



# NEWSLETTER 29



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February 2011

## **2010 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** **- IN BRIEF**

Wendy Raine and Bob Diamond step down from their respective posts as Secretary and Treasurer and were thanked for all their work on behalf of ACFA.

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Scott Wood was thanked for his work over many years on the Newsletter. He is now stepping down and Wendy Raine will take over as Editor, with Elizabeth Bryson assisting.

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Lionel Masters updated the meeting about the imminent demise of GUARD due to the University cuts. The implications for the CFA course are worrying but full details are not known. The situation should be clearer by our February meeting. The present course has 20 people and some of the Committee will be going to talk to the class about AFCA.

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Ann Bray is planning a small survey of a

World War II gun site at Ardpeaton overlooking Gareloch.

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Govan Old Parish Church (Home of the Hogbacks) is still open to the public twice a week during the summer months. An increase in visitors is anticipated in 2011 linked to the opening of the Riverside Transport Museum when a ferry from north to south bank is proposed. Hence more guides are required. Get in touch if you are interested in the training for guides. Tea-making is also required and contrary to what was said at the AGM, there may even be training offered in hospitality. However untrained tea-making has not, to date, led to any known fatalities.

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Ian Marshall showed photographs of the site at Forteviot where several ACFA members have been involved in the dig. This complex and multi-period site includes a most unusual tri-partite cist. The only other known example of this is in

Ireland. The excavations will continue again next year.

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Dugie McInnes described the ongoing work at Glen Lochay, showing an outline of the considerable area of the Glen which has been surveyed. This year, the 3 day event and the intrepid camping expedition greatly increased the number of sites now covered. Further sorties (in hotel and under canvas) are planned for next year.

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Wendy Raine reported back on the first year of the Rona survey. The party of nine achieved a lot in a week, wisely starting with the so-called “easy” sites. Unusual stone enclosures on the shoreline were considered and lobster (or other varieties of sea-food) tanks were suggested. Judging by the terrain, a lot of boldly-going will be required in future. And don't mention the t\*\*\*\*.

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Susan Hunter showed slides of Craig Mill and Old Craig Mill near Eaglesham. Remnants of a by-gone agricultural era are being recorded just before they slip out of reach. Heated discussion almost broke out over “When is a packhorse bridge not a packhorse bridge?” (answers to S Wood). The Eaglesham Farmlands survey is now almost complete. Well done Susan and Robin and their team

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And finally, the 2011 ACFA Photographic Competition was won by Fred Hay.



## **PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION** **RESULTS 2010**

### **Humour Category**



Dorothy Gormlie

*First woman - Mine's bigger than yours*

*Second Woman - Yes but mine's cuddly with big ears*

### **Archaeology Category**

Joint winners



Fred Hay

*An Teampull, Rona*



Wendy Raine

*Cultivation Terraces*

## Spirit of ACFA



Fred Hay

*Committed, concentrated, certificated*

## Overall winner and Quaich

Fred Hay

*Committed, concentrated, certificated*

## RONA SURVEY – 2010



We are now into the second year of the follow-on from Raasay – the Rona Survey. Last year 9 of us tried out the logistics of working on the island and had a great week of sunny weather and few midges, battling the undergrowth in the main settlement, Acarsaid Tioram, (Dry Harbour). As a result we have completed about three quarters of the township and are set to finish it this year.

We are booked in to all three cottages on Rona for the week of 14<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> May, with the night before in Portree. Places are limited so any ACFA members interested should let me know soon. There will be a short meeting during the February Bash for anyone interested in coming this year or next, when the work planned will be outlined and places booked. There is space only for 9-10 people so everyone has to multi-task, including drawing, field-walking in rough terrain and photography and I hope there will be an EDM team.

Wendy Raine

## ACFA VISIT THE BLACK ISLE

Several years ago during an expedition based in Helmsdale, we spent two days ‘raiding’ down to Portmahomack, Tarbat, Nigg and Shandwick – and it was then decided that the Black Isle looked tempting. So, in mid September a convoy of sixteen arrived in Cromarty, set up our HQ at The Old Brewery and hit the archaeological hot spots (actually the wet spots – we were assured that this was the first rain in weeks). The Brewery was built about 1776 with the intention of weaning the local population off whisky on to beer. Needless to say it wasn’t successful and after years of neglect was remodelled internally as a field studies centre. Somewhat less luxurious than ACFA’s usual standard – no en suite and only one shower between three and a half bodies-nevertheless we managed to make ourselves at home.

Cromarty is situated right at the northernmost tip of the Black Isle. Although hardly bigger than a self-respecting village today, it was once both a royal burgh and a County town. Consequently there is a great deal of interest in the town itself. We were walked round on Friday afternoon by John Wood, a local archaeologist – so local he actually



lives in the town. Very close to the Brewery is the East Church which was one of the finalists in the BBC's *Restoration* programme. Sadly we could not get inside because of restoration work but John Wood filled us in on the excavations which suggest that it was much earlier than its present 18<sup>th</sup> c incarnation. According to John Hume of Historic Scotland it is 'unquestionably one of the finest 18<sup>th</sup> century parish churches in Scotland'.

There are a number of impressive 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century merchants' houses, one of which has underground tunnels below its front garden; romantic ideas about smuggling were dashed - apparently this was so the servants could get water from the well without getting rained on. The most poignant of these houses was perhaps the abandoned Old Dairy at the edge of Victoria Park, revealed as a late 17C substantial burgess house, awaiting a lot of TLC and a banker whose bonus survived the recession. What a beauty – and, according to the poster, 'Under Offer', so fingers crossed for reprieve and restoration. Closer to the sea was the fishertown with cottages and ice houses. Of course the best known cottage was that in which Hugh Miller – stone mason, geologist, journalist and moving spirit in the Disruption of the Kirk in 1843 - was born. (He's still worth reading – try *First Impressions of the English*.) The cottage is preserved and newly thatched by the National Trust, despite which they tried to close it, but locals rallied round to keep it open.

Cromarty also boasts one of the earliest examples of a factory building in Scotland; the Old Ropeworks on Marine Terrace was built in the 18<sup>th</sup> c to make hemp with 5 ranges long enough to house the whole operation. Today it has been converted to housing. At the east end of the town is Cromarty House (1772) built on, or close to, the site of the old castle. The house has a tunnel leading from the road to the basement designed to prevent the gentry

having to sully their eyes seeing servants coming up the drive. From here the view includes a typical cottage at the end of the bay – well, not absolutely typical – it's brand new and conceals the sewage works within. Walking back to the Brewery, we passed a children's playpark – no, wait a minute – it's a wrinklies' play park, like an outdoor gym for elderly people. When opened it made headlines on TV and the serious papers. There's no-one there on a cold September evening though.

Dinner in the Brewery plus a cake called Delicious Death. It was agreed to be delicious but nobody died. Alan and Ann, newest ACFA members seemed a bit taken aback at the amount of alcohol that appeared to lubricate the after dinner conversation.

On the Saturday, off to *Ormond Castle* above Avoch. Very little stone visible but a most impressive situation. Norman Newton filled us in on the monument at the top, where Moray is said to have raised the Northern Standard before marching south to join William Wallace in the Wars of Independence. The site has now been adopted for an annual rally by the SNP. Thereafter some of the party searched for a well shown on Beaton's 19<sup>th</sup> c muddy sketch; a well was found, but not in the right place according to the sketch.

Next *Balnaguie*, a fine Orkney-Cromarty chambered cairn atmospherically sited in a



Balnaguie Chambered Cairn  
Photo by Wendy Raine

natural wood in the grounds of a typical Scottish manor house complete with crowsteps and tower – built about 10 years ago. Some attendant rare sheep nestled picturesquely around the cairn but raised no objection to our wandering round. Balnaguie has really massive monoliths – it was hard to imagine how the capstone could have been raised.

On to *Conon Bridge Henge*, right beside the road so no tedious walking involved, but a shame that absolutely no archaeological monitoring seems to have been done when the surrounding houses went up. Then *Carn Mor Dun*, a big fellow but very overgrown with Willow Herb, although we thoroughly enjoyed grazing the brambles and blaeberrys all around! Probably an even more magic place before the residential creep of ‘luxury’ developments began lapping around the wood – we were told there had been a recent excavation here so it would be interesting to see the results, if published.

Lunch was booked at the excellent Culbokie Inn. The bar was graced by a crackling log fire and there was a certain amount of unseemly jostling as people tried to get close for a heat and to dry out a bit. We forewent the delights of the Petanque court and proceeded to the *Clootie Well* at Munloch (avoided by some of the party who had been before and preferred to keep their lunch down). The well itself is only a small part of the site and offerings are attached to the trees all around. The general effect is rather squalid but it’s interesting that it is still very much visited in spite of the attempts by the local authority to shut it down.

Back to civilisation in the shape of Rosemarkie and the wonderful *Groam House Museum* with the stunning Rosemarkie Slab and a talk from one of the trustees. Rosemarkie church seems to have been very important in the early days of Christianity and many stones found in

the graveyard can now be seen in the museum – GHM also has the best selection of Early Historic publications for sale in the country. We were very concerned to hear that there may be question marks over the funding of independent museums in the Highlands. If you can encourage support of the museums by visiting or writing to the local paper or the Council, please do.

A short step took us from Rosemarkie to Fortrose and *Fortrose Cathedral* with some merry tales from Norman Newton who had joined us for the day. The only surviving part of the original Cathedral is the Chapter House which has enjoyed a varied career since the demise of the Cathedral, as church, school, council chamber and as recently as 1927 the town jail. The Cathedral itself, founded about 1250, is now no more than the ground plan laid out in gravel. The early 15<sup>th</sup> century chantry chapel founded by Euphemia, widow of the Lord of Ross and subsequently wife of the Wolf of Badenoch, with the South Aisle, are the only remains standing. In spite of its ruined state, the Cathedral still hosts occasional events such as weddings.

The day ended with a walk out to the settlement at *Eathie*, clearly a multi-phased deserted settlement remarkably preserved between the forestry and the improved fields below in the valley, with half a dozen very early looking turf longhouses, field systems and structures, and the shell of the later lone longhouse with both lime and cement mortar that replaced this once vibrant community. Very cautious approaches were made to NOSAS about the possibility of a survey either on their own or with some help from us. Watch this space.

A great day was rounded off with a splendid meal and jollification in the Sutor’s Creek in Cromarty (ACFA Four Trowel recommendation).

On Sunday, up the hill to *St Regulus Graveyard* at the back of Cromarty, with its wonderful collection of table tombs of Black Isle gentry among engulfing pine and yew - and the creep with our torches into the little subterranean mausoleum with its rather sinister small white grave stones. Some very interesting military gentlemen buried here, worthy of a monograph all to itself.

Finally, as the rain really set in, up to the *South Sutor* where our RCAHMS guide, Allan Kilpatrick, took us around what was clearly his labour of love, the stupendous World War fortifications which guarded the channel into the 'inland sea' of the Cromarty Firth – vast gun batteries, mine stations, subterranean magazines, engine houses and encampments gradually being engulfed and sinking back into the scrub. Most amazing, the tiny search light stations on terrifying rock stacks at the foot of the cliffs - what a place to be manning on a heavy night with a huge North Easterly running in! And to think that pre-Allan, some of us thought that concrete was just – well concrete!

I missed Sunday's delights by managing to lock my keys in the boot of my car. With help from Sue Bryson and rather less help from the insurance company, a nice man came from Inverness and tried to open it. However, the best he could do was to get a rear door window open but was unable to reach anything useful. He went back to his van – Sue and I were wondering what high-tech piece of equipment would appear. It took the form of a wee girl of about 8 who was lifted up and 'posted' through the open window so that she could reach everything from the inside. Needless to say neither of us had a camera handy.

ACFA disbanded in the early afternoon for the run home – some looking in at the Clava Cairns, others heading west to a guided walk around *Knockfarrel Hill Fort* in Strathpeffer. An excellent weekend

despite the weather and much more left for a return 'jolly'.

Carol Primrose/Ian Marshall

### **MY LIFE AMONG THE PICTS** **1994 TO 2007**



Tarbat Museum and Visitor Centre

In 1993, being recently retired, I went on a holiday to St Andrews University to attend a 1 week course by Edwina Proudfoot on 'The Picts.' We were lectured at and conducted around various sites seeing the wonderful collections of sculpture at Meigle, St Vigean, Aberlemno and others. I was fascinated and spent much time afterwards reading up everything I could find on the subject. Then I saw a call for volunteers to help excavate a Pictish monastery at Portmahomack under the direction of Professor Martin Carver. Off I went, tyres screeching, to spend my first two weeks as a digger. The first impression was daunting, a vast expanse of yellow sand with lots of dark splodges and stones sticking up here and there. There was what seemed like a small army of young students scraping away and barrowing the spoil up a mountainous heap nearby. After some brief instruction as to which end of a trowel to use I joined them. Horrors, a supervisor took one look at my work and said "no, no, too many crumbs, do it again" So I did and again and again until the result passed his eagle eye. That experience laid the ground work that has stood the test of time and now I look at

photographs of some excavations and think “no, no do it again”. More about standards and discipline later.

That was an introduction to the joys of digging, but also to the camaraderie of site life, living in a tented village with lots of young people which was fun. They accepted me as one of them and we had some great nights in the pub, especially after a day’s digging in the rain. However, it was clear that to get beyond working on the trowel line something had to be done, so the next year I signed up for the 3 week training school which was run on site, mainly for students but others could join at some expense.

That was it. I was now some sort of archaeologist and over the next 2 or 3 years was given more and more demanding tasks until I could take on my own features doing all of the excavation and recording.

At that time we were still living in tents with a few exceptions like the director and supervisors who had battered old caravans donated by the local camp site. The cooking was done by us on a rota basis under the instruction of a wonderful lady called Faith, who produced a daily miracle feeding up to 50 or 60 people from a caravan cookhouse on a budget of about £3 per person per day. I can make a risotto from 10Kg of rice. You do need a very large pan! At that time we had portaloos and a diesel generator to operate some showers. The less popular students would sometimes get a nasty shock when their fellows started to rock the portaloos with them inside. Since they were not emptied very often, the results were spectacular.

The population came from all over the world as Portmahomack was at that time the biggest dig in the UK and Carver had an international reputation. Eventually though, the field school was discontinued and the numbers gradually fell away,

leaving only a core team of which I had the good fortune to be one. That had a big advantage. I got a caravan! OK, the windows were missing and replaced by black bin bags, but much better than a tent.

The site discipline was very strict. On site every morning at 8.30. Work until 10.15 then 15 minute break. Lunch 12.30 to 1.15. Another 15 minute break in the afternoon then finish at 5.30. All this 6 days a week with Sunday off. The Wee Free was the dominant sect in the village and would not countenance any work on Sunday. They ran the village caravan site and would not allow anyone in or out on a Sunday. There was to be no swearing or singing while digging and permission had to be asked from a supervisor to take a natural break. I think much of this was because Martin Carver had spent many years in the army before taking up archaeology and he well knew that with a bunch of wild young students, any show of weakness would have led to chaos. During the night of course it was a different matter. There was a good deal of nocturnal visitations and activity but so long as it was discreet nobody worried except Faith who kept a motherly eye on all.

Having said that, Martin led from the front, working on site like everyone else, drinking in the pub with us, going back to site afterwards singing Russian love songs until the early hours and then out on site with his notebook by 7 am.



Martin Carver on site (with wheelbarrow)

Maybe it is time to say something about the archaeology.

There were two very different areas under investigation. To the landward we found the foundations of a large building shaped in plan like a bag or sporran. This had been very substantial with perhaps two floors supported by aisles of massive posts. It had at some point been used as a smithy but probably also as a barn. Associated with this were a well and a corn drier. In short this was an agricultural aspect of the monastery.

On the seaward side the archaeology was much more complex. The sloping ground here had been terraced with retaining walls and a road dividing the area into two parts. On one side we found good evidence for the manufacture of parchment and for writing, both essential for the operation of a monastery. Here among the chaos resulting from later activity, we finally identified another bag shaped building in a very fragmentary state. The most difficult job I ever had was to piece together the floor area from the small islands that were left and to correlate across these the numerous layers of ash, turf and earth where the floor had been laid and relaid many times.

On the other side of the road was a fine metal working area with hearths, crucibles and moulds for casting small decorative items in bronze and precious metals, another essential monastic activity. A most enjoyable week was spent by me and a young boy who came to us for work experience, excavating a dump where the metal workers had discarded broken crucibles and moulds. In total we recovered over 200 pieces from an area about 3 metres by 2 metres. Every few minutes there was another find. Towards the end, I went off to do something else and left Duncan to clean up, convinced that we had finished and commenting; 'Duncan if you find another complete crucible I'll give you a fiver.' Oh dear. Of

course when I came back I had to pay up. Not easy for a Yorkshireman who emigrated to Scotland. However that experience might just have been a formative step in creating a talented young archaeologist, so money well spent.

At the foot of this road was a dam with a sluice clearly intended to feed what was probably a small horizontal mill wheel. We never did find the wheel pit though. It was very likely beyond our site in the garden of one of the nearby houses.

By this time the core team was down to about 8 people and we were living in a rented cottage or billeted with a local family who had a very large early 18<sup>th</sup> century house. The days of site parties with the students and massive hangovers were gone. But there were still some funny goings on. Like the time we made a new entrance into the site and dug up the telephone lines to the next village with a JCB!

Early on we had dug a test pit to gauge the depth of the archaeology, into very friable dune sand. Every year it was backfilled and opened up afresh at the start of each new season. Of course it got bigger and bigger, but showed no features, until on almost the last day in 2006 the site director caused yet another collapse. My friend Roy and I were sent in to square things up and noticed a cut in the new section. Closer inspection of it and the surface above revealed three graves which everyone had missed for years. Excavation of these recovered the perfectly preserved remains of three middle aged men all buried EW with heads to the west.

We had stumbled upon a part of the monastic cemetery! Dating showed that they all died in the late 6<sup>th</sup> century. Almost certainly they would have known Saint Columba himself and must have been among the first monks from Iona to have established the new monastery at





6<sup>th</sup> Century monk's grave

Portmahomack after the famed visit of the saint to meet Bridei, king of the Picts, somewhere near Inverness, as told by Adomnan in his biography of Columba. A fitting end to a long journey for both Columba and our project team.

Here I have only been able to give a brief flavour of the archaeology and history of the site but those interested to learn more can read all about it in Martin Carver's book 'Portmahomack, a monastery of the Picts,' published last year. Lucky readers will even find a photograph of yours truly posing with a pile of old bones. As my good friend Roy used to say; 'There's always lots of old bones in your features, Ralph.'

Ralph Shuttleworth

### **BATTLES IN POST-GRADUATE ARCHAEOLOGY – A PERSONAL VIEW**

The possibility of taking the DACE Certificate in Field Archaeology, which had lurked at the back of my mind for many years, became an attainable objective on my early retirement from the Department of Economics at Glasgow – but the consequences were unexpected. I took the plunge. The Certificate's two modules reviewing Scottish archaeology from the Mesolithic to the recent-past industrial heritage proved fascinating; the two devoted to the theory and practice of archaeology not only spanned techniques

ranging from remote sensing to standing-building survey and heritage-protection issues but also revealed that intellectual battles about what counts as valid explanation in archaeology were not so far removed from what had preoccupied me latterly in economics – albeit with the unfamiliar terminology of processualism, post-processualism and the challenges of phenomenology. All four modules were supported by appropriate field trips, one of which we had to lead ourselves. The two field-school modules – one on the Iron Age site of Quinlochmuir, the other in Pollok Estate – involved a combination of applying the techniques and substantial desk-based analyses. All in all the Certificate was a stimulating experience, expertly guided by staff from GUARD, with various guest lecturers plus input in the field from tutors from ACFA – Sue Hothersall and Ian Marshall. Mind you, sitting exams again after forty years was, as they say, an interesting experience!

The unexpected twist was not just finding that I wanted to take the subject further, but the discovery that successful completion of the Certificate (plus some recognition of my background) could give me a particular opportunity to do so: enabling entry to the MLitt in Battlefield and Conflict Archaeology, a one-year postgraduate master's programme in the Department of Archaeology at Glasgow. It is taught within its unique Centre for Battlefield and Conflict Archaeology established a few years ago by specialists in the field Tony Pollard (one of the *Two Men in a Trench*) and Iain Banks. It comprises six modules (the same as the Certificate but compressed into two rather than four semesters) plus a dissertation submitted in September. The subject is, to an extent, a sub-discipline within historical archaeology – hence the willingness to relax the usual entrance requirement of a first degree in archaeology, much of which typically focuses on prehistoric periods. Seven of us, including another of the

previous year's Certificate class, embarked on the programme; six are mature students. Assessment is almost entirely by essays (indeed 3000 words every two weeks for a period) and presentations – no exams!

The three modules of the first semester are all compulsory: Method and Theory of Battlefield and Conflict Archaeology; the Art of War; Research Methods (the last common to all postgraduate programmes in the newly formed College of Arts – there are no faculties now! – and delivered by it). The first focuses on the scope and distinctive orientation of the subject (from military engagements to their memorialisation), the relevant techniques (from historical landscape reconstruction to metal detecting) and the application of its approach to diverse theatres of war in Britain and abroad. The second examines the changing nature and technology of warfare in history up to the twentieth century, together with contrasting interpretations of its origin and role. Together they demonstrate the scope for archaeological investigation to enrich and, possibly, to qualify existing historical explanations of individual battles.

The second semester presents the choice of three options from an extensive list, some specific to battlefields, some from other archaeology taught programmes and some from the master's programme in War Studies within the School of Humanities. I've opted for Roman Warfare (which re-establishes contact with Alan Leslie, who taught in and administers the Certificate), Early Modern Warfare (nineteenth century to the Great War – last lecture was on investigations by Tony into a battle in the Zulu Wars) and Forensic Archaeology, another unexpected twist in my interests and opportunities. Archaeological approaches and techniques are increasingly valued in investigations of crimes where material is buried (particularly bodies but also drugs, weapons); all three teaching staff (Tony, Iain and Gaille Mackinnon) have participated in forensic investigations

(Bosnia, Afghanistan, 9/11, amongst others). Assessment in this course includes a search for a clandestine grave (a replica, we're assured!) created for the purpose last year.

It's proving to be a fascinating and challenging programme, though the task of finding a dissertation topic remains to be confronted. But the programme is also likely to be the site of another battle, this time for its own survival; the members of staff who established the Centre were until recently part of GUARD, the bulk of which has been obliged to set itself up independently of the University as a consequence of a Court decision. It remains to be seen if there will be further attrition affecting the Centre and even Archaeology itself. The future of not only this programme, but also the Certificate itself, remains uncertain.

Fred Hay

### **BOOK REVIEW**

#### ***The Archaeological Landscape of Bute***

George Geddes and Alex Hale. RCAHMS, 2010

In the beginning were the Inventories: large, handsome volumes in which His or Her Majesty's Commissioners undertook to list all the 'Historic Monuments and Constructions' of Scotland up to the year 1707, and even some later ones deemed 'worthy of mention'. As the scope of RCAHMS's work expanded apparently limitlessly and the Inventories grew ever larger and more expensive – and with only half the country covered by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – it was clear that a new approach was needed. And with the publication of 'The Archaeological Landscape of Bute' we see the result of several new approaches.

This little book is only 53 pages long and uses a smaller format than the Inventories. It does not set out to be an Inventory, but

rather an overview of the island's archaeological character. The text is divided into short chapters: 'The Late Bronze Age and Iron Age', 'The Pre-Improvement Period', etc, with a distribution map of sites from each period, much like the introductions to the Inventories. But the background to this study is a completely new type of survey: instead of a brief visit by a team of independent experts working in isolation, Bute has enjoyed the prolonged presence of a variety of RCAHMS staff undertaking a complete record revision of the island's archaeological sites within a larger project, the Discover Bute Landscape Partnership Scheme. The emphasis has been on working with the community, particularly the Buteshire Natural History (and Antiquarian) Society, and so everywhere the RCAHMS has gone, local people have gone with them, contributing their knowledge and expertise and helping to increase the number of recorded sites from 525 to over 900. In return the Commission staff has provided training in recognition and recording of sites. Bute people have had a unique opportunity to learn more about their archaeology; but the Commission's aims go further: they wish to encourage local people to carry out archaeological survey and research and to set priorities for future work. So the book features numerous hints and suggestions about areas where more work might be undertaken: excavating one of Bute's hut-circles, surveying caves and rock-shelters, or archival research into the date of charcoal-burning platforms.

The RCAHMS did not completely abandon their traditional role while on Bute. New plans of a number of sites have been produced for the book, from a re-interpretation of Dun Scalpsie to the little-known Kilchousland Chapel and one of the salt pan houses at Ascog.

Those of us who accompanied the Commission staff in the field were smitten with admiration, not to say envy, of the

Trimble gadgetry now used in survey work – these hand-held devices not only allow on-site electronic note-taking, but give access to old and new OS maps and any other maps and plans (such as 18<sup>th</sup> century land surveyors' estate plans) which have been loaded onto the machine. Combined with hugely refined GPS equipment this whizz-kid kit enables faster and more accurate site descriptions and cuts out tedious paperwork. New or improved records can then be added directly to Canmore, the online, publicly-accessible database which could be said to have killed off the Inventory project. Canmore itself is changing, as the RCAHMS embraces not just the new technology, but the principle of public participation in its continuous expansion. Just as the Bute survey work has encouraged local and 'amateur' contributions, so Canmore now actively prompts users to contribute text and images – a far cry from the rather stuffy, password-protected, text-only version of its earlier years.

Despite all these changes in attitude, organisation and technology, 'The Archaeological Landscape of Bute' embodies the classic virtues of the Royal Commission's work: beautifully produced and illustrated with stunning aerial photographs, new site plans and material from many other sources, clearly and succinctly written, generous in its acknowledgement of earlier archaeological work. In trying to reach the widest possible readership it occasionally encounters the problem of judging how much prior knowledge to take for granted; thus the writers have felt it necessary to define a chambered tomb and a burnt mound, but not, for example, a spacer-plate necklace or a Food Vessel. But this is a trivial criticism of a gem of a book, highly recommended and an absolute bargain at £7.50.

Sue Hothersall

## **MARGARET GILL (NEE GOWANS)**

**1941-2010**



Margaret belonged to that remarkable (author's personal view and shared by Margaret) Certificate course of 1990-1993. She was a highly respected and well liked member of the group, intelligent, articulate, confident and honest yet very sociable and with a great sense of humour.

Born in Selkirk, though growing up in Melrose, Margaret was successful (according to her younger sister Alison) at everything she set her mind to and was even crowned "Melrose Queen" when she was only 12 years old.

Whilst at Edinburgh University she met fellow Pharmacy student, and future husband Roland. After qualifying they worked in Falkirk before moving to Ardrrossan where they established their own Pharmacy business.

In addition to Archaeology Margaret had many interests particularly bird watching and travelling. With Roland she enjoyed travelling the world on their great train journeys across Europe, America, South America, Vietnam, Australia, India and Africa where, on one occasion, she went searching for Gorillas.

Archaeology, however, and particularly the work of ACFA remained an abiding passion. She continued to attend Lionel's

classes in Ayr and worked on many surveys including those of Largs, Raasay and Glen Lochay. At the latter these included Duncroisk, Corrycharmaig, Kenknock, Innisrairieach and Doctor's Burn. Margaret was also the Co-editor of the Glen Lochay Corrycharmaig ACFA Occasional Paper.

Dugie MacInnes says of Margaret that she "was excellent at drawing features. She was never one for offering fanciful interpretations of the features that she found, but, rather, she looked for hard evidence in the field".

Margaret was also a founder member of ACFA's curling club, Standing Stones, and remained active until her health made it impossible to continue curling.

Having survived breast cancer some years previously Margaret sadly developed a further tumour in 2009 and this, together with complications arising from her treatment, resulted in her being unable to participate in many activities including surveys. Tragically she also had to bear with Roland's sudden death in November 2009.

In November 2010 Margaret was admitted to the Beatson Unit with pneumonia and despite intensive treatment her condition deteriorated and she died on 22<sup>nd</sup> November.

Margaret will forever be remembered as a fun loving member of the group who was always present at social events and who valued the close friendships that had been formed. Her presence along with the sports cars that she loved to drive will be greatly missed.

Dorothy Gormlie



## **J. BRUCE HENRY**

**1948-2010**



Bruce was born on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 1948 and brought up in Clarkston in what was then Renfrewshire.

He went to the local school in Eastwood and, on leaving, joined the Civil Service. He had a number of postings in various places including Edinburgh and London before returning to Scotland as a manager in ACAS.

Bruce settled down in Neilston where he very quickly began to pursue his many diverse interests. This led him to join many of the local societies such as the Neilston Agricultural Society, The Light Horse Society and of course the Neilston Curling Club. As always Bruce did nothing by half and was soon serving on the various committees.

I first met Bruce twenty odd years ago when he came along to a Renfrewshire Local History Forum meeting. At the end of the meeting he joined the Archaeology Section. He went on to become one of the most active members finally becoming the Convenor of the Archaeology Section. It was about this time he enrolled in the C.F.A. course and when he had completed it, joined ACFA. As with all organisations

he joined, he was always one of the most active members. It wasn't long before he was on our committee and finally our Chairman.

I got to know him very well when he joined the Raasay Volunteers. His first survey in 1996 was a baptism of fire as it was one of the wettest weeks of the whole survey. However this didn't deter Bruce and he became one of our most regular volunteers. Both Scott and I are greatly indebted to him for organising and publishing the surveys of Umachan and the "North End".

Bruce was involved in many other surveys. He became very heavily involved with the Glen Lochay survey where I know he was of great assistance to Dugie. Sometimes Bruce would organise his own survey such as at Middleton.

Bruce took early retirement in 2006 and was looking forward to many years of travelling the world with his long time partner Vivian and to pursuing all his various interests. Sadly on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 tragedy struck, when Vivian died. Bruce was devastated by her untimely death but was determined to carry on and filled his time with all his different interests and with the support of his many friends.

He had bounced back, when in the summer of 2008 tragedy struck again. He was diagnosed with cancer. Bruce being Bruce he was determined to beat it and fought it all the way but sadly he lost the fight in November of last year.

Bruce could sometimes be rather pedantic, sometimes even a pain in the backside, **but** he was also very kind and considerate and always ready to help. I have many fond memories of times we spent together either on the hill or in a comfy bar enjoying a dram or two. I still can't quite believe he's gone and I still expect when I open my

emails to see one from Bruce, or when the phone rings to hear his voice.

I know we are all going to miss him for a whole host of reasons but mostly because he was a good friend.

John Macdonald

### **CALLING ACFA MEMBERS!**

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.

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### **2010 – 2011 COMMITTEE**

Sue Hothersall - Chair

Janie Munro - Secretary

Ewen Smith - Treasurer

Committee members –

Ian Marshall Carol Primrose

Alan Thompson

Lionel Masters – ex officio

Elizabeth Bryson – co-opted (publications)

Wendy Raine – co-opted (newsletter)

Scott Wood – co-opted (archives)

*Title photo, page 1 – Crisp Spring  
Weather, Raasay. – Sue Hothersall*