



NEWSLETTER 30



www.acfabaseline.org

May 2011

This is going out to you as I get ready for another trip to Rona. Keep your fingers crossed for good weather, please. The newsletter includes an article from Amy Gazin-Schwarz whom I first met on Raasay surveys and whom we will miss when on Rona. It's good to know in this uncertain time, that we have members who were attracted by ACFA's approach and reputation and in that vein, the committee has decided that we should record in the newsletter at least one of the letters of support that went to Glasgow University on our behalf in the recent consultation. You'll find it below from Archaeology Scotland.

We've got a website review, a book review and an archive article in this edition as well as the usual items, but if there's anything you'd like to see or want to write yourself, please send it in. We'd like the newsletter to be more interactive, so any puzzling sites, or archaeological conundrums would be welcome. There are 70 odd ACFA brains out there ready to help. One of them sent out an SOS that had me foxed. See Norman's article.

WR

FEBRUARY BASH – IN BRIEF

There was a good turn-out, including some of the new members, at the February dinner which was preceded by an excellent talk by Heather James on '*Hunting for Medieval Settlement in Mid Argyll*'

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The situation at Glasgow University regarding DACE (and CFA) was a major item of discussion. GUARD has now been dismantled. Members were encouraged to express their views individually to the Consultation Group. The point was made that not only is DACE in danger but also the Humanities as a whole. The Committee has sent in a preliminary letter of concern and will submit a more detailed response in due course.

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Susan Hunter showed slides of the remains of Capelrig Tower, Towerwood House and its alpine garden which have been surveyed. Robin saw Capelrig Tower some years before when it was intact. Its function is not clear - possibly a view-point to watch hare-coursing or perhaps simply a folly. From the turret of Towerwood House, and with the aid of a telescope, the owner could have watched his ships on the Clyde at the Broomielaw.

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Norman Newton spoke about this year's exhibition in Groam House Museum (of which he is now a director). The exhibition is related to George Bain and the Celtic Revival in late 19th and 20th century art and design and will look at the derivation of artistic interpretations. Anyone who may have an objet d'art or jewellery which uses celtic motifs is invited to send a photograph of the item to Norman.

It was reassuring to hear that ACFA kept up its reputation for serious shopping during the Cromarty trip when the takings of Groam House Museum shop soared. ACFA members are welcome back any time.

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And lastly, Sue Bryson has selflessly answered the plea for someone to take over the organisation of the ACFA photographic competition. Members can now look forward to polite (or possibly not so polite) nagging from Sue to get out those pictures from the vast number quietly stagnating on computers, or still on a memory card. You have been warned.

AGM Date : Saturday 12th November 2011

EB

LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM ARCHAEOLOGY SCOTLAND



Dear Professor Coton

Certificate of Field Archaeology at Glasgow University Department of Adult and Continuing Education (DACE)

I am writing, on behalf of Archaeology Scotland, to offer comment on the proposed closure of Adult and Continuing Education courses at the University of Glasgow. As an organisation (established in 1944 as the CBA Scotland) our key objectives are:

- Education, both formal and informal, concerning Scotland's archaeological heritage
- Promotion of the conservation, management, understanding and enjoyment of, and access to, Scotland's archaeological heritage
- Support through the provision of advice, guidance, resources and information relating to archaeology in Scotland

We have a proven track record of success in educational projects and in involving the public and volunteers in archaeology. We are a hub for community archaeology in Scotland, with a particularly close, and long-standing, link to the Association of Certificated Field Archaeologists (ACFA). While we are in no way responsible for the teaching of archaeology, we do have a role in supporting community archaeology across Scotland and enabling access to archaeology for all. Our recent research into the availability and demand for continuing educational courses⁽¹⁾ confirms both the demand from students across Scotland for this course and the fact that there is no alternative course available in the area. The university is, in our view, best-placed to address demand.

We would argue that the provision of this certificate is well-aligned with the University's strategy, "Glasgow 2020 – A Global Vision" by contributing positively to the international standing of the university as a place of learning and excellence. The reputation of ACFA as an organisation (directly linked to the Certificate in Field Archaeology provided by DACE) is second to none, both in Scotland and further afield. Archaeology Scotland would strongly support and commend the work of ACFA in recording and making publicly available their research.

Other national bodies in Scotland also recognise the status of ACFA including the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland; the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland and the National Trust for Scotland. This can only be a positive reflection on the University of Glasgow and its role in adding to the knowledge of Scottish culture and heritage.

The recent flourishing of community archaeology in Scotland and the UK can be monitored by the numbers of people attending events and viewing television programmes such as *Time Team2* and the BBC's recent programme on ancient Britain. The learning campaign which supports the BBC programmes will continue to run for the next two years and this is an opportunity for the university to engage with a wide audience and to promote the availability of the CFA course to those people eager to follow up their interests in archaeology. In addition, recent research by our colleagues at the Council for British Archaeology (CBA)³ has shown that there are at least 2,030 voluntary groups and societies active in the UK that interact with archaeological heritage in a wide variety of ways. This represents approximately 215,000 individuals. The CBA report also identified the need for training of these individuals, a role that Glasgow University is carrying out through its CFA course

The impact across the University of withdrawing the CFA on the student experience will be significant. The Certificate in Field Archaeology and the activities of ACFA are closely inter-twined, allowing progression, once the rigorous course has been completed and externally assessed, to carrying out research and publications of national and international significance. In our view, the impact across the University of withdrawing the CFA will be damaging to the reputation as an academic institution that supports communities and volunteers and currently provides access for all. These communities and volunteers are the stakeholders, in addition to staff and students, who will be affected by the proposed changes. In our view, the proposed withdrawal of the certificate will require mitigating actions to be taken as part of the Equality Impact Assessment on students as the result of the loss of the Certificate in Field Archaeology will be that ACFA will lose its source of membership. ACFA members all hold CFA or an equivalent or higher qualification.

In summary, it is the view of Archaeology Scotland that the Certificate in Field Archaeology is a positive contributor to the University's strategy, attracting renowned staff, international and Scottish students of a high calibre and promoting the university as a place that supports Scottish communities and opportunities to learn about Scottish culture.

Yours sincerely



Eila Macqueen, Director

1 Archaeology Scotland, unpublished Interim Report, 2011

2 http://www.britarch.ac.uk/research/bulletin/piccini_toc.html

3 <http://www.britarch.ac.uk/sites/www.britarch.ac.uk/files/node-files/CBA%20Community%20Report%202010.pdf>

ACTIVITIES IN THE ARGYLL ISLANDS DURING 2010

It has been a very full year out here with a wide range of activities and discoveries in the islands where I live.

Some of you will remember the 2004 ACFA visit to the Isle of Coll and the discovery by some of our members of flint cores and chipped stones in the tidal area of Fiskary Bay. Just around the corner from it, the 'Potato Patch' site at the croft of Caolas an Eilean, discovered in 1997, produced a wide range of worked flints and blades, collected during field walking by ACFA members on the trip. Lying between the two sites, the beach area at the croft of Arinthluic where I used to live, also produced stone tools and a small flint core in 1997 that Alan Saville of the National Museums in Edinburgh suggested could be either late Mesolithic, or early Neolithic.

So the evidence was growing that this had been a busy multi-period coastline from at least the Neolithic and possibly stretching back to the first Mesolithic settlers. This continuity was reinforced by the existence of carefully formed rock-cut basins in the hard Lewisian Gneiss bedrock beside natural landing places and harbours. The origin of these basins may be associated with the Neolithic of which there are abundant examples of rock-art in Scotland. The fish trap at Fiskary Bay, formed by a dry-stone wall constructed from beach stones and boulders, may also be contemporary with other prehistoric evidence in the area and is overlooked from the high ground by a possible Neolithic burial mound. My favourite item from the past, discovered under layers of stone in a sheltered rock pool in Fiskary Bay, is a flat triangular shaped stone of Lewisian Gneiss weighing about 5kg with a diagnostic Neolithic dragged cup-mark on one face. Walls surrounding Fiskary Bay and around the small island of Eilean Oronsay opposite Caolas an Eilean may also be Neolithic and await further study.

In 2005 I approached Professor Steven Mithen of the University of Reading, who was searching for Mesolithic sites. At that time he had just completed excavations on Colonsay and Tiree and I caught his interest when he saw the possible Mesolithic/Neolithic evidence of sites on Coll. This resulted in several seasons of digs at Fiskary and Caolas an Eilean and an RC14 calibrated date from burnt hazel nut shells at Fiskary of c.9,300BP. Large quantities of Mesolithic micro-blades and equally well made larger blades were discovered in the c.10,000 year old 1.5M deep sand beach that had been sealed in by a thick layer of beach pebbles and stones deposited by a storm or tsunami event in the distant past. This early beach was discovered by digging trial pits over the general area surrounding the bay in search of the source of the flint cores and chipped stones found in the lower tidal area. The ongoing dig in the 'Potato Patch' at Caolas an Eilean has uncovered a multi-period site containing evidence of Neolithic and Bronze-age artefacts in the form of stone tools, possibly associated with leather working, and a range of flint blades, cores and Beaker pot sherds. The area of the dig is to be extended during the next year or two to reveal more of what looks like having been a multi-period seasonal camp site.



In January 2010 I had a phone call from the BBC to say that they wanted to come in early March to film the location of the Mesolithic fishing camp and excavation sites in Fiskary Bay. Neil Oliver, John Lord and Steven Mithen were the main presenters in this first of a four part TV series covering prehistoric Britain, 'Ancient History of Britain', shown in the spring of 2011.

Professor Steven Mithen and Neil Oliver examining flint blades from the Fiskary Bay site – photo by Astrid Hill

Neil is known to most viewers as a presenter in the BBC's 'Coast' series and John Lord is equally well known as a flint knapper and expert on the Mesolithic. One of John's tasks for this project was to build a Mesolithic tent covered with animal skins for Neil to sleep in overnight so that he could capture the atmosphere of the location and period.

John also demonstrated how harpoon blades identical to those used by the Mesolithic hunters, were made out of deer antler as well as a variety of flint tools that replicated those found on the site. Professor Steven Mithen FBA is Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Reading and author of several books on the Mesolithic period. His recent publication, 'To the Islands,' describes his quest for Mesolithic sites among the Scottish islands during the last 20 years. In 2006 he was kind enough to invite me to join his team working in the Argyll islands as well as his other team on the pre-pottery Neolithic site in Jordan not far from Petra.



Neil Oliver and John Lord at Fiskary Bay enjoying the fresh March morning in a coracle made by John. – photo by Astrid Hill

August soon arrived and the Scottish Island's dig team met up at the Kennacraig ferry ready for a 3 week dig on two new Mesolithic sites on the east coast of Islay with one overlooking the Sound of Islay with its circling basking sharks. We arrived in Port Askaig and after settling into our accommodation, visited the sites, including one revealed by pigs rooting up Mesolithic flint blades, and one by a farmer digging a new ditch, which exposed a large quantity of worked flints. In both cases the head gamekeeper for the estate recognised their importance and upon meeting him it turned out that we were old friends from the days of my previous visits to Islay.



The Storakaig site was probably a Mesolithic hunter's camp in partially wooded terrain. It was unusual to find burnt animal bone in the hearth area because most soil or peat in the islands is acidic. However, in the case of Islay, the soil in this part of the island is alkaline due to the presence of limestone and so bone is preserved.

The BBC and presenters off to check the other Mesolithic sites on Mull, Tiree, Colonsay and Islay – photo by Astrid Hill

Other finds included a wide range of stone tools, large quantities of worked flints and a large camp site area thick with a black greasy deposit suggesting that that the site had been used over a long period. On the high ground not far from this site, I was pleased to identify a pre-reformation chapel site that was subsequently revealed in detail by a geophysics survey.

My main activity was wet sieving and washing, drying and identifying artefacts for further sorting and cataloguing. I was also volunteered to make the breakfast porridge for the other 15 members of the team. During the dig I discovered leather working stone tools identical to those found at Caolas an Eilean on Coll.



Storakaig, Islay, wet sieving – photo by Simon Wicks

The other site in the area of Rubha Port an t-Seilich is on level ground at the top of a low cliff overlooking the sea. This also produced a wide range of stone tools and flint blades of the Mesolithic. In addition, the pattern of trial pits discovered what may be evidence of supports for a structure.

There is much more work to be carried out on the overall site that might run into several seasons as well as adjoining areas that look equally promising and will require investigating.

Jim Hill (Coll)

WEBSITE REVIEW

Stirling Castle

<http://sparc.scran.ac.uk>

Stirling Castle Palace, Archaeological and Historical Research 2004-2008 Historic Scotland

This is probably the most comprehensive report of upstanding building recording and archaeological excavations you are ever likely to come across. Many of us will be familiar with Stirling Castle and aware of the project to record and restore the magnificent Renaissance palace, built by James V, which followed the successful restoration of James IV's Great Hall. Although in essence this site follows the traditional format for reports of description of process, followed by specialist reports and discussion, it is so much more. Designed and built by Kirkdale Archaeology the site is well laid out, user friendly and easy to navigate.

Tempting though it may be to plunge straight in, it is worth taking the time to read the introductory pages which include a useful timeline identifying ten different periods in the history of the palace defined by alterations and changes of use as well as an explanation of the fieldwork carried out.

You could spend hours searching the database which contains the details from 15,000 context sheets. Connoisseurs of 20th century service trenches and cabling are well catered for, but the meat of the site is contained in the Publications section.

The introductory page breaks down the contents into four levels: I the database archive; II specialist reports; III an account of the archaeological development of the site in terms of historic periods; IV archaeological and historic accounts, contained in downloadable PDF files.

Historian John Harrison contributes three extended essays: *King of the Castle: Stirling Castle's Landscape Setting*, *Ladies and Waiting*, and *People, Place and Process: The Royal Court at Stirling*, which are highly readable reports of particular aspects of the history.

The History and Archaeology of Stirling Castle Palace, by Dennis Gallagher and Gordon Ewart, is a publication in its own right. To get access to this clearly written 198 page illustrated 'book' for free is nothing short of the bargain of the decade. I can imagine visitors to the palace walking round referring to it on their 'tablets' or downloaded printouts. This narrative account is based on the archaeological sequence of building and rebuilding focussed on the building campaign of 1540.

A further outstanding feature of the site is the Drawings and Photos section which contains a complete archive of excavation photographs, historic pictures and photographs, and 500 CAD drawings. Viewing the CAD (computer aided design) drawings requires Autodesk True View software which is downloadable free from the site.

The usefulness of this website is hard to overestimate. For future researchers and scholars the ability to access freely the raw archive, without travelling to some repository of dusty files, will be invaluable. For archaeology and history enthusiasts as well as the general public it is a well written synthesis and account of the history and archaeology of the most important Renaissance building in Scotland and witness to a critical period in Scottish history. Historic Scotland and its partners in this project are to be congratulated for making it available.

Janie Munro

MASSACHUSETTS "PRAYING INDIAN" TOWNS

For the past three years I have been involved in a Native American history project, funded by the US Department of Education. The lead scholar was Thomas Doughton, who is an enrolled member of the Nipmuc tribe. In the course of this project, many issues very significant to New England archaeologists came up including: the issue of federal and state recognition of Indian tribes; the issue of who is an authority about Native American prehistory and historical archaeology; and the issue of the impact of federal laws like NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act) on the practice of archaeology in New England. I would like to illustrate some of these controversies by discussing the archaeology and history of the Praying Towns of Massachusetts, particularly Grafton, MA where archaeological research has investigated the site of purported Native American homestead associated with the Praying Town of Hassanamessit.



In the 1630s and 1640s, John Elliot, a Puritan minister, learned the Algonquian language of Massachusetts Indians, and set about preaching to them and converting them to Christianity. In 1646, the Massachusetts General Court (legislature) passed an Act for the Propagation of the Gospel amongst Indians. Central to this mission was the notion that Indians should learn to live like proper English people; that conversion was one part of the process of saving the Indians by civilizing them. Of course, at this time, the Indians in Massachusetts had been growing corn, beans, pumpkins and other crops for hundreds of years; lived at least part of the year in villages,

had political leaders who governed largely by consensus; and had formed various political alliances and trade alliances with other groups over long distances (as far as Nova Scotia and New York, for example). Nevertheless, the English figured the Indians didn't understand civilization. In fact, the first seal of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts shows an Indian saying 'Come over and help us'!

So, since 'civilizing' the Indians was the goal, and since these English folk thought civilized people lived in towns, Eliot got investors to found Praying Towns, where Christianized Indians could live in proper houses, farm nice square permanent fields, and learn to read, raise more crops, and raise livestock. Seven of these towns were founded in Massachusetts, at Wamesit (now Chelmsford), Nashobah (Littleton), Okkokonimesit (Marlborough), Hassannamesit (Grafton), Makunkokoag (Hopkinton), Natick and Punkapog or Pakomit (Stoughton). The towns were conceived as a defensive line between the English settlements and the 'wild' (or more likely, independent) Indians to the west. However, during King Philip's War (1675-1676), the settlements fell apart and many of the Indians were taken and confined to islands in Boston Harbor.

These Christianized and 'civilized' Indians played important roles as mediators between the Natives and the English, because they were often bilingual, they were literate, and they had experience with both ways of life. In times of trouble between the groups, however, they were never really trusted by either side.

On to archaeology. One of the Praying Towns was Hassannamesit. This location became the focus of historical and archaeological research in the early 2000s, when the town of Grafton decided to purchase a plot of land known as Hassannemesit Woods, to protect one of the remaining areas of open space in the town from development. The town established a committee to oversee the research into the area, and to develop the recreational, historical, and natural resources of the area for public use.

An archaeological excavation was conducted on the site of land noted in the earliest (1728) map of Grafton, and in a 1729 survey of the plot, as belonging to Peter Muckamugg, alias Sarah Robins, an Indian couple. The land was actually owned by Sarah apparently, but English law didn't recognize the right of women to own property. Steven Mrozowski and a team from the University of Massachusetts, Boston, did a survey and excavation of the site, and discovered house foundations and artifacts illustrating that the Muckamuggs and their descendants, whom Mrozowski believes to be Sarah Boston, lived in ways quite similar to the other 18th and 19th century residents of the town.

Now for the complications. While there are some deeds and other historical sources documenting Native American Indian presence in Grafton, and in the Hassanamesit woods area, some of the historical interpretation at Hassanamesit and other sites in Grafton are based on oral histories and interpretations of recent Nipmuc people. The problem, according to Tom Doughton, is that the people who currently claim to represent the Nipmuc 'tribe' in Grafton are relatively recent incomers to Grafton, and are not connected to a more cohesive community of Nipmuc people, who live now mostly in Worcester. He is the tribal historian for that community, and is quite dismissive of most of the claims of the other tribal historians, including the claim that some of the land was always in Indian hands, and that there was a reservation in Grafton. Having a reservation would help the Nipmuc claim for recognition: they have applied once to the US government for tribal recognition, but been denied. The government's criteria for tribal recognition are based largely on the attributes of Western US tribes, and it is difficult for groups in New England, who were in continuous contact with Europeans since the early 17th century, to meet those criteria, which include having a tribal government, and being able to document continuous identity as a community recognized by outsiders since first European contact. Doughton argues that the claim about a reservation and the small group of people in Grafton weakens the Nipmuc case because it is not documented.

Tribal recognition matters for archaeology because federal and state antiquities laws require archaeologists to consult with members of the local tribes when any archaeological project will impact Native American sites. In New England there are very few recognized tribes: in Massachusetts only the Wampanog in Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard, and in Rhode Island only the Narragansett. Archaeologists working in Grafton, for example, would need to consult with descendants like the Nipmuc; but they are not a recognized tribes. The Naragansset have often stepped in to serve as consultants in the place of, or on behalf of the unrecognized groups. However, historically the Naragansett may have been enemies of the local group. Often they did not live in the area. Yet they have begun to make claims about the significance of archaeological sites based on the presence of stone alignments (sometimes on the line of fences marked on historic maps), 'sacred' plants, or views from hillsides. These claims have delayed approval for archaeologists to begin surveys and excavations, and made the context of doing archaeology in New England very complex! On the one hand, some Native peoples do have rich oral histories and often do continue to recognize locations that have historical significance to their families and communities. On the other hand, there are often competing interpretations of those histories within the self-identified communities, and because archaeologists can only officially consult with recognized tribes, they often get what other tribes consider to be distorted stories. In the case of Grafton, two Native historians have very taken very different positions on whether there was ever a 'reservation' in the town. Which position should the archaeologist accept? Legally, that would be determined these days by which position the Naragansset accept, since they often serve as the recognized tribal unit for consultation. According to one archaeologist I have talked to about these issues, the archaeology is less important to some tribal consultants than is their ability to make a claim that large areas of the landscape are significant to the Native peoples, and have been 'since time immemorial'. Since all of the land was once in Native hands, and since nearly all of the land was subsequently taken by the colonists, it is not hard to understand their wanting to make those claims, whether or not they can be documented by archaeology or historical sources. And, while these claims make life difficult for New England archaeologists, they do often help to preserve archaeological or historical sites.

Relevant websites:

- 1) www.teachingamericanhistoryasfcs.org/links.html
- 2) www.bio.umass.edu/biology/conn.river/praying.html/hassanamesit.org/
- 3) www.fiskecenter.umb.edu/beta/Pdfs/Grafton%20rpt%202008.pdf

Amy Gazin-Schwarz

Amy is a lecturer in archaeology and anthropology, and a member of ACFA. She lives and works in New England but still managed to join the Raasay survey regularly and to run surveys and excavations in Sutherland with Olivia Lelong and students from the US and Glasgow.

S.O.S

An appeal from Norman Newton

SUPPORT OUR SCANDINAVIAN history and origins.

You will all be aware that for some years The Highland Council has promoted the use of bilingual Gaelic/English road signs, even in parts of the Highlands, like Caithness, where support for Gaelic is, to say the least, not very enthusiastic.

I am supporting a campaign to reinstate Old Norse as an important linguistic component of Highland History and Culture. Please forgive a brief historical digression:

- 300 AD- 500 AD: Gaelic-speaking peoples in Argyll. Opinions vary as to whether they were there already or arrived from Antrim.
- 563 AD: St Columba established a monastery at Iona, followed by numerous other Christian missionaries from Ireland.
- 800 AD: Norse raiders (Vikings) loot Christian sites throughout the Hebrides, Orkney and Shetland; monks slaughtered at Iona and women traded to Iceland as slaves.
- 800 AD – 1000 AD: Norse settlers arrive in large numbers, taking over farmland, wiping out the ‘Celtic’ church, collecting taxes for the King of Norway, intermarrying with the native population and renaming places and settlements with Norse names.
- 1000 AD: King of Norway converts to Christianity.
- 1156 AD: Somerled, son of a Norse mother and a Gaelic-speaking father, defeats the Norse in a sea battle off Islay; his name in Gaelic is Somhairle, from the Norse ‘sumar-lidi’, ‘summer traveller’. He is the ancestor of all MacDonalds.
- 1290 AD: Margaret, Maid of Norway, heir to the Scottish throne, dies in Orkney, precipitating the succession crisis leading to the Wars of Independence.

So, for 350 years the Norse ruled the Hebrides and most of what is now the area ruled by The Highland Council, including of course Caithness. This period has been largely air-brushed out of history by supporters of Gaelic. In order to reinstate the Norse to their rightful place in Highland history and culture I support the following minimum measures:

- Introduce tri-lingual road signs throughout the Highlands, starting in Caithness where almost all place-names and farm names are Norse; even in some Skye parishes 40% of the place-names are Norse;
- Establish a Norse Culture Committee in The Highland Council and make sure a Norse Language Plan becomes council policy. Proceedings of this committee should be translated into Old Norse and made available on the council website;
- Establish Norse-medium primary schools, starting in Caithness, with a commitment to make them available throughout the Highlands by 2020;
- Ensure that relevant content on the Am Baile website is translated into Old Norse, making it a tri-lingual website;
- Establish cultural consulates in Iceland, Norway and Denmark in order to promote cultural connections with the Norse homelands;
- Ensure that Highland Libraries, the public library service formerly run by The Highland Council, promotes Old Norse publications to the same extent that they currently promote Gaelic.

- Ensure that Norse folklore and mythology are widely taught in primary schools; religious education should be expanded to include Odin and other Norse gods;
- Encourage inward migration to the Highlands from Scandinavian countries, especially to areas, like Skye and Caithness, which suffered from the brutal expulsion of Norse settlers in the late Middle Ages;
- Establish mandatory DNA tests for all residents of the Highlands in order to determine the extent of the Norse gene pool in the Highland population.

These proposals should form part of the Manifesto of a new Scottish-Norse Party (S-NP) who will contest seats at the next council elections. Only MacDonalds, MacLeods, MacAulays and other ‘Norse’ clans should be allowed to stand for this party.

All being well, these measures will come into effect on **1 April 2012**. Your support would be greatly appreciated.

Norman Newton

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Turf Wars – Both Sides of a Story

The following two documents were found in the Breadalbane Muniments for 1795. They take the form of memorials or letters, to Earl of Breadalbane, written by the local scribe in Killin, at the request of two Glen Lochay tenants, the memorialists. This record is very much as found in the archives, with the addition only of modern punctuation to make it comprehensible. The tenants would have told their stories in Gaelic and maybe some English to the scribe, who then recorded it in English as follows:-

On 1st June 1795 Donald McMartin, tenant of Corlaraich, Glen Lochay wrote :

‘Upon Saturday last past, the memorialist sent his servant to cast peats in the moss and field (*associated with his tenancy*)....

Donald McVean, tenant in Wester Dun Croisk, and Donald McVean, his eldest son, took upon them(*selves*) to go and cast peats in the said moss, which being observed by John Cameron, Donald McMartin’s servant, he went to where the said Donald McVean senior and junior were at work and in the most well mannered (*way*) reprimanded them for encroaching upon his master’s moss and required them to desist, which however they absolutely refused to comply with and continued their encroachment. Thereupon the servant laid hold of the peat spade wherewith the said Donald McVean was at work requiring him in the like calm and civil manner to give over. After some conversation Donald McVean senior told the servant to permit him to proceed to cast the peats and that, if thereafter it would be found the said moss belonged to his master, the peats would belong to the master without further trouble, and of consequence the servant desisted.

Nevertheless the said Donalds McVean betook themselves to another part of McMartin’s moss and began to cast peats. John Cameron observing that they still persisted, went again to them and required them to desist, whereupon Donald McVean senior in a furious passion aimed a monstrous blow at the said John Cameron’s head threatening to knock out his brains which intended blow being happily parried, both the McVeans seized upon John Cameron dragging him to the ground and unmercifully beat and bruised him on the face

and other parts of the body to the great effusion of his blood and imminent danger of his life, and the consequences would have been certainly fatal to him were it not for the interposition of some persons who providentially happened to come and rescue him.'

On 2nd June 1795 Donald McVean, tenant of Wester Duncroisk, Glen Lochay wrote :

'The memorialist entered Wester Duncroisk in 1794 and unacquainted with either moss or spreadfield, and being unwilling to make any disturbance, wandered backward and forward through the moss and with much ado provided what served his family that year.

But being this year informed by a servant that a certain spot in the moss was the special property of the farm of Wester Duncroisk for time past memory, but that as of late the tenants of Duncroisk and Corlarich were all friends, they used the moss and spreadfield all at pleasure.

But to avoid any quarrelling the memorialist went to Donald McMartin in Corlarich upon Wednesday last in presence of many witnesses and asked him as a favour to go and either shew him the property of Wester Duncroisk of the moss and field or other ways to part the same, and that he would be satisfied with either of the ways. Both of which he refused.

Upon 30th ult. Donald McVean and his son and four females went to the moss and, being uncertain where to begin and being refused by Donald McMartin to shew or inform him any part or property he had to the moss, he was rendered the necessity of beginning in the spade where he was informed by the neighbours that was the property of the farm. Immediately after he began the work, John Cameron, servant to Donald McMartin, came and desired him to stop, that that belonged to his master and not to the memorialist.

Cameron went off at that time without any more ado but came back a second time and took hold of Donald McVean's son's spade to twist it out of his hand and told him that if he could not deliver up the spade to him it would fair the worse with him, upon which Donald McVean desired his son to give up his spade to prevent any further mischief and in obedience to his father's command, he allowed Cameron to take the spade. The memorialist then desired Cameron to go away peaceably and find his master that he would settle the affair. But Cameron replied that he was master himself in that point. Donald McVean very calmly answered, 'Very well, if that shall be found that your master is intitled to this moss more than I am, although I shall cast the peats, he shall be welcome to carry them home.' By which soft and mild words Cameron was advised to go away and leave them carrying on their work. But some time thereafter and the peats beginning to wear out, young Donald went off to find some other hagg and finding another place began to work along with two of the girls, leaving the other two girls with his father. It seems that Cameron observing the old man alone except the other two helpless maids, casting off all fear of God or any mercy to his fellow creature, came in a very furious and unruly manner, almost stript of his clothing and exclaimed 'Do you still persist?' and without any more ado began to uplift and cast the peats back in the hole. McVean stood for some time surprised and confused to behold the madness of the fellow and after a quantity of the peats was cast in said, 'You unfortunate fellow, are you to destroy my peats?' and without any more ado Cameron jumpt in the hole and took hold of him by the hair and dashed him below his foot and trampled him in the moss. If it was not that one of the servant maids cried to Donald, the son, who was at a distance busy at his work thinking of no evil, looking up at the cry and seeing his father in the moss hole below Cameron's feet, made the best that he could to rescue him.....The son took hold of Cameron and uplifted him off and Cameron then, as a madman, seized upon the son and took hold of him by the throat upon which young Donald was under the necessity to save his life and make his escape.....'

Both memorials end with a request of Breadalbane for security.



This is what they fought over.

The now empty slopes of Glen Lochay have come alive with this vivid record of the pressures of tenant farming in the 18th century.

Wendy Raine and Dugie McInnes

CALLING ACFA MEMBERS!

Surveys and Field Trips.

ACFA members are encouraged to undertake field survey, not just at a landscape level but also on a smaller scale for perhaps just one building or feature. These can be sent to RCAMHS and kept as a collection of ACFA Site Reports in addition to the Occasional Papers.

Contact the Committee if you are thinking of proceeding. There are many people who will be happy to advise if required. So, if you have come across an old farmstead or a kiln or a WW2 air raid shelter or any unusual feature in your walks, consider rallying a few of the members, drawing it up and writing a short report.

ACFA does of course promote the larger scale survey where a team of volunteers labour over many weeks / months / years. The costs of printing can be considerable depending on the size of the final report but the Committee will assist survey directors in applying for grants and also advise on a combination of in-house printing and electronic publishing.

And if you don't want to survey, but do like a field trip, would you like to organise one. Recent trips have been great fun, educational and above all, sociable. Cromarty, Borders, Kintyre and Ardnamurchan have all been visited by ACFA in the recent past, as well as the memorable Cairnholy Revisited Anniversary trip. We have a 25th anniversary coming up. Where shall we celebrate it?

GOVAN OLD PARISH CHURCH

This summer, Govan Old will open to visitors on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays 1-4pm from June to September. Volunteers to act as guides, make tea or help with security are needed. There will be training about the history of the church site and the hogback stones (not too onerous). Anyone who can help out with even a few dates should contact

govanold.pc@virgin.net (FAO Robert Melvin) or phone 0141 440 246



Arran Rig

And don't forget the photo competition

Title page photo : Dry Harbour Township ruins, Rona. Photo by WR.

Disclaimer - The views and opinions of authors published in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of ACFA.

Submissions - It would be appreciated if submissions were sent in Word format. Please note that the Editor reserves the right to shorten and generally edit articles, as required.

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