

# Able minds & practised hands

Scotland's early medieval sculpture in the 21st century



SEMINAR • 3-4 April 2003 •  
The Hub, Castlehill, Royal Mile, Edinburgh

Organised by



SOCIETY FOR  
MIEVIAL  
ARCHAEOLOGY

National Committee  
on the  
Carved Stones in Scotland

*Here, then [St Vigeans], we have a very remarkable group of monuments – remarkable alike as regards their number and the character... If we picture this group of thirty such monuments clustered around the pre-Norman Church on its isolated mound, - if we consider the quality of their art, the interest of the one fragmentary inscription that remains, and the mystery of the symbolical representations that occur among them, - we cannot but regret that a group of memorials so singularly interesting, impressive, and instructive, should thus have suffered irretrievable destruction. We judge of what we have lost by what remains of these mutilated products of a national school of sculpture, to which the special culture of the present day does not disdain to turn for instruction and for inspiration... I only ask attention in the meantime to the obvious fact that they are neither poor in design nor feeble in execution; that they are, on the contrary, the productions of **able minds and practised hands**.*

(Joseph Anderson 1881, *Scotland in Early Christian Times (Second Series)*. *The Rhind Lectures in Archaeology for 1880*, Edinburgh (David Douglas), 55-6.)

## **Contents**

3	Background and Acknowledgements
4	Programme Day 1 (3 April)
5	Programme Day 2 (4 April)
6-19	Abstracts
20-21	Bookstalls and Displays
22-23	Places to Eat
24-28	Delegates
29	Protecting Early Medieval Inscribed Stones and Stone Sculpture (Ancient Monuments Board for Wales 2001)
30-31	Carved Stones: Historic Scotland's Policy (1992)

## **Background and Acknowledgements**

2003 marks the centenary of *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland (ECMS)* by J Romilly Allen and Joseph Anderson. This mammoth undertaking, the production of the first national overview and catalogue, was prompted by concerns about the condition of this dwindling national asset. One hundred years on, what is the position now?

### **Seminar objectives**

- to mark the centenary of *ECMS*;
- to explore the present state of knowledge, appreciation, approaches to study, protection, conservation, interpretation and presentation of early medieval sculpture in Scotland;
- through a series of overviews and case studies to identify the agenda and priorities, providing encouragement and a steer for work in the 21st century;
- to inform the development and implementation of conservation practice and policy, in Scotland and beyond.

The seminar and a range of associated papers are to be published as a monograph by the Society for Medieval Archaeology (Sally M Foster and Morag Cross eds). The Hunter Archaeological Trust has kindly awarded a grant towards the cost of illustrating this.

### **Organised by**

Historic Scotland, National Committee on the Carved Stones in Scotland (NCCSS), Society for Medieval Archaeology.

### **Seminar sponsored by**

Historic Scotland.

### **Wine Reception sponsored by**

Historic Scotland and the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

### **Special thanks to**

- Ian Fisher, Dr Katherine Forsyth and John Higgitt for input into programme content.
- Gareth Wells for co-ordinating bookstalls and displays.
- Ailsa MacTaggart for co-ordinating audio-visuals.
- Members of Historic Scotland, National Committee on the Carved Stones in Scotland and Council members of the Society for Medieval Archaeology for support, advice, and input, particularly Professor David Breeze, Nicola Jones, Rod McCullagh, Richard Strachan and Richard Welander of Historic Scotland and Anne Emerson of NCCSS.
- Audrey Dakin, Sabina Strachan and Dr Allan Rutherford for taking a note of discussions.
- Catriona Tytler (The Hub) and Timothy Blow (Edinburgh Castle).
- [john@thehouse.uk.net](mailto:john@thehouse.uk.net) for flier/poster design.

### **Please direct any present or future queries about the Seminar to**

Dr Sally Foster, Historic Scotland, Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH.  
Tel. 0131 668 8658. E-mail: [sally.foster@scotland.gov.uk](mailto:sally.foster@scotland.gov.uk)

## Programme Day 1 (3 April)

0830-0930 Registration and refreshment

0930-0935 Welcome (Dr Richard Hall, President of the Society for Medieval Archaeology)

### Policies and Practice

0935-1000 *Able minds and practised hands*: historical fact, 21<sup>st</sup>-century aspiration (Dr Sally Foster)

### Values and Significance (Chair: Dr Stephen Driscoll)

1000-1030 *'They made it a living thing, didn't they ...'*: Hilton of Cadboll and the production of community, place and belonging (Dr Siân Jones)

1030-1100 Just an ald stane (Dr Iain Fraser)

1100-1130 Fragments of significance: the whole picture (Dr Isabel Henderson)

1130-1200 Discussion (Discussant: Nick Bridgland)

1200-1315 Lunch

### Understanding setting and context (Chair: John Higgitt, Chair of the NCCSS)

1315-1345 *Christ's cross down into the earth*: some cross bases and their problems (Ian Fisher)

1345-1415 Pictish cross-slabs: an examination of their original archaeological context (Heather F James)

1415-1430 Discussion (Discussant: Dr Nancy Edwards)

1430-1500 *HIC MEMORIA PERPETUA*: the inscribed stones of sub-Roman southern Scotland (Dr Katherine Forsyth)

1500-1530 The Tarbat atelier: context (Professor Martin Carver)

1530-1545 Discussion (Discussant: Dr Nancy Edwards)

1545-1615 Break

### Conservation Chair: Dr R Michael Spearman

1615-1645 Scale of problems, methods for maintaining and replication: a strategic overview (Ingval Maxwell)

1645-1715 Runic Inscriptions: documentation and preservation (Professor Michael Barnes and Dr R I Page)

1715-1745 Discussion (Discussant: Dr Charles Mount)

- 1830-1900 Private viewing of Stone of Destiny (and Honours of Scotland), Edinburgh Castle, with Professor David Breeze, Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments
- 1900-2030 Wine reception, Jacobite Room, Edinburgh Castle, hosted by Historic Scotland and the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. Welcome by Graeme Munro, Chief Executive of Historic Scotland and Ms Lisbeth Thoms, President of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland will be selling *Early Medieval Sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands* (Ian Fisher) and taking orders for *Kings, Warriors, Craftsmen, and Priests* (Leslie Alcock).

## Day 2 Programme (4 April)

- 0900-1015 Coffee, Bookstalls and Demonstrations

### **Approaches to study** (Chair: Dr Katherine Forsyth)

- 1015-1045 'A perfect accuracy of delineation': The drawings of sculptured stones in Scotland by Charlotte Wilhelmina Hibbert preserved in the Manchester Local Studies Archive (David Henry and Dr Ross Trench-Jellicoe)
- 1045-1115 The Tarbat School of Sculpture: connections (Kellie Meyer)
- 1115-1145 Figuring Salvation: an excursus into the iconography of the Iona crosses (Dr Jane Hawkes)
- 1145-1215 Discussion (Professor Rosemary Cramp)
- 1215-1315 Lunch
- 1315-1345 The role of geological analysis of monuments: a case study from St Vigean and related sites (Dr Suzanne Miller and Nigel A Ruckley)
- 1345-1415 The early medieval sculptures from Murthly, Perthshire: an interdisciplinary look at people, politics and monumental art (Mark Hall, Dr Isabel Henderson and Ian G Scott)
- 1415-1445 Discussion (Discussant: Professor Rosemary Cramp)
- 1445-1515 Break

### **Interpretation and Presentation** (Chair: Emma Carver)

- 1515-1545 Know your properties, recognise the possibilities: Historic Scotland's strategy for the interpretation of early medieval sculpture in its care (Dr Sally Foster and Peter Yeoman)
- 1545-1615 The role of a local museum service in the preservation and interpretation of early medieval sculpture (Norman Atkinson)
- 1615-1645 The Missing Dimension: Future directions in digital recording of early medieval sculptured stone (Stuart Jeffrey)
- 1645-1715 Discussion and concluding remarks (Discussant: Dr David Clarke)

Notes

## Abstracts (in order of presentation)

### Policies and practice

***Able minds and practised hands: historical fact, 21<sup>st</sup>-century aspiration***  
**Dr Sally Foster, Historic Scotland**

‘... they are neither poor in design nor feeble in execution; ... they are, on the contrary, the production of able minds and practised hands’ is how Joseph Anderson described the collection of thirty or so Pictish sculptures from St Vigeans in his Rhind lectures for 1880. These few words encapsulate what is so significant about our inheritance of early medieval sculpture, as well as the skills and imagination that we today need to apply to the challenges of its research, conservation and presentation.

By way of an introduction, this talk will set the scene for the seminar and its objectives. This will include a brief review of policy and practice with regard to early medieval sculpture over the last 120 years, not least the part played by General Pitt Rivers and Joseph Anderson in the late 1880s/early 1890s.

### Values and Significance

***‘They made it a living thing, didn’t they ...’: Hilton of Cadboll and the production of community, place and belonging.***

**Dr Siân Jones, School of Art History and Archaeology, University of Manchester**

The Hilton of Cadboll cross-slab is variously regarded as having local, national and international significance. Its significance as a national icon is reflected in the prominent position of the largest fragment of the cross-slab in the Museum of Scotland. However, discovery and excavation of the missing lower part of the sculpture, along with thousands of fragments, in 2001 re-vitalised disputes about the appropriate conservation, management and presentation of the monument. In particular debate revolved around whether it should be conserved and presented in the locality of Hilton of Cadboll in Easter Ross, or whether it should be removed to a museum, in this case the Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh.

The fragmented biography of the Hilton of Cadboll cross-slab, and in particular the historic gift of the largest fragment to the National Museum of Antiquities in 1921, creates specific problems for the organisations involved in the recent excavations. Nevertheless, the broader debates surrounding the location, ownership and display of the monument resonate with the controversies surrounding other examples of early medieval sculpture. In this paper, I will explore the ways in which the Hilton of Cadboll cross-slab provides a vehicle for the conception of community, place and belonging in local contexts in Easter Ross. I will argue that an appreciation of these processes is fundamental to understanding the conflict surrounding ownership and display of the various parts of the monument. The Hilton of Cadboll case shows that, at least in part, the discourses mediating heritage management policies and practices are incommensurable with those mediating the discussions and activities surrounding such monuments within local communities. I will conclude by highlighting some of the implications of these disjunctions for heritage management policy and practice.

Notes

### *Just an old stone*

**Dr Iain Fraser, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland**

Even when the sculptured stone's original function became obsolete and was forgotten, the stone persisted as an element of the landscape. This paper examines the perception of sculptured stones in past centuries, and how this influenced their survival. Stones came to fulfill a variety of functional roles, in situ or relocated, utilized as boundary markers and as valuable building material, uses that could spell either their destruction or preservation. Stones also came to serve as a focus of local folklore as narratives were woven around them to explain their existence and their enigmatic carvings. From the 16th century the stones emerge as objects of topographical and antiquarian interest. Early attempts to explain them were, however, hampered by the limited chronological frameworks then available, and were both informed by, and influenced their associated folklore. By the 18th century the growing awareness of the stones allowed the first essays at their systematic study: Alexander Gordon's *Itinerarium* explained the stones as monuments of the Danish wars, while recognition of the repeated appearance of the Pictish symbols inspired Rev. Charles Cordiner's attempts at comparative analysis. Although their interpretations were ultimately superseded, their work laid the foundations upon which others would build.

### *Fragments of significance: the whole picture*

**Dr Isabel Henderson**

The significance of Pictish sculpture both to the antiquaries and to modern communities to a large extent resides in visibility – comprising scale, quantity and comparative monumental completeness. This is true for modern scholarship, where a major monument replete with imagery, or regional assemblages with a quantity of sculpture in various formats, attract state care and interpretation, and provide opportunities for contextual investigation by art-historians and archaeologists. On the other hand, find spots with only one or two fragments can easily be overlooked. It was one of the merits of *ECMS* that many fragments were described, and illustrated, for the first time. The current convention of publishing gazetteers and lists where the criterion for inclusion is the presence of the Pictish symbols contributes to the neglect of other sculpture. It is true that such lists are nowadays supplemented by locally produced publications, unfortunately ephemeral in nature. The eventual production of a comprehensive corpus of early medieval sculpture in Scotland which places physically together all the sculpture found at one location will greatly advance understanding. This paper will draw attention to some work of this nature already underway and to examples of significant fragments that need to be built into any cultural perception of the sculpture of this period.

## **Understanding Setting and Context**

### *Christ's cross down into the earth: some cross bases and their problems*

**Ian Fisher, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland**

The basal structures of crosses and cross-slabs were functional and symbolic. Raised bases represented the mount of Calvary and the cross itself linked earth to heaven. The original support of St John's Cross (Iona) failed in response to unprecedented stresses, and ensuing damage caused a major redesign of the cross itself. The new composite base enclosed a socket-slab linked to the Columban tradition of millstone cross-bases. The Hilton of Cadboll cross-slab also suffered a disastrous fall, but excavation shows that the measures taken to re-erect it were surprisingly makeshift. Among the few other excavated bases are the composite slabs of the Kilnave Cross (Islay), whose lack of corner-posts makes reconstruction problematic. The structure that still supports Scotland's tallest monument, Sueno's Stone at

Notes

Forres, was stabilised for Ann, Countess of Moray, in one of our earliest conservation projects, when ‘like to fall’ soon after 1700. Excavation in 1990-1 exposed the massive socket-stone and a ring of pits which may have supported a lifting-mechanism.

***Pictish cross-slabs: an examination of their original archaeological context***

**Heather F James, GUARD**

Excavation of the broken lower part of the Hilton of Cadboll cross-slab revealed two settings within the vicinity of a medieval chapel. The question of where it had been erected in the 9th century was unfortunately not answered conclusively, although it is possible that one of the settings was the original. Many other Pictish cross-slabs clearly do not stand today in their original location, some were moved into churches or churchyards, or removed to museums for their protection, while others, still sited within the landscape, could also have a complex biography. I shall examine what archaeological evidence there is for the original setting of these sculptures, the significance of these settings and also look at, where possible, the process of how these settings changed.

***HIC MEMORIA PERPETUA: the inscribed stones of sub-Roman southern Scotland***

**Dr Katherine Forsyth, Department of Celtic, University of Glasgow**

Scotland’s earliest early medieval sculpture comprises the dozen or so inscribed pillars erected in the lands between the Roman walls in the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries. Less visually arresting than later crosses and slabs, these simple memorials are incised with a brief Latin text and, at most, a simple undecorated cross. This plainness, however, belies the importance of this body of sculpture as a source for the history of southern Scotland in the ‘sub-Roman’ period.

The Scottish material is part of a much more widespread epigraphic tradition attested virtually throughout the contemporary Brittonic-speaking world to the south. This wider corpus has been subject to a flurry of scholarly activity in recent years (e.g. Davies et al., Edwards, Handley, Knight, Koch, Okasha, Sims-Williams, Tedeschi, Thomas). We need to re-assess the Scottish inscriptions in the light of this new work and its sometimes radical implications.

To this end, I examine the setting and context of the sub-Roman inscriptions of southern Scotland in the following terms. Firstly, their physical contexts in terms both of the immediate archaeological setting of individual monuments, and also their place in the wider landscape. Secondly, their social contexts: who are the women and men named in the inscriptions? (for instance, are they clerics or aristocrats?; indigeneous Britons, long-settled ‘Romans’, or incoming Gauls? and who was the audience they hoped to reach?) Addressing these questions is the key to understanding the functions these monuments were intended to perform: commemorative, devotional, and proprietorial.

***The Tarbat atelier: context***

**Professor Martin Carver, University of York**

The Tarbat peninsula, Easter Ross, has long been known for the exceptional 8-9th century cross-slabs found at Hilton of Cadboll, Shandwick and Nigg. The Tarbat research programme which commenced in 1991 has been trying to discover a context for these monuments, focussing on the early medieval settlement at Tarbat Old Church, Portmahomack, where excavations have been in progress since 1994. The site seems to have been a monastery, founded in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps from Iona. It saw a peak of craft activity in the 8<sup>th</sup> century with connections along the east coast to Northumbria, and was burnt between the 9-11th century. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century the church was rebuilt to serve the new parish of Tarbat.

Notes

The Portmahomack site has produced 149 pieces of sculpture from at least eight types of monument: simple grave markers with crosses incised and in relief, posts and slabs from a *cancellum* or shrine, a sarcophagus lid or altar, and at least two monumental cross-slabs, one bearing a frieze of apostles and a Latin inscription. Many fragments show that the Portmahomack artists are intimately associated with the crosses at Hilton of Cadboll, Nigg and Shandwick, and as Kellie Meyer's study shows, all belong to the same exegetically sophisticated environment. Our studies suggest that the whole of the Tarbat peninsula was probably a single monastic estate which signalled its boundaries with standing stone monuments in the manner documented by Tomàs O'Carragàin in the Dingle peninsula, Ireland.

## Conservation

### ***Scale of problems, methods for maintaining and replication: strategic overview*** **Ingval Maxwell, Historic Scotland**

The physical and environmental problems that beset Scotland's early medieval sculpture are no different from these affecting other stone objects.

Although we are confident that significant degrees of decay have occurred over the last 100 years, a principle difficulty is conclusively proving this in a quantifiable manner. Arguably, the overall scale of the problem is also so large that it could be an impossible task to physically save every item.

Against the work of Allen and Anderson, the paper will consider the present state of play and the options for action that are currently available.

### ***Runic Inscriptions: documentation and preservation*** **Professor Michael Barnes, University College London and Dr R I Page, University of Cambridge**

This paper will explain briefly how we went about compiling a scholarly edition of the Scandinavian runic inscriptions of England and Scotland, with the main emphasis on the Scottish corpus. More detailed discussion will be offered of particular problems: establishing the corpus (including questions of authenticity); preservation; record; presentation. In conclusion we will offer a few thoughts about what we think has been learnt from the making of our edition.

## Approaches to study

### ***'A perfect accuracy of delineation': The drawings of sculptured stones in Scotland by Charlotte Wilhelmina Hibbert preserved in the Manchester Local Studies Archive*** **David Henry and Dr Ross Trench-Jellicoe**

In 1831, Charlotte Wilhelmina Hibbert accompanied her husband, Dr Samuel Hibbert, the eminent antiquary and geologist, on an extensive and prolonged journey from Edinburgh to the north of Scotland and to Orkney and Shetland. In addition to making sketches and plans to illustrate her husband's work on vitrified sites, Charlotte pursued her own special study, filling her portfolio with sketches of sculptured stones. It was her intention to have published these drawings 'in a sort of fascicule', but this was never realised owing to her untimely death in 1835.

Notes

The sculptured stones had previously received the attention of antiquaries and several artists, but the resultant engravings were regarded as disappointing, giving only a 'general effect ... while the details, if attempted, are most unfaithful to the originals', and Mrs Hibbert sought to rectify this 'at the expense of considerable labour'.

Having drawn 'the figured stones of the Isle of Man, and some parts of England' for the sake of comparison, and also had intended a trip to Denmark and Norway to study Scandinavian sculptured stones, Charlotte can be truly regarded as a pioneer of early sculpture studies.

***Figuring Salvation: an excursus into the iconography of the Iona crosses***  
**Dr Jane Hawkes, University of York**

Scholarly interest in the iconographic significance of the figural carving of the pre-Viking period of Anglo-Saxon England has steadily increased during the last 20 to 30 years. Such approaches to the early Christian sculptural remains surviving elsewhere in the insular world, however, are still comparatively rare, and the lack of iconographic discussions of the figural decoration of the stone crosses that were erected in and around Iona during the middle and later part of the 8th century provides one example of this neglect. The non-figural motifs have, of course, been the subject of academic enquiry for many decades and their relationship to other works of Insular art has been extensively examined. Yet, like some of the contemporary Anglo-Saxon monuments, the crosses of St Martin and St Oran on Iona itself, and that at Kildalton on Islay, display a remarkable amount of figural decoration, but unlike their Anglo-Saxon counterparts, the iconographic significance of this figural ornament has received relatively little attention.

This paper seeks, in part, to redress the balance, examining the identity and selection of images figured on the crosses, exploring their potential significances within the context of liturgical, early Christian, Hiberno-Latin and Anglo-Saxon exegetical literature known to have been circulating during the 8th century, and assessing the material within the overall context of the associated non-figural ornament and the layout of the decoration on the Iona monuments. It will be suggested that although the manner in which the carving is organised is adapted to each monument, the iconographic significances thus constructed provide the onlooker with a series of variations on the theme of participation in the 'mystery' of Christ. This is achieved through the concerted juxtaposition of alternating Old Testament 'figures' with the constant of Christ Incarnate, and the setting of the figural alongside the non-figural. Together these elements combine to present the intricacies surrounding the death and resurrection of Christ, the mysteries of his Church, and their relevance to the Christian community of the Iona federation.

***The Tarbat School of Sculpture: connections***  
**Kellie Meyer, University of York**

A wealth of information uncovered in recent years by the archaeological dig at Portmahomack, on the Tarbat peninsula in north-eastern Scotland has shown that the site once played host to a powerful monastic community. Founded in the late 6<sup>th</sup> century, the Tarbat monastery experienced at least two periods of expansion before the 10<sup>th</sup> century, one of which may have been the result of an alliance with the Northumbrian church. Regardless of the impetus, there is little doubt that the Tarbat settlement was catapulted into the wider Christian community sometime during the 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, the evidence for which can be seen in the figural and ornamental decoration carved on the cross-slabs located at Shandwick, Nigg and Hilton of Cadboll, as well as on the sculptured fragments found in association with Tarbat Old Church in Portmahomack. While Martin Carver has suggested that the cross-slabs were erected to mark the boundaries of the expanding monastic estate, it is my belief that their

Notes

carved images also proclaim the political and religious affiliations of both the individual communities and of the peninsula as a whole.

Although a great deal of scholarly enquiry has been dedicated to an investigation of the artistic sources behind many of the images contained on the Tarbat collection of sculpture, iconographic discussion of the figural decoration is much rarer, and very little effort has been made to investigate the stones as a related group in regards to the message they may proclaim. As my research into this matter (begun in 2000) is ongoing, it would be premature to present any overall conclusions about the material, and indeed, given the number of carved stones and images being addressed, impossible to present in any concise manner. However, by focusing on a few of the specific examples contained on the various Tarbat cross-slabs and sculptural fragments, it is possible to demonstrate that the early medieval settlements on the Tarbat peninsula, whether monastic or secular estates, were familiar with the exegetical literature, liturgical practices and religious currents affecting the rest of the Insular world, and that they were eminently able to express these ideas through their art. At the same time, I will highlight some of the difficulties I have encountered in regards to the iconographic identification and iconological interpretation of some of the examples. In conclusion, I will present several possible iconological 'readings' of these selected images, thereby providing a brief glimpse of a highly sophisticated and knowledgeable community with religious and, possibly, political links throughout the Insular world, as well as on the Continent.

***The role of geological analysis of monuments: a case study from St Vigean and related sites.***  
**Dr Suzanne Miller, National Museums of Scotland and Nigel A Ruckley**

A geological survey of the early medieval sculptured stones from St. Vigean (41 specimens) and other related local sites (55 specimens) has been undertaken. This work has assessed the geological make-up of the sculptured stones and identified possible source areas for the raw materials. Non-destructive petrological studies (including grainsize, mineralogy and textural and structural characteristics) and examination of previously and newly collected magnetic susceptibility measurements have been used to characterize the sculptured stones and potential source material. The results of the project indicate that: (1) all the sculptured stones are sandstone with the exception of one siltstone and one granite, (2) the sedimentary rocks are consistent with sources in the Lower Old Red Sandstone of the area and (3) from within the LORS, a number of different geological units have been utilised for the procurement of the stones. The techniques used have also aided the art historical interpretation of a number of carved stones, in providing identification of carved fragments from the same monument.

***The early medieval sculptures from Murthly, Perthshire: an interdisciplinary look at people, politics and monumental art***  
**Mark Hall, Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Dr Isabel Henderson and Ian G Scott**

Art-history, archaeology, place-names, geology and the draughtsman's eye are all used to assess three pieces of sculpture from Murthly - the Gellyburn slab, the Murthly panel and the Pittensorn fragment – in terms of their physical association and their art-historical and landscape contexts. The specific formats, design principles and selection of subject matter, evident in the group, are all shown to raise issues relevant to both the understanding of the locality and to how sculpture functioned in Pictish society generally. A case is made for a hitherto unrecognised church.

Notes

## Presentation and Interpretation

### *Know your properties, recognise the possibilities: Historic Scotland's strategy for the interpretation of early medieval sculpture in its care*

**Dr Sally Foster and Peter Yeoman, Historic Scotland**

Scotland possesses one of the richest bodies of early medieval sculpture in Europe and certainly the most diverse range to survive anywhere in the British Isles. This material provides a unique insight into the early medieval peoples of Scotland and is critical to understanding the formative period of the Scottish nation. Historic Scotland is fortunate to be responsible for over 350 examples, including some of the finest sculpture of this period, such as the so-called St Andrews Sarcophagus or Jedburgh shrine. Its collection also includes the oldest Christian memorials in Scotland and the best preserved surviving examples of certain categories of sculpture in Scotland, notably high crosses. Unlike most museum collections, the strength of most of this assemblage is its continuing association with the site it came from. This considerably enhances its cultural significance as well as its value to local people. The challenge for Historic Scotland is how to improve its interpretation and presentation of this sculpture in line with 21<sup>st</sup> century standards and expectations.

This talk will provide an insight into the interpretative planning process adopted by Historic Scotland and in doing so will identify what the core issues are, how they might be addressed and what some of the options for future presentation and interpretation are. Whithorn will be used as a case study.

### *The role of a local museum service in the preservation and interpretation of early medieval sculptured stones*

**Norman Atkinson, Angus Council**

Through a series of case studies, this paper examines the issue of the acquisition of early medieval sculpture by local museums taking account of Finds Disposal, Treasure Trove, and Ancient Monument legislation. The display and interpretation of these stones both in museums and in situ is also considered.

### *The Missing Dimension: Future directions in digital recording of early medieval sculptured stone* **Stuart Jeffrey (University of Glasgow)**

Recent improvements in three dimensional digital recording technologies, and the subsequent drop in price, open the way to a new way of recording early medieval sculptured stones. Three dimensional digital records and their associated presentation technologies present opportunities for curators, academics and public alike to manage, explore and understand these important artefacts in a new way. Their potential benefit to those remote from Scotland or with special needs is particularly apparent. However, any new recording media raises new questions of interpretation, access and bias. Three dimensional models are no exception. This paper gives a non-technical overview of current and nascent three dimensional recording technologies appropriate to early medieval sculpture, demonstrates the varied uses that records can be put to and hypothesises on the impact these technologies might have and where they might lead us in the future.

## Bookstalls and Displays

### **Bookstalls**

#### ***Groam House Museum***

Copies of the annual Groam House lecture series will be available for sale along with a selection of posters and postcards.

[www.cali.co.uk/highexp/fortrose/groam.htm](http://www.cali.co.uk/highexp/fortrose/groam.htm)

#### ***History Scotland***

Staff from this popular magazine will be on hand offering subscriptions.

#### ***ON-Books***

A wide selection of archaeological and historical publications will be on sale at the ON-Books stand.

#### ***The Pinkfoot Press/Four Courts Press***

These bookstalls will be offering a variety of publications on early medieval sculpture.

#### ***Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (at wine reception, Edinburgh Castle only)***

The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland will be selling *Early Medieval Sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands* (Ian Fisher) and taking orders for *Kings, Warriors, Craftsmen, and Priests* (Leslie Alcock). Staff will be on hand to offer information about the work of the Society itself.

[www.socantscot.org](http://www.socantscot.org)

#### ***The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS)***

RCAHMS will be highlighting their recent work on recording Scotland's carved stones, focussing on Pictish material in Aberdeenshire and Angus. A range of RCAHMS publications will also be available for purchase.

[www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk)

## **Displays**

### ***Archaeoptics Ltd***

Archaeoptics will be promoting the use of their 3D laser-scanning techniques, displaying a range of results from both indoor and outdoor sites.

[www.archaeoptics.co.uk](http://www.archaeoptics.co.uk)

### ***Lindsay Thomson, AOC Scotland Ltd***

This display will be highlighting recent research into the erosion and conservation of historical stone monuments in Scotland.

[www.aocarchaeology.com](http://www.aocarchaeology.com)

### ***Dr Susan Buckham, Council for Scottish Archaeology, Carved Stones Adviser***

The Carved Stones Adviser Project will be launching a new website, aimed at providing information and advice for everyone with an interest in the understanding and conservation of Scotland's gravestones.

[www.scottishgraveyards.org.uk](http://www.scottishgraveyards.org.uk)

### ***Graeme Cruickshank***

Results of new research into the Aberlemno Pictish stones will be on display, along with new and detailed drawings.

### ***Headland Archaeology Ltd***

Headland will be displaying results of their excavations at Inchmarnock on Bute, in particular the inscribed stones and motif pieces recovered during their work. They will also be highlighting the applications of digital illustration techniques.

[www.headlandarchaeology.com](http://www.headlandarchaeology.com)

### ***The National Committee on Carved Stones in Scotland (NCCSS)***

The Committee's website will be officially unveiled, and is intended to be a first point of contact for all those with an interest in the nation's carved stones.

[www.carvedstonesscotland.org](http://www.carvedstonesscotland.org)

### ***Historic Scotland, Technical, Conservation, Research and Education (TCRE)***

TCRE will be presenting a display focussing on their work and offering a range of technical and advisory publications for sale.

[www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk)