



TAYSIDE & FIFE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
COMMITTEE
1870

Newsletter of the Tayside and Fife Archaeological Committee

Issue Thirty-Eight – September 2021

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Scottish Crannog Centre



Image copyright: The Scottish Crannog Centre Trust

No-one could have failed to have been shocked and disappointed to learn in the news about the fire that devastated the Scottish Crannog Centre in June. Thankfully, whilst much of the superstructure of the crannog, which opened in 1997, was destroyed by the fire, no-one was hurt and the museum collection is safe. The fire has resulted in the Centre's pre-fire ambitious plans for redevelopment plans to be scaled back, but the good news is that funds to rebuild the centre on its new site have been rolling in from various sources, including the Scottish Government (£51,000) and members of the public through crowd-sourcing. Much has been said in print elsewhere, so there is no need here to describe that sad event in June – but to instead emphasise the importance of supporting the broad range of activities provided by the trust to the local community and world-wide visitors alike. Your editor urges anyone who cares about the work of the trust to visit

<https://justgiving.com/campaign/crannog> or

https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/scottishcrannogcentre-fire-fund?utm_id=66&utm_term=geV3PkXVN

Using Old Maps -- Moira Greig

Covid has caused a lot of restrictions in our lives over the past year and a half, but it has also given opportunities as well. Walking around my local area has brought a few things to light that I did not know existed previously. On one walk I noted what looked like two old railway metal girders lying across a burn. I knew that there certainly hadn't been a railway line running there, but it got me intrigued. On returning home I began looking up old maps, then noted on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map (Fife 1855, Sheet 26) that an old mill lade was evident and it crossed over the burn.



1st edition OS 6-inch map showing location of Brick and Tile Work and, to the NW, the lade crossing the burn and the sluice. Image copyright National Library of Scotland.

On returning to the burn, I explored further and found part of the lade now well overgrown and filled with old cut timbers. Slightly further upstream I also found stonework where there had once been a sluice gate and part of a broken small dam, where the water collected before being diverted via the sluice into the lade. The lade led to Muircambus Mill, which was an old corn mill, so one query answered.

However, looking at the map brought forth another interesting feature, a Brick & Tile Works, which stood in the corner of a road junction close to the old Kilconquhar Railway station, on the original coastal railway line around Fife. Asking around the local village of Kilconquhar no one appeared to know about the Works.

Right; The overgrown remains of the mill lade where it crosses the Cocklemill Burn.
Image copyright: Moira Greig



Little can now be seen of the Brick Works when walking within the woodland, apart from a few hollows, but the remains of the clay-pit is still evident as a large deep, wet hollow in the ground. So far, I have not found any remaining bricks or tiles.

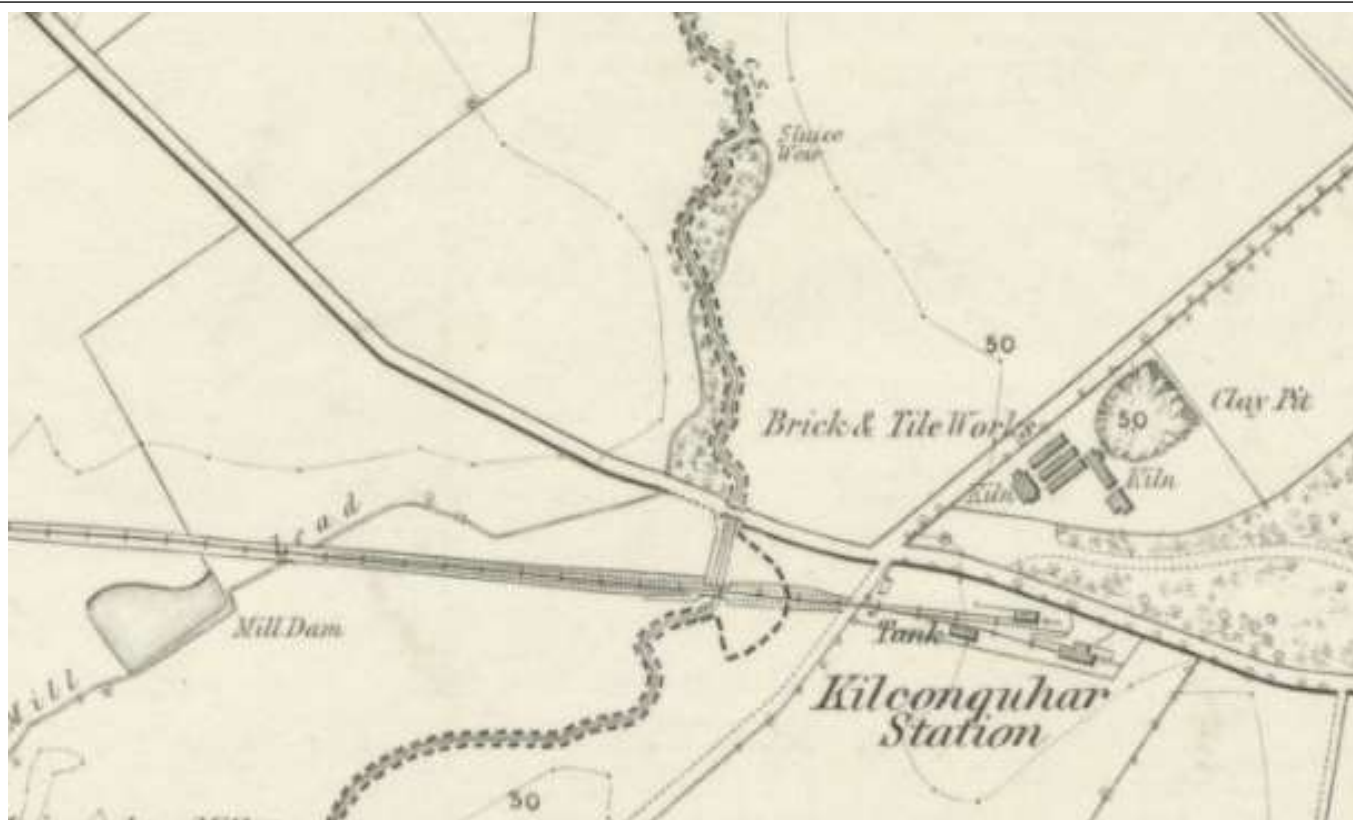
In trying to find out more about the old Brick Works I started Googling and came up with a great web site, which is well worth looking at if you found that there were once an old brick works near you.

<https://www.scottishbrickhistory.co.uk/scottish-brick-production>

Here I found that the Brick Works at Kilconquhar were known as Broomlees Brick and Tile Works and belonged to the Elie Estate, then owned by a Mr Baird. They appear to have been built by c.1853 and consisted of two kilns for firing the bricks and tiles; several sheds for drying purposes; a clay pit, and a small dwelling house.

On reading the web page it appears that every year there was an annual dinner held in the drying room of the Tileworks, that was 'tastefully decorated' for the occasion by some of the tile workers, to which all workmen, together with several farmers of the neighbourhood, a few other friends and the parish minister attended.

The brickworks appeared to survive until 1863, when a 'displeenishing sale' was held by Public roup at the site on 4th June 1863. A full inventory of the sale was listed in the Dunfermline Press on 3rd June 1863.



What is noticeable on the map above (OS 1st edition 6-inch – Fife 1855, Sheet 26 reproduced here courtesy of the National Library of Scotland) is that the railway terminated at Kilconquhar in 1855. Seeing the station as the terminal for the line appeared strange, as I always assumed that the line was always part of the coastal railway between Leven and Leuchars. This got me searching again and a map of 1857 (see over page) shows the line continuing. The remains of the Brickworks still appear to be visible (OS 1-inch map Sheet 41).

From the same web site noted above is an article from the newspaper *The Fife Herald*, dated 6th August 1857, reporting the opening of East Fife Railway and that the Directors organised additional trains to carry patrons on opening day trips. In the afternoon the Directors, several shareholders and other friends dined together in one of the large sheds at the Brickworks, which was 'tastefully fitted up and decorated for the occasion'.



Interestingly on another map (below) by Johnston of '*Fife with railways*' dated roughly c1850 (?) it shows the railway line running on a completely different course and missing Kilconquhar completely!



All map images courtesy of the National Library of Scotland.

Moira Greig

Heritage Society announces its forthcoming programme of virtual talks.

Following a successful pilot programme in late 2020 and Spring this year, Crieff-based Strathearn Archaeological and Historical Society is pleased to announce eight new lectures for its season commencing on September 28th. There will be no lectures in December and June, July, August 2022, but we already have a lecture booked to commence our 2022 – 2023 season in September next year.

Commenting on the forthcoming season, Ian Hamilton, Vice-Chair, said: “Sadly we cannot yet resume our talks in the Strathearn Campus Cursus Lecture Theatre – our traditional home base – but during the past eighteen months we have harnessed the opportunities the internet presents to reach a much wider audience and to offer all members, existing and new, near and far, the comfort of participating from their armchairs without concerns about winter road conditions. Equally important are the same benefits for our guest speakers!”

“During the past year we suspended annual subscription fees but these will be reintroduced for next season, remaining at a cost of only £12.00 for 2021-22. This equates to £1.50 per talk – remarkable value given the quality of our speakers and the range of their favoured subjects. Previously visitors paid £3.00 per talk, but this will rise to £5.00 to cover increased overheads. Full membership is obviously an attractive option!”

For further information about membership of the Society and/or the talks please contact Ian at ianhamilton45@outlook.com or ‘phone 01764 650927. Or contact Laura Fraser, Secretary, at SAHScrieff@yahoo.com, to join or purchase specific talks as a non-member. Links to all talks will be provided in advance of the dates.

Forthcoming talks:

Sept 28, ‘Heritage Science’, Dr Lisa Brown, Historic Environment Scotland.

Oct 26, ‘The Work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission’

Nov 30, ‘The 700th Anniversary of The Declaration of Arbroath’, Dr Fiona Watson

2022

Jan 25, ‘Update on the Strathearn Environs Royal Forteviot Project/the Third Monograph’ Dr Kenny Brophy, University of Glasgow

Feb 22, ‘Rediscovering the Antonine Wall’, Severine Peyrichou, West Dunbartonshire Council/Historic Environment Scotland.

Mar 22, ‘Learning through Archaeology’, Jane Miller, Education Officer, Archaeology Scotland.

April 26, ‘Kilmartin Museum’, Dr Sharon Webb MBE, Director and Curator, Kilmartin Museum/Senior Curator Campbeltown Museum.

May 24, ‘The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland’, Dr Simon Gilmour, Director of The Society.

2021 TAFAC Annual Conference

Recent Archaeological work in Tayside and Fife

The committee is pleased to announce that its conference this year will be held on Zoom on the mornings of Sat 6th and Sun 7th November, 09.30 – 12.30 with Q&A following each morning session

Speakers confirmed so far:

- Gordon Noble - *Keynote address in memory of Oliver O'Grady with an Appreciation by David Munro and Joe Fitzpatrick.*
- Kate Britten & Orsoyla Czere - *Blair Atholl man.*
- Clare Ellis – *The Logierait Terraces, a place of significance.*
- Derek Hall - *A Hidden Vernacular-Rapid Building Survey in Perth and Kinross.*

The rapid photographic survey of buildings that are to be redeveloped or demolished and replaced has become a common requirement of the planning process across Scotland. This presentation will compare and contrast the different types of buildings that the speaker has been asked to record and offer his views on the often long hidden variety of architectural styles, evidence for the reuse of earlier structures and the ability that this technique offers to define and record the largely rural Post Medieval architecture of Perth and Kinross before it is lost forever.

- Fran Houston - *The Scottish Crannog Centre: Rising from the Ashes: The Scottish Crannog Centre development plans.*
- Eleanor James - *Evidence of early settlement at Honeyberry, Rattray.*

This presentation will cover the preliminary results of GUARD Archaeology fieldwork from a development-led archaeological site in Rattray, Perthshire. This site includes numerous prehistoric roundhouses and varying pottery fabrics while also providing possible evidence of metalworking, giving us an insight into prehistoric settlement in Perthshire

- Maureen Kilpatrick - *Seggie Farm, Guardbridge: Multiperiod settlement in the shadow of a multivallate fort.*
- Magnus Kirby - *A Neolithic pit-defined enclosure and Roman field ovens at Alyth Substation: excavations in spring 2021.*
- Phil Richardson - *30 Years of Adopt-a-Monument and a look to the future.*

Booking is free on Eventbrite at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/recent-archaeological-work-in-tayside-and-fife-2021-tickets-165262854647>

For further information email tafacinfo@gmail.com or see www.tafac.org.uk



Grateful thanks to our sponsors

A relict of a bygone age

In a rapidly changing world in which characteristic features of the landscape are vulnerable, if not to overnight change then certainly to gradual attrition, it is pleasing to occasionally come across something that has survived – seemingly against the odds. One such thing is a fingerpost which stands in the southern angle of a crossroads at Westmill, Kinnaird, in the Carse of Gowrie. Fingerposts were the principal means of providing direction to travellers for hundreds of years and were only superseded by modern signage after the Second World War. A 'guide-post' is depicted at this location on the 2nd edition of the OS 25-inch map (Perthshire 1900, Sheet LXXXVII.10) and although the shaft of the post is likely to be original and of late-19th century date, the form of the lettering on the surviving finger-board suggests that it is of much more recent origin. The three missing boards most likely indicated the directions to Perth (SW), Errol (SE) and Kinnaird and Abernethy (NW). This example at Westmill is the only example in Perth and Kinross that your editor is aware of but having recently recorded over forty surviving finger-posts in East Lothian, he is keen to hear from readers of this Newsletter of any other examples within the Tayside and Fife area, where once there must have been several hundred.



Image copyright: JR Sherriff

A new prehistoric standing stone in Fife ?

The image to the right shows a large erect boulder, possibly a prehistoric standing stone, that stands on the NE side of a rough track low down on the NW flank of the West Lomond. At one time the stone has been used to secure a gatepost – there are the lead-filled sockets for an attachment that has been removed and there is a modern tubular steel post adjacent to the SE side of the stone.

However, the use as a gatepost may well be secondary. Although boulders have been used as gateposts elsewhere in the vicinity, all are very much smaller than this stone which measures 0.8m by 0.55m at its base and stands 1.55m high above the ground-level of the verge. Your editor suggests that the effort and cost of erecting this huge boulder would have far outweighed any benefits it might have provided as a simple gatepost.



Image copyright : JR Sherriff

Two rediscovered milestones

It came as a surprise to your editor in late June this year whilst travelling between Kinross and Crook of Devon to see two redundant milestones in re-use at the entrance to Balado House. The stone on the east side of the entrance (below left) is missing its cast iron information cap but its form and dimensions mean that it must have originally stood on the Great North Road, most likely between North Queensferry and Perth. Compare this stone with the one that is still visible a little to the south of Glenfarg (bottom left).

The other stone (below right) is of a different form and most likely once stood on what is now the A91, which passed Balado about a mile to the north. All images copyright: JR Sherriff.



Unusual wall

Your editor has included a photo of a wall on the NW flank of the West Lomond only because of its unusual construction. The base course of small stone seems contrary to common sense but, clearly it works.

