

Loch Hourn

Earlier this month twelve members had the "dubious pleasure" of an intensive week at Loch Hourn. A good time was had by all, thanks in no small part to the superb weather. We worked very hard and all the objectives for this years project were achieved (I think), plus some additional bonuses:

- two small scale trenches were excavated. One across a building at the head of the loch and the other across the quay and part of the adjacent "green" at Mhogh Sgeir
- a plan-drawing of the long building at Mhogh Sgeir was drawn together with several of the small ?fishermens huts in the vicinity.
- A computerised contour plan of the long building, using an EDM under the guidance of Tom Dawson, enabling some of us to gain experience of this useful piece of equipment. An interesting area on the shore at Skiary was also done
- A planetable drawing of the foreshore at Skiary
- A 6km length of the north shoreline was prospected and at least another 40 sites recorded, - Shielings were recorded in several of the high corries on both the north side and the south side of the loch.

All came away pretty satisfied but exhausted! Thanks to Donald and Aileen for looking after us and to John and Trina who organised it all once again. Interim report available from John.

Meryl Marshall, 10 Riverford Crescent, Conon Bridge, Ross-shire, IV7 8HL, tel 01349 861824 or email Meryl.Marshall@tesco.net

Welcome to new members:-

Wayne Bremner, 32 Henderson St, Thurso, Caithness. Tel - 01847 891633. Email - bremkins@bremkins.freeserve.co.uk

David & Susan Findlay, Holly Cottage, Fearn, Ross-shire IV20 1TJ. Tel 01862 832818. Email - david@davidfindlay5.wanadoo.co.uk

Change of name - Congratulations to Hazel Anderson on her marriage, she is now Hazel Bews

Subscription reminder - Subscriptions are well overdue and Allan will be contacting those who have not renewed. Please send £12.50 single, £20 double or let him know if you do not intend to renew - . Allan Mackenzie, Braeval, Brae of Kinkell, Conon Bridge, Ross-shire, IV7 8HZ. Tel 01349 866494

Glen Feshie Excavation - 15th to 20th July

The excavation of the cairn in Glen Feshie, 2004 proved that it was indeed a building, most likely a shieling, and that it probably predated the nearby township of Achleum-a-Choid. The external walls of the building, a hearth, an entrance, and 3 circular stone features with cobbled bases were revealed. We will be continuing where we left off in Sept, 2004, extending the project to include excavation of the 2 nearby sheilings, in an attempt to discover more about the buildings and the site.

I have secured a small grant from the Cairngorm National Park Authority to cover some of the cost and have booked Milehouse, which we will be using as a base again. Food and accommodation will be £5 per night if staying there, but there are many other alternatives in the area if you wish to make your own arrangements for accommodation

I will be happy to forward a copy of the project design to anyone who wishes it.

Please contact me if you are interested in helping preferably for the whole time, but failing that a minimum of two days at least. MM

Future Events

The Autumn Weekend, probably 21st-22nd Oct, is to be in the Kilmartin area. This beautiful and fascinating area in Argyll is steeped in archaeology. There are Neolithic and Bronze Age Monuments, enigmatic cup and ring marked rocks, Iron Age forts (including Dunadd, the "capital" of the Ancient Kingdom of Dalriada), fine examples of Early Christian graveslabs, not to mention the more recent Crinan Canal. Whatever your interest you will find something here. Anne Coombs is organising, more info later.

We are in discussions with Brian Duff, FE (Inverness) Recreations Officer, (also NOSAS member) about developing a new "family" **cycling route in the Contin area** and using the cleared townships at Rogie as an objective. NOSASs part would be to research the history of the 2 townships, planetable them and "tidy" them up so that they are better presented. FE would improve and maintain the track, provide the signage and leaflets and also maintain the sites. More info later

Caithness - as usual there is lots happening in the Caithness area this Summer, including the Pre-History Conference in June. More Information from Emma Sanderson, Tel 07855875619. Email email@caithnessarchaeology.org.uk



Glen Feshie Book

I am delighted to report that the Glen Feshie book is having a good reception and 500 copies have already been disposed of! There have been a number of (not altogether) unforeseen outcomes in that several elderly people have contacted me with their reminiscences and anecdotes of the Glen going back to the 1920s and 30s. The book is available from me at a cost of £8 (p&p free to members, £1 extra for non-members). Cheques to be made out to "NOSAS Publications" MM

The following is an extract from the preview by Prof. Chris Smout:

"Glen Feshie is one of the most beautiful places in the Cairngorm National Park, iconic for its ancient pine forests, towering mountains and sparkling waterfalls, famous for its black grouse, crossbills and deer. Wild though it is, however, like everywhere in the Highlands, it is steeped in history: it is the interaction between nature and people that makes it so interesting.

This excellent short book tells it all, from the old shieling systems and the deserted farmtouns high in the glen once growing grain (it seems incredible now), to the days of the nineteenth century deer stalkers. Particularly fascinating are the high jinks of the Duchess of Bedford, holding parties in her "huts" with her friend Sir Edwin Landseer and other guests, playing at turning their backs on civilisation. It is all a far cry from the usual idea of Victorians as prim and proper.

Bits and Pieces:-

Heritage Lottery Fund - an application is to be made for a further Awards for All grant for more equipment. This time a resistivity meter, a digital projector and screen and a "broadcast" quality dictaphone will be on the shopping list. These will all be available for every member to use.

ASPIRE (Archaeological Standard Protocol for the Integrated Reporting of Events!) - Update

We were to use this new system of recording during the Loch Hourn week, but sadly there were a few hitches and it had to be abandoned - watch this space for further developments.

Whilst on the subject of recording archaeological sites and in order to be "compatible" with the GIS system, it will be desirable in the future to convert the OS letters which appear at the front of all Grid References (and which indicate the 100 kilometre square) to numbers. Here are the conversions:-

NM = 1 & 7 NG = 1 & 8

NB = 1 & 9 NN = 2 & 7

NH = 2 & 8 NC = 2 & 9

NJ = 3 & 8 ND = 3 & 9

The first number refers to the easting, and the second number to the northing. These cover all the areas of Highland

New Skills Building Courses

The new programme for May - July has been drawn up for these free training courses which are run in the Highland Council area. The courses cover a variety of topics ranging from "Exploring Local History", "Live Interpretation", "Archive Handling" and "Copyright Basics" in a variety of locations throughout the Highlands. Visit the new website www.heritage-skills.co.uk for more information or to book online

Highland Archaeology Fortnight is to take place from Saturday, 30th Sept to Sunday 15th October 2006.

Once again Hazel is the co-ordinator and is looking for registers of interest and offers of events. Contact Hazel Bews, Rowan Tree Consulting - tel 01463 718505 or email hazel@rowan-tree-scotland.co.uk

Scottish Archaeology Month - this annual event co-ordinated by the CSA which as usual is to happen in September has a new organiser in Andrew Tibbs who is also looking for offers/organisers of events

RCAHMS Newsletter : May 2006

The first edition of the RCAHMS Newsletter, which is intended to bring information about new developments being undertaken by the Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Scotland, has been emailed to me and I have forwarded it to members. For those not on email please let me know if you wish me to send you a copy