



TAYSIDE & FIFE  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
COMMITTEE  
HISTORIC

# Newsletter of the

Tayside and Fife Archaeological  
Committee Issue Thirty-One – December 2018

TAFAC is registered in Scotland as a charity (SC002450).

## Recording stone carvings at St Athernase Church, Leuchars



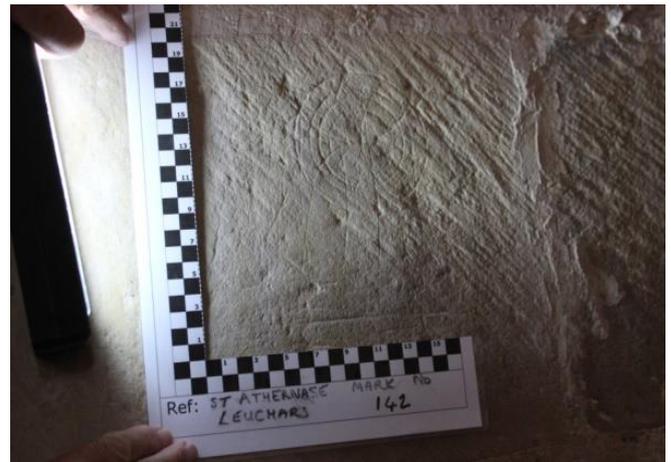
St Athernase Church. Image copyright M Greig

While the Mason's Mark Project is primarily to record stonemasons' marks, to help aid the interpretation of a building, a number of other types of marks can be seen and are recorded as well. While recently undertaking a survey of masons' marks in St Athernase Church, Leuchars, a number of interesting other features were noted.

St Athernase has a surviving 12<sup>th</sup> chancel and a 13<sup>th</sup> century apse, with a later added early 18<sup>th</sup> century bell tower and a 19<sup>th</sup> century nave.

While consecration crosses are often fairly visible, both inside and outside many earlier churches, one of the crosses recorded on the interior of St Athernase bore evidence of other markings added to it, possibly at a slightly later date. Here a mason,

possibly trying out another pair of compasses, has added more circles and also other lines to a cross, which almost obscure the original work.



Additions to consecration cross. © M Greig



Another consecration cross. © M Greig

The other consecration cross inside the church is of a simpler design but has recently been chalked over, which

is not the best way to preserve carving. Another example of using compasses was also noted on another block after it was placed and built into its position, as the line carries over onto the next block.

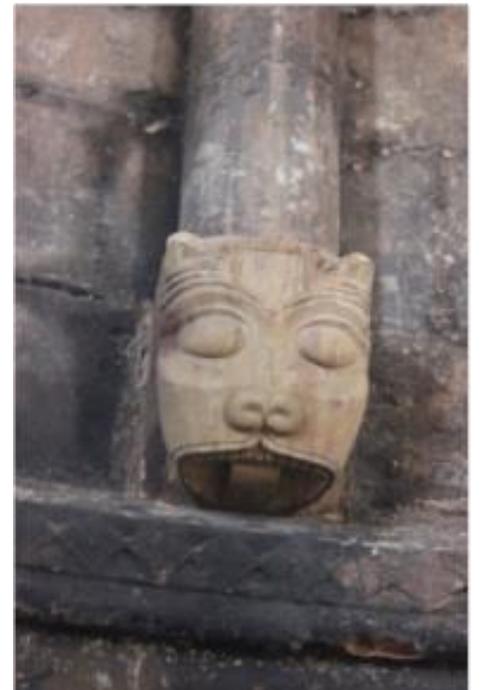


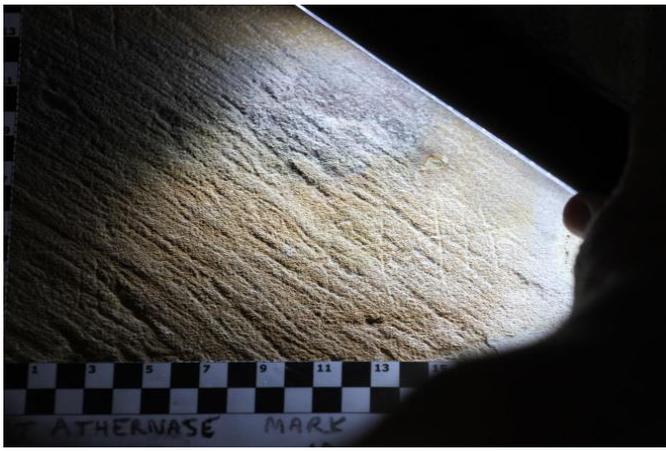
Compass marks. © M Greig

Within the semi-circular apse are beautiful carvings at the base of the pillars (see three images on right © M Greig), which depict different animal heads, one of which has been replaced at a later date (centre), as the stone work is of a different type to the others.

Other types of marks recorded are both scores of vertical and horizontal lines (see column 1, page 3). These may represent a type of game played by some of the masons and their labourers, or the other possible explanation could be that they are a form of 'Tally table', used to keep note of how many blocks had been cut. Masons working before the 17<sup>th</sup> century were mainly paid for piecework. In other words this meant they were paid for the number of blocks they cut and carved. In order to receive the correct payment they would mark the blocks with their own mark, although this is often referred to as Banker's marks, thus the reason many more marks can be found in earlier buildings which are not built of random rubble.

Other interesting features were recorded on the exterior of the apse and on the north-west corner of the later nave, where a re-used stone is evident. Here (next page) can be seen several blocks of stone which have been used for sharpening arrowhead or spearheads.





© M Greig



© M Greig

The Mason's Mark Project itself recorded 600 marks belonging to 52 different masons while undertaking the survey. These marks were all mainly found within the original chancel and apse and on the exterior of them, but three later marks of possible 18<sup>th</sup> century date were recorded within them. Two other marks were noted on the exterior of the later nave, which may be reused stone from an earlier nave, as they are of a type earlier than usual 18<sup>th</sup> century marks but not recorded within the chancel or apse.

Moira Greig

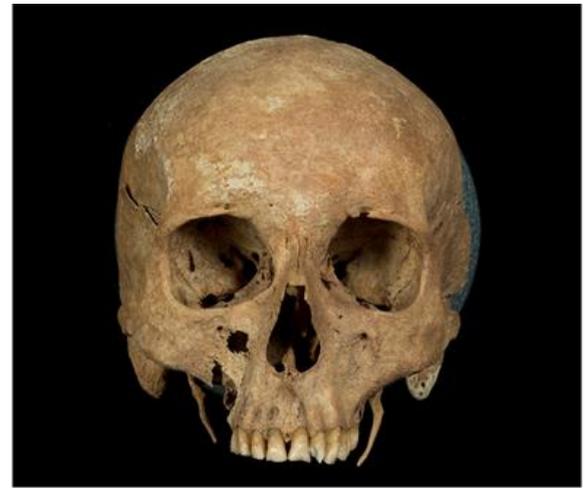
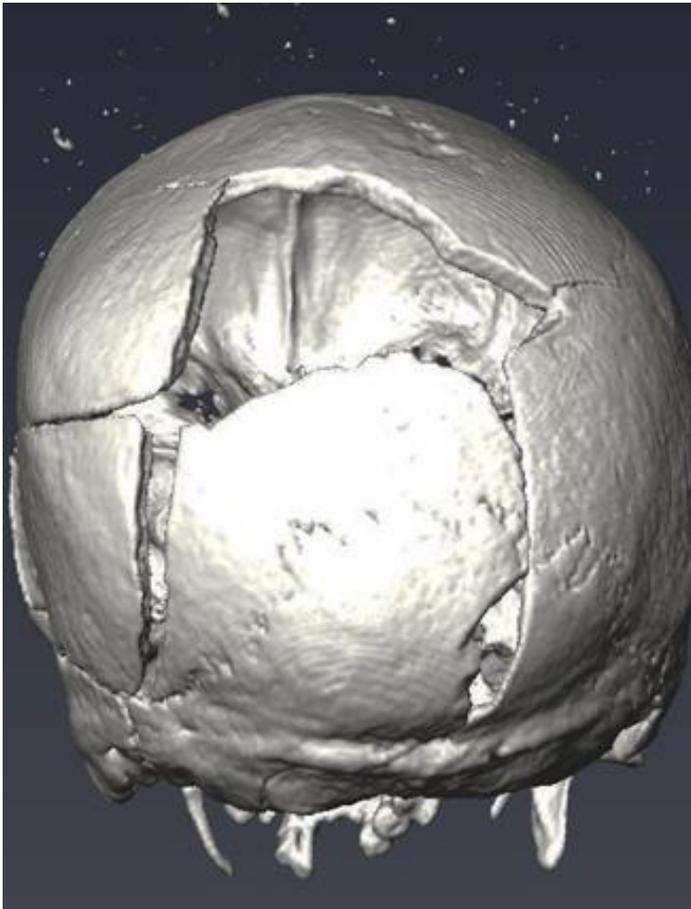
## Conference and Publication

There is no room in this newsletter to go into detail about this year's conference, which was held (for the first time, in St Matthew's Church, Tay Street, in Perth and generously sponsored by AOC Archaeology Ltd. By all accounts, the day was a great success, with a good variety of speakers talking about a very wide range of subjects. It was especially nice to see Rich Hiden, the Community Archaeologist at the Scottish Crannog Centre, share the platform with two members of the local Young Archaeologist Club. Total attendance this year was 140.

This year's TAFAC Journal (Vol 24) is now available to view via the TAFAC website at <http://www.tafac.org.uk/2018/10/volume-24/> It contains four papers covering aspects of the Bronze Age, Iron Age, Early Historic and medieval periods.

## Links with the Past

Held in Dundee City Council's collection of human osteology are around 20 individuals who were buried in a long cist cemetery in Lundin Links, near Lower Largo in Fife. After a storm exposed skeletons on the beach in the 1960s, a rescue excavation was undertaken. Radio carbon dates place the cemetery in the 'Pictish' period, the 5th -7th centuries AD. The collection is of interest to researchers because the bones are well preserved and offer a rare chance to study the people themselves. As scientific techniques have moved on we have learned more about the individuals buried at Lundin Links. Dr Kate Britton of The University of Aberdeen is undertaking a project on Pictish diet and mobility to find out what people ate and if they came from the same place they died. Laura-Kate Girdwood a Phd student at the University of Edinburgh studied the teeth of the individuals. While examining the skulls she noticed an individual with head injuries.



She referred the case to her supervisor, Dr Elena Kranioti of the University of Edinburgh's Unit for Forensic Anthropology, a specialist in skeletal trauma. She examined the skull and in her opinion the man had suffered strikes with a heavy, sharp bladed object which resulted in fatal injuries. Further investigation by Ange Boyle determined that he had been struck five times. Dr Kranioti is working on a study of interpersonal violence. Thanks to funding from the Art Fund, the Lundin Links man could be included in her study. A CT scan of the skull was used to create a 3-D printout so that she could experiment with different types of weapons. The project also included a 3-D reconstruction of the man's face by master's degree student Kristin Walters.

For further information about Dr Kranioti's project please visit [www.polyphonicmurders.com](http://www.polyphonicmurders.com)

You can learn more about the Links with the Past project and the man from Lundin Links in the exhibition "Links with the Past" at The McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery and Museum until 31 March

Christina Donald

# Community Archaeology

Community archaeology is without a doubt a hugely important tool in the arsenal of an archaeologist. In fact, many would argue it can be the single most effective tool in engaging and teaching the public, especially towards those of the younger generation. Young people often get overlooked in terms of what we do with the archaeology we find. All too often the focus is on impressing peers and expanding the understanding of the academic group. This is important, but if all this fantastic information doesn't get to the ears of the general public, especially those inspirational young kids wanting to find their passion, then let us be brutally honest... what is the point? Young people play an incredibly important role in the future not just of archaeology but also of history, heritage and museums. These kids need to be interested in what it is we are doing and why we are doing it - otherwise there is very little future for archaeology. This cannot be forgotten.

As part of the development of the Scottish Crannog Centre into an accredited museum one of the many improvements was the creation of a 'Community Archaeologist' role. One remit of this post is to engage the local community and elevate the station of the centre to those within the local community, and further afield. A major part of this was to create a Young Archaeologist Club. The club started in February 2018 and runs on average twice a month. The aim for myself was to engage kids and then feed that interest as much as physically possible. We started with the basics, teaching about what archaeology is (a much bigger question than it sounds), excavating contexts, survey, aerial photography, and a huge number of crafts, ranging from metal-working through to food preservation in the Iron Age style.

One plan from the very beginning was for the club to run a proper archaeological project, not one that is just a mock-up of the archaeology. To this end we started a project working on the recording of the headstones in the churchyard of Kenmore Kirk. So far, half the job has been done, and the experience has been so incredibly valuable for the kids involved, the highlights being presentations to TAFAC and the Breadalbane Heritage Society, which was part led by the members of the club. They spotlighted some of the most interesting headstones in the churchyard, including that of the infant son of the last maharaja of the Sikh Empire, and the monument placed in commemoration of James Ferguson-Wylie, the Factor of the Earl of Breadalbane, who spearheaded the Breadalbane Clearances. These significant figures played a huge role in the local story and the kids have been discovering all about them.

The project has been a major success bringing together the church community, local (and not so local) children, and a new developing museum at the Crannog Centre. More importantly, in all of this there have been some fantastic stories to go alongside the headstones. This is the crux of archaeology: to be able to interpret, understand and tell those special stories around the objects that we study. In this case the headstones have stories which are 90 years old, and others only 1 day old. This process of understanding the people that owned and lived in this area in the past is by far more valuable than the exact archaeological process which we have been following, as these stories are what engages the community. Sadly, these stories seem to have less value placed on them as time goes by, with funding cuts to education and culture, and schools gradually shifting focus away from history and heritage as a pathway for young people. The opening is there for youth clubs and museums like the Scottish Crannog Centre to fill that gap and play a more important role in the future. Other projects the YAC has done in 2018 include measuring and recording artefacts from the museum's collection, metallurgical

analysis of a range of items from a bronze age axe to a King George VI penny, fieldwalking and landscape studies, and so much more. After a very successful first year, 2019 promises to be even more exciting and will include completion of the Kenmore Kirkyard project – so long as we don't get distracted by the archaeology elsewhere!

Rich Hiden, Community Archaeologist, Scottish Crannog Centre

## A new Pictish stone from Tulloch, Perth

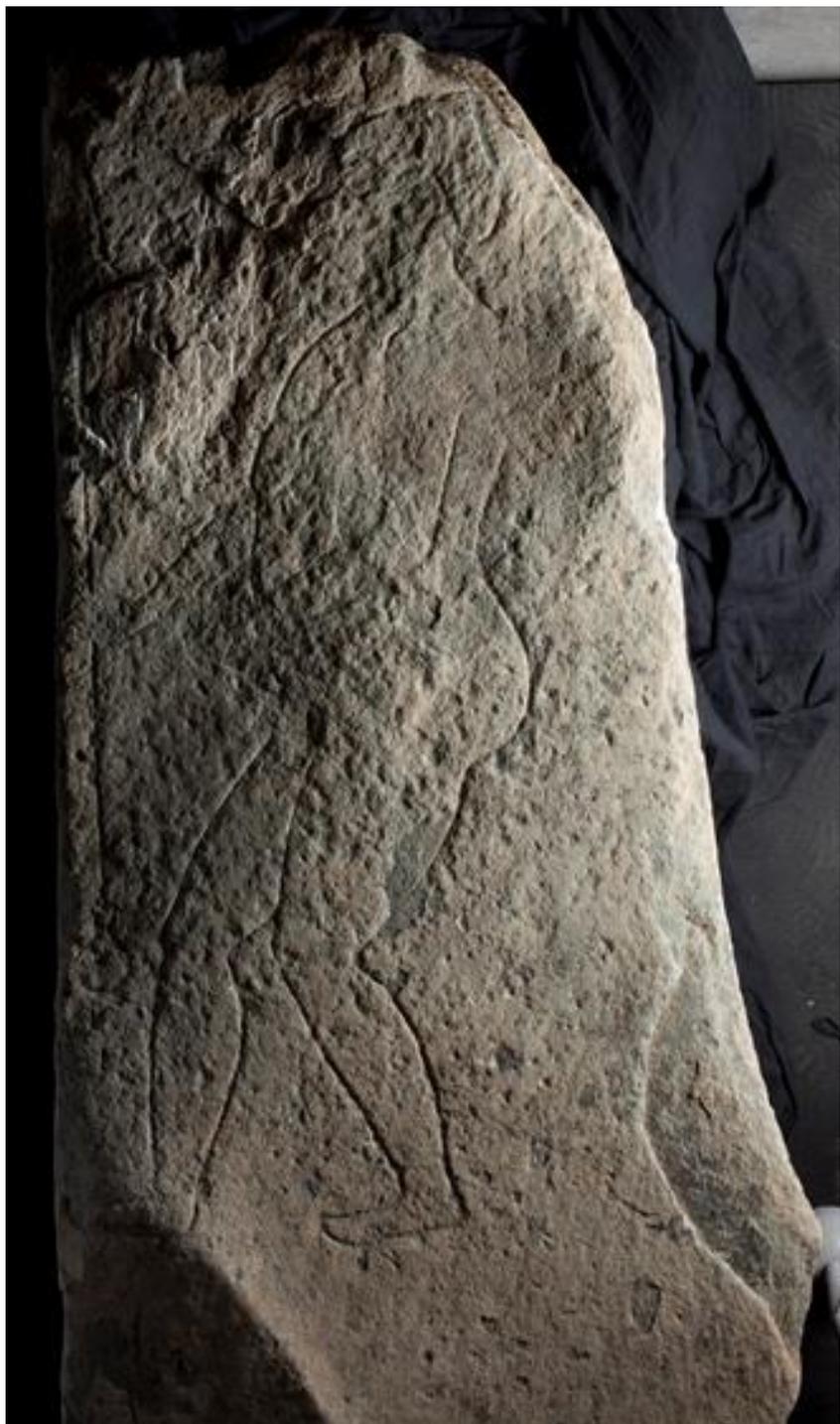


Image copyright: Perth Museum and Art Gallery

In the context of landscaping works for one phase of the ongoing A85/A9 junction roadworks in Perth, a large stone bearing an incised figure on one face was unearthed in the autumn of 2017 by contractors, Brice Prentice and Alex Campbell. The sculpture was moved for safety to Perth Museum & Art Gallery, where it currently awaits processing through Scottish Treasure Trove. The stone is a large, oblong, glacial erratic of metasandstone/ psammite from the Southern Highland Group of the Dalridian<sup>2</sup>, measuring 194cm high by 70cm wide (max) by 45cm thick. It weighs approximately 1 tonne. It has one tapered facet at the base of the slab, on the carved face, Face A. The sides are irregular, though Faces A and D are somewhat flatter than the rest – there are evident areas of marked stippling on some of the flatter areas indicating dressing of the stone but the stone does not appear to have been fully dressed. Its overall appearance is suggestive of a standing stone of some antiquity, to which the carving was later added. Occupying most of Face A is an incised, naked, human figure 102cm in height, depicted moving right to left, with a walking gait that appears to exaggerate the posterior.

The incision is cut with a single stroke of fairly uniform width and depth – where this varies it appears to be due to wear of the stone. The right arm extends outward at a downward sloping 45 degree angle and grasps an object firmly. The object is indicated with a single, slender line incision and has a length of 77cm parallel to the head down to the knees. There is some recent scarring damage (from the stone's mechanical removal?) at the upper end of this object but it does not obscure its termination in a pointed head. This and its very clear door-knobbed butt at the opposite terminal define the object as a spear.

The left hand is much nearer to the body and the fingers are again shown in a gripping pose. Above this closed fist is the worn suggestion of the top of another object, presumably a weapon such as a sword or club. It appears to extend in the opposite direction behind the right leg. The head is the most worn area of the figure, and its lines and features are obscured by the worn and eroded surface of the stone. Nevertheless a clear impression of a face with a possibly extended snout, above a clearly delineated chin is evident. A line appears to delineate a pushed back hairstyle leaving an exposed forehead and upper scalp.



Mark Hall explaining the Pictish Stone to the finders.  
Image copyright: M Hall.

This is a significant new addition to Scotland's corpus of Pictish sculpture and in particular the small group of incised, walking, often-grotesque, ritually symbolic single figures. The new addition, Tulloch 'man', shares traits with all these liminal figures but most notably Rhynie 3, Westerton and Collessie. All four figures have a similar right to left walking gait and distinctive hairstyling and all but Westerton (which is damaged) carry doorknob butted spears in their right hands. Excitingly, Tulloch 'man' makes for the clearest, depiction of a figure carrying a doorknob butted spear. The clarity of the butt makes it readily comparable to excavated examples. The Westerton figure is too damaged to know whether it carried a second object but enough survives to suggest it is a naked figure, as is Collessie. In contrast Rhynie 3 appears to wear a cloak and like Collessie, carries a shield in his left hand. Both Rhynie 3 and Collessie are also accompanied by the Pictish horseshoe symbol and Collessie is further accompanied by a Pictish beast symbol. We cannot know if Westerton once boasted symbols but Tulloch has no evidence of them. The other element possessed by Westerton is that it has prehistoric cup-markings across its upper edge, helping to confirm its presumed status as a prehistoric standing stone.

The other chief excitement of Tulloch is the potential it offers for extending our understanding of the early medieval landscapes of power in the Perth area. The findspot is on the flank of a post-glacial gravel mound or terrace, currently occupied by Perth Crematorium and before that Newton House. Construction of MacDiarmid Park football stadium in the late-1980s probably removed a significant portion of this mound/terrace. It is one of a series of such natural mounds/terraces along the western edge of Perth, giving the district its name of Tulloch or Hillyland. Although views south and east are now obscured by Perth's urban spread, views north and west remain extensive and give a clue to the attraction of the terrace for human occupation. We do not know whether the Tulloch walker marked a funerary site or the residence/ritual centre of a lord. All four carved, ritual walker stones inhabit rich prehistoric and early medieval landscapes.

Mark A Hall, Collections Officer, Perth Museum & Art Gallery

## LATEST TREASURE TROVE FOR PERTH MUSEUM

Recent acquisitions by Perth Museum & Art Gallery under the Treasure Trove allocation process include three fascinating objects. All three were found by metal detecting.



Above is a copper alloy or bronze razor, a rare type of Bronze Age artefact found in the Kilmagadwood area and it is the fourth (though the first, found at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was lost shortly afterwards) to be found around Loch Leven-side. Such razors were probably used for shaving and are usually found with cremations in urn burials. Above right is a copper alloy and enamel strap junction. Often referred to as 'massive-style', this horse harness strap fitting is Roman Iron Age in date, about 1-250 AD. It was found in the vicinity of the Roman fort at Carpow. The cracks and breaks in the metal indicate significant wear probably caused by the strain of holding horse harness in movement. Fraser Hunter (NMS) excitedly commented on this piece: "The decoration on this item (the high-relief mouldings, trumpets and enamelling) place it within the so-called 'massive' style of metalwork, typical of north-east Scotland. Harness gear is rarely found in this tradition: there are two or three examples in a different style, but this is the first instance in a figure-of-eight



form. Indeed, only one other example of this form of strap junction is known from Scotland, from the Borders, and in a much plainer style."



Above is an image of a toy axe made of lead (typical of children's toys down to the 20<sup>th</sup> century). This one is probably 18<sup>th</sup> century in date and was found near Muthill. All three items are important acquisitions for the archaeology collection of Perth Museum & Art Gallery and could not have been acquired without the generous grant aid provided by the National Fund for Acquisitions (administered through National Museums Scotland).

Mark Hall, Perth Museum & Art Gallery