



TAYSIDE & FIFE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
COMMITTEE
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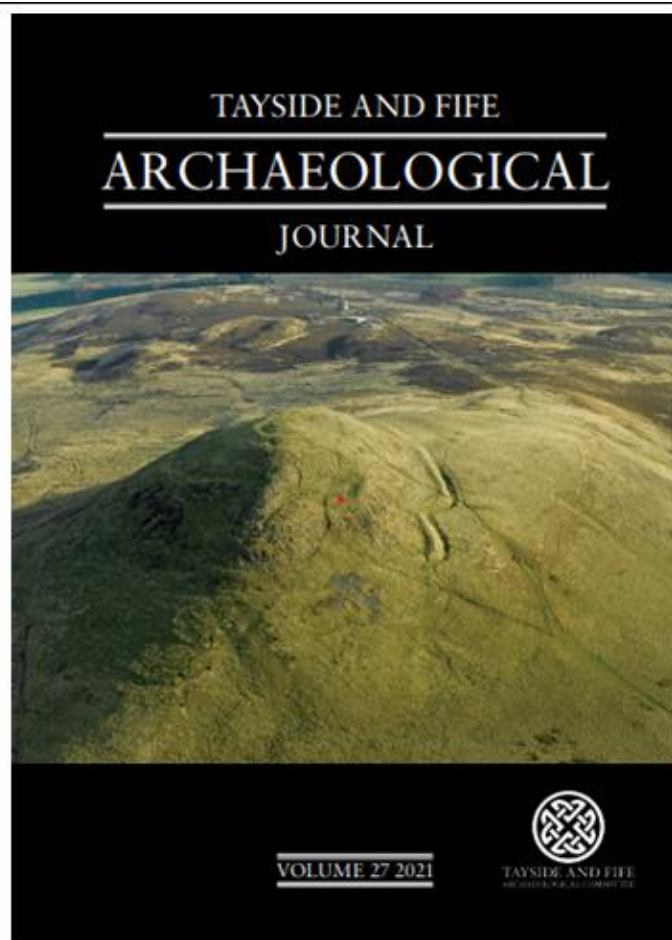
Newsletter of the Tayside and Fife Archaeological Committee

Issue Thirty-Nine – December 2021

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

New TAFAC Journal

The latest volume of the TAFAC journal is now available online at <https://www.tafac.org.uk/2021/11/volume-27-2021/>. The papers in Volume 27 include reports on a new survey of East Lomond hillfort in Fife by Historic Environment Scotland, the excavations of Prehistoric and Pictish occupation at Logierait in Perth and Kinross by Clare Ellis of Argyll Archaeology, the study of an unusual Prehistoric stone artefact from Baledgarno in Perth and Kinross by Dr Fraser Hunter of National Museums Scotland, a ground breaking study of the isotopic analysis of the diet and mobility of a Pictish burial from Blair Atholl, Perth and Kinross by Dr Orsolya Czere, Dr Kate



Britton and others, the study of two newly identified pilgrim badges of St Margaret of Scotland by Lydia Prosser of National Museums Scotland and Robert Webley the Finds Liaison Officer for Somerset, a study of the 'witches' of Perthshire by independent scholars Irene Hallyburton and Katy Gordon and, finally, a reinterpretation of the Foulden seal matrix by James Andrew and Garry Strachan of the Clan Strachan Society in the United States of America.

Offers of papers for future volumes are always welcomed by the editor at derek.hall1@blueyonder.co.uk with a submission date of the beginning of February for the relevant calendar year.

More relicts of a bygone age

In the September issue of this Newsletter your editor highlighted a surviving late-19th century finger-post at Westmill, Kinnaird, in the Carse of Gowrie. A quick perusal of Google Streetview has thrown up a few more examples two of which are illustrated below; further research and recording is planned to take place over the winter months. In the meantime, your editor would be happy to hear from readers any information regarding any form of old street furniture. He can be contacted at johnsherriff@hotmail.co.uk



This finger-post was made at the Royal Label Factory in Stratford on Avon and dates probably to the 1930s. The factory supplied County Councils throughout Britain, but this is the only one so far recorded in Perthshire.

The upper finger-board is original and is unusual in that it has a tubular sleeve bracket which incorporates a socket in which the board is secured by no less than four sets of nuts and bolts. The lower board is modern.



This finger-post, which stands on the NE edge of Kirriemuir, probably dates to the late 19th century. Unlike the segmented tubular shafts that were assembled in sections and bolted together, this post and an identical one at Bridgend of Lintrathen comprises a central casting with four 'fins' radiating out from a central 'twisted rope' motif (see below).

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Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Regional Fund Buchan Lecture

As part of the Curious Minds Lecture Series presented by Perthshire Society of Natural Science and Culture Perth & Kinross Dr Nick Card will talk about “**The Ness of Brodgar**”.

The lecture will take place on Friday 11th March 2022 at 7.30pm in Perth Museum and Art Gallery. This will be a hybrid meeting and advance booking is essential.



Tickets are £5 to attend in person and can be purchased via [Eventbrite/Curious Minds: The Ness of Brodgar](#)
Numbers are restricted so book early to avoid disappointment

Tickets are £2 to view the lecture via Zoom and can be purchased via [Eventbrite/Curious Minds by Zoom: The Ness of Brodgar](#)

Part of the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site, the Ness of Brodgar is covered in, and surrounded by, archaeology. Since 2003 excavation has revealed a massive complex of monumental Neolithic buildings along with associated “artwork”, pottery, bones and stone tools. As Director of the Ness of Brodgar Project, Dr Card is uniquely positioned to update us on one of the most important archaeological digs in the world. For further information email secretary@psns.org.uk or see www.psns.org.uk

Image copyright - J Bennett

PSNS Lecture Series

The Perthshire Society of Natural Science (Archaeological & Historical Section) has announced details of its post-Xmas winter lecture series. All talks are on Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm on Zoom. The talks are free and non-members are welcome but booking essential. For the links to each talk contact psns019@gmail.com.

19th January 2022 Peter McNiven -- *Place names in historic Perthshire*

Dr Peter McNiven is a well-known expert on the medieval Gaelic origins of place names in Scotland. He will talk mainly about his work on eastern Perthshire, done as part of the Catheran Trail and the Tay Landscape Partnership (TLP). The area includes the Carse of Gowrie and the stretch from Perth to Abernethy, which were studied as part of the TLP; the Catheran Trail extends from Blairgowrie to Glenshee and Glenisla. Scots and Gaelic place names predominate, but there is also a significant Pictish presence. What can place names tell us about past languages and society?

16th February 2022 Prof Richard Oram -- *Scotland and the Plague, 1350-1650*

Richard Oram is Professor of Medieval and Environmental History at the University of Stirling. The pandemic we know as the Black Death arrived in Scotland in 1349 and was reported as killing “one third of the human race”. As with Covid-19 today, the poor suffered more than the wealthy. Over the next three centuries such epidemics occurred repeatedly. How many died, what measures were taken to combat plagues, what were the economic costs and the long-term consequences?

16th March 2022 Dr Fraser Hunter -- *The Traprain Treasure – new research on a Roman silver hoard*

Dr Fraser Hunter is Principal Curator of Iron Age and Roman collections in the National Museum of Scotland. Buried near Haddington in the 5th century, the Traprain Law treasure was discovered in 1919. With over 300 items, it is the largest Roman hoard ever discovered anywhere. Dr Hunter will tell us about the exciting new discoveries revealed by recent research.



Just some of the pieces that make up the Traprain Treasure. Image copyright: National Museums of Scotland.

Rediscovered milepost

Your editor was recently very pleased to be informed that a cast iron milepost on the A926 Blairgowrie to Alyth public road at Pictfield, which was previously thought to have been removed, has been found and re-erected. Google Streetview imagery shows the N verge of the road as it was before recent development, with a drystone wall running parallel to the road and, importantly, no sign of the milepost, which is depicted here on the 2nd edition of the OS 6-inch map (Perth and Clackmannanshire 1901, Sheet LIII.SW). The development work has seen the removal of the dyke and the erection of a post and wire fence. The exact circumstances of the discovery of the milestone are not known to your editor but it is important because it has demonstrated that it was not removed but simply buried in situ. This is likely to have happened about 1940 when the order was put out by the War Department to Town and County Councils to remove any street furniture that could provide locational information to an invading army. Some councils removed them and replaced them after the war. Some buried them in situ with the intention of re-erecting them. It seems this is what may have happened here. If so, it is therefore possible that some of the posts that are no longer visible in eastern Perthshire were also buried meaning they may yet be reinstated. Copyright all images: John Sherriff.



Pictfield milepost: View from SE.



Pictfield milepost: Bold, 'blocky' letters and numbers are characteristic of mileposts in Strathmore.



Pictfield milepost: View of the hollow rear of the milepost showing the triangular brace that has been welded to provide extra strength.

New Heritage Website

Your editor is delighted to pass on (albeit belatedly) information received about a new website that concerns the heritage of the Blairgowrie and Rattray area of Perthshire.

Our Heritage Blairgowrie and Rattray's website was launched on Friday June 25th with the exciting new Timeline which shows the history of the area from 500 million years BCE to the present day. Initially, ten categories were chosen by the group to populate the timeline, including The Cleaven Dyke, Inchtuthil Roman Fort, Donald Cargill, The Beech Hedge at Meikleour and the Strathmore Meteorite. Other articles and the expansion of existing ones are planned for this frequently updated timeline. Lots of information, researched by a dedicated and hardworking team and including original photographs and video clips, can be found on this website. New categories to be added soon include 'The Berries' and 'The Mills'.

There is an opportunity on the website to leave feedback, which we hope locals and visitors alike will do in order to enable the information contained within the Timeline to be as accurate and comprehensive as possible.

The group is still hoping to hold a pop-up event in Blairgowrie Library sometime in the near future but, obviously, the situation surrounding the Coronavirus pandemic will dictate this happening.

As always, Our Heritage Blairgowrie and Rattray has the ultimate goal of the exhibition of the heritage of our town to be housed in a permanent building for all to visit, peruse and enjoy.

Please visit our website and find us on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Details below.

<https://www.ourheritageblairrattray.scot/>

TAFAC Annual Conference

For the second time during the Covid 'situation' TAFAC held its annual conference '*Recent Archaeological work in Tayside and Fife 2021*' in November online. The talks were first shown on Zoom on the mornings of Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th November, with live Q & A with the speakers following each morning session. The conference talks can be accessed via the TAFAC website tafac.org.uk/category/conferences.

The Committee is especially grateful, once again, to Doug Rocks-McQueen for recording the proceedings and making them so readily available to all. Special thanks also to Eva Bennett without whose hard work the conference would not have been the success it was. The Committee is hopeful that the 2022 conference will see the return of an audience. It would be held in Dundee, but watch this space.