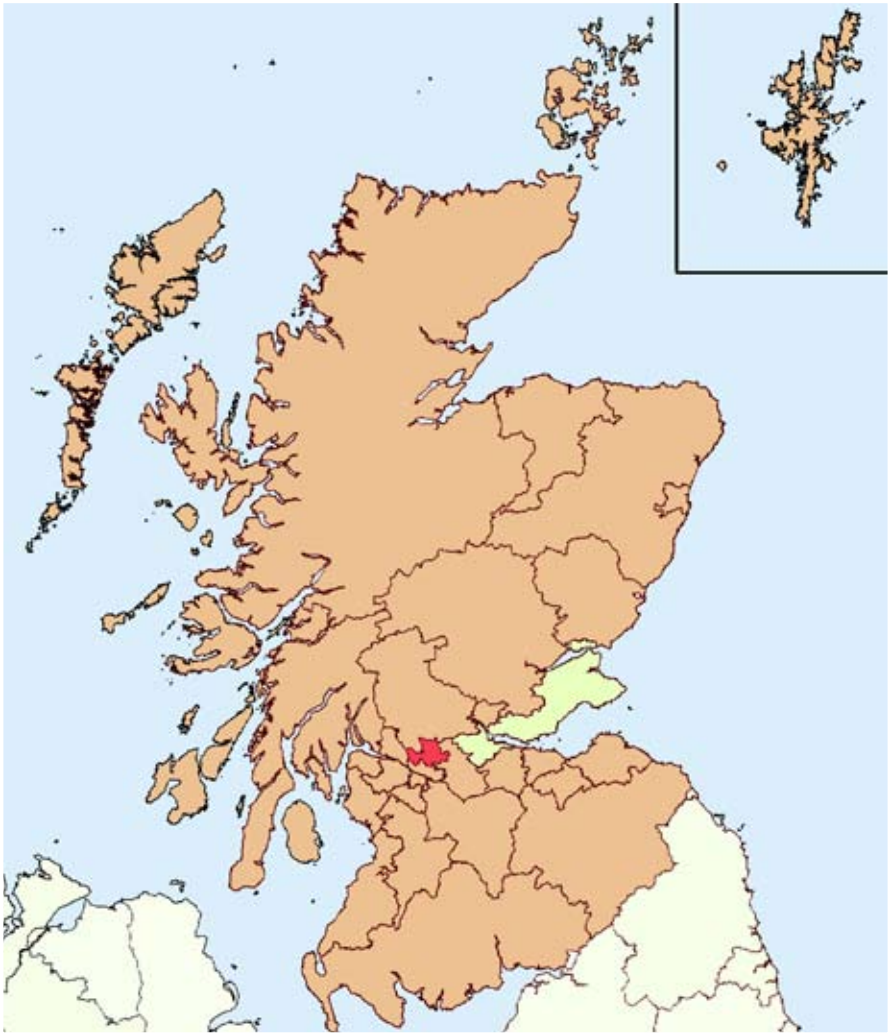
Caroline Ingle, ALGAO:UK
admin@algao.org.uk

ALGAO:Scotland welcomes financial support from Historic Scotland to help us meet common objectives in the conservation, management and promotion of the historic environment.

General enquiries to the Association should be directed in the first instance to the administrative assistant, Caroline Ingle at: admin@algao.org.uk

Editor

David Strachan, Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust



The membership coverage of ALGAO:Scotland in 2008
(brown = ALGAO member; green = non-ALGAO member
with archaeological service and red = no archaeology service).

