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Notes for contributors are available online at <http://www.tafac.org.uk/category/publications/>. Offers of papers are welcome, and intending contributors should first contact the Editor at 34 Glenfarg Terrace, Perth, PH2 0AP or derek.hall1@blueyonder.co.uk

Front cover Decorated carved stone ball from the Blackford Estate, Perthshire
(© National Museums Scotland and courtesy Perth Museum & Art Gallery)

Back cover Masons' marks recorded at Tolquhon Castle, Aberdeenshire
(© Masons' Marks Project)

2020

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Introduction

This year of 2020 will go down in history, and remain in the memories of many, as one of the worst years ever, with COVID-19 dominating all lives world-wide. While many live events had to be cancelled over the year, many groups produced online events for the first time to maintain contact with their members and the public in general, including our own conference in November. The Tayside and Fife Archaeological Committee (TAFAC) is delighted to continue to be able to produce the annual Journal online in spite of all that has happened, and is continuing to happen, and give you the opportunity to read it safely in your own homes.

As Chair of TAFAC I would like to welcome you to TAFAJ Volume 26, with its usual variety of papers which I am sure you will find of interest. Again, we cover a variety of periods from the Neolithic through to the Pictish period and into later and Post-medieval times. As ever, few publications can go ahead without the financial backing from funders, who generously provide grants to enable these papers to be published. This year we would like to thank Perth and Kinross Council, the University of Aberdeen, and the Markinch Heritage Group.

We have five different papers this year covering work in Perthshire, Moray, Fife, and one which covers a variety of locations. Hugo Anderson Whymark and Mark Hall present a paper on a decorative carved Neolithic stone ball and associated lithic scatter from the Blackford Estate, Sherriffmuir, Perthshire; Rob Engl tells us about prehistoric and early medieval

occupation at Bertha Park, Perth; Juliette Mitchell, Martin Cook, Rob Engl, Lindsay Dunbar, Rachel Ives and Gordon Noble move between Moray and Perthshire, with their paper on both the excavation and dating evidence from Greshop, Moray and Bankhead of Kinloch, Perthshire. These are followed by two papers which bring us into the Medieval period and later: Bruce Manson tells us of the history and ongoing work on St Drostan's Church in Markinch; the remaining paper is on some background to stonemasons and their marks and how these can be used, which represent some of the results from the Masons' Mark Project by Moira Greig.

A publication does not just happen by itself; there are always people who work away in the background to produce the finished result that you now see. So, I would personally like to thank the following people for all the work they put into TAFAJ: firstly our Editor, Derek Hall, who has the initial overall responsibility of keeping everything on track; Catherine Smith (Alder Archaeology Ltd); John Sherriff (TAFAC Treasurer); Elspeth Reid (Pictish Arts Society); David Munro (Kinross Museum); and our referees. A special thanks also goes to Christina Unwin, our typesetter.

I, as Chair of Tayside and Fife Archaeology Committee, would also like to thank all our contributors, as, without them we would not have a publication. Finally, to you all, the readers, for supporting us over the years, and we hope you again enjoy reading this online edition of TAFAJ 26.

Moira Greig TAFAC Chair

