



NEWSLETTER February 2013

Dates for your diary

Tuesday 26th February 6.30 for 7 pm
at Brockies Lodge Hotel, Kiltarlity, by Beauly, IV4 7HW

Public lecture: *The Rising Tide Project: recent archaeological fieldwork on underwater Orkney*

- Caroline Wickham-Jones, Aberdeen University

NOSAS members £4, guests £6 including coffee/tea from 6.30 pm

(If you can offer a lift to someone who might otherwise find it difficult to get there that would be appreciated.)



Monday 11th March 7.30 pm
at Seaforth Club, Station Road, Fortrose

Fortrose and Rosemarkie Local History Group: *The excavation of Caird's Cave, Rosemarkie*

- talk by Simon Gunn, NOSAS

Non-members £4

Monday 25th March 7.30 pm
at Dingwall Community Centre

ARCH Highland: *"just some old huts in the hills!" Shielings in the Highlands and Islands*

- talk by Eve Boyle, RCAHMS

Tuesday 26th March

MAD: *Hut circles*

- Anna Welti, NOSAS

Wednesday 27th March

Field Day for members - to be led by Eve Boyle and/or Piers Dixon, both of RCAHMS

25, 26, 27 May - long weekend in the north, Bettyhill/Tongue
Boat trip to Eilean nan Ron and Shorewatch surveying

A note from the chair

Last year perhaps seemed to be a quiet NOSAS year because the committee were working very hard on the suggestions we received from the AOC Development Plan. The results are now beginning to appear. The web site is being refreshed and there may well be other innovations on the media front. The new Activities sub-committee is sending out the plans for the end of season MAD nights and other day events are beginning to take shape. The Projects sub-committee is helping and encouraging the various Project Leaders to fully develop their plans and begin the arduous process of applying for funding. Simon is hoping to begin further work on his Caves Project soon and he will be letting you know how things are developing. John is writing the plans for an ambitious Rock Art Project. The Roads Through Ross Project is also advancing as is Eric's Tarradale Project. Eric will be expanding his plans and we hope that they will be at an advanced state by the beginning of next year. Meryl has several ideas some of which she will be letting you know about in the summer I hope. I am still at the thinking stage of the Shieling Project as I am fully occupied with being Chair but in due course it will be one of the major NOSAS projects; meanwhile I keep adding to the list of sites.

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)

You will have all seen the email detailing the committee's intention to change the status of NOSAS to become a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). SCIO is a relatively new type of organisation which the financially aware members of the committee feel is suited to our needs. We have formed a sub-committee to look at the changes required before we can apply to become an SCIO. The sub-committee will be considering changes to the constitution and some other consequential changes. For example we will need to appoint trustees who have specific duties, in particular to ensure that 'new NOSAS' follows the legal and other guidelines set out by the The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). Any changes will require the committee to call a Special General Meeting or wait until the AGM so that members can vote on the proposals. We will have to have a 2/3 majority at that meeting before we can go ahead.

I would like to emphasise that we do not expect there to be any great change for the members in how we operate.

We will update you regularly as we progress through our discussions. I will be happy at any time to discuss the proposal with members and if anyone has experience with the process of becoming an SCIO we will be delighted to hear your thoughts. There are 2 web sites providing information on SCIO; the first is the official web site and the second gives a clear explanation of the how and why.

OSCR (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator)

<http://www.oscr.org.uk/about-scottish-charities/scio/>

SCVO (Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations)

<http://www.scvo.org.uk/information/organisational-structures/scottish-charitable-incorporated-organisation-scio/>

Anne Coombs

SCHARP (Scotland's Coastal Heritage at Risk Project) training day

A one day course was held on 22nd of January at the Old Store, Ferryton Point on the Cromarty Firth for a dozen NOSAS members led by Jo Hambly from St Andrew's University. Jo showed us how to look up coastal archaeological sites on the SCHARP website, how to register and login to the website on our computers, making entering information about site checks much simpler.

Our house was suggested for the course as it is on the Cromarty Firth; our house was a ruined girnal (grain store) before we put a roof on it in 1990 and made it into a home.



Old Store today

Simon Gunn



The ruined giral

Simon Gunn

Nearby there are several items on the SCHARP list, a fish trap, an old steel boat-launching trolley, the giral itself and a wooden jetty. The jetty caused some amusement, as it is listed with SCHARP and Canmore, but is not really of much historical interest.

After we had completed rebuilding the giral, I thought I would start building a jetty to reach my boat as there were quite a lot of logs washed up on the beach. I thought that, if these washed up regularly, I would soon have a jetty long enough to reach my mooring, or at least far enough out to allow the boat to tie up alongside. So I made a start, but the supply of logs was not to be and besides, I now have a wood-burning stove, so I have other uses for timber from the beach.



The jetty

Simon Gunn

In the afternoon we explored Castle Craig, a later 16th Century tower house on the cliff top overlooking the Cromarty Firth.



Castle Craig

Anne Cockroft



Castle Craig

Anne Cockroft

Very many thanks to Jo for making it such an interesting day.

Simon Gunn.

Golspie to Littleferry Walkover Survey, 6th February 2013

Ten folk (2 Annes, 2 Alans, Beth, Jonie, David, Roland, James and Karen) took part in the Golspie to Littleferry walkover survey. John had suggested we practice techniques learned on the SCHARP training day to record the effects of the December 2012 storm surges in the area. Sadly John was unable to take part but Jonie and Anne stepped in and took the reins. The weather gods were unkind to us early in the day with snow showers and ice, but nonetheless folk gathered from a widespread area. James, a veteran of the 2012 Foulis Mound excavations was welcomed on his first NOSAS field trip. Once walkers were kitted up two participants kindly volunteered to leave transport at Littleferry to taxi everyone back to Golspie at the end of the day and cars were duly despatched. Jonie and Anne outlined the agenda and distributed maps and forms. Anne reminded us of our health and safety responsibilities. In response to this the weather began to cheer up and we were off, taking advantage of the low tide.

The first port of call was the old jetty and proximate contemporary Golspie pier. We noted the jetty's deteriorating condition with iron works such as a ladder detached and thrown clear of jetty.



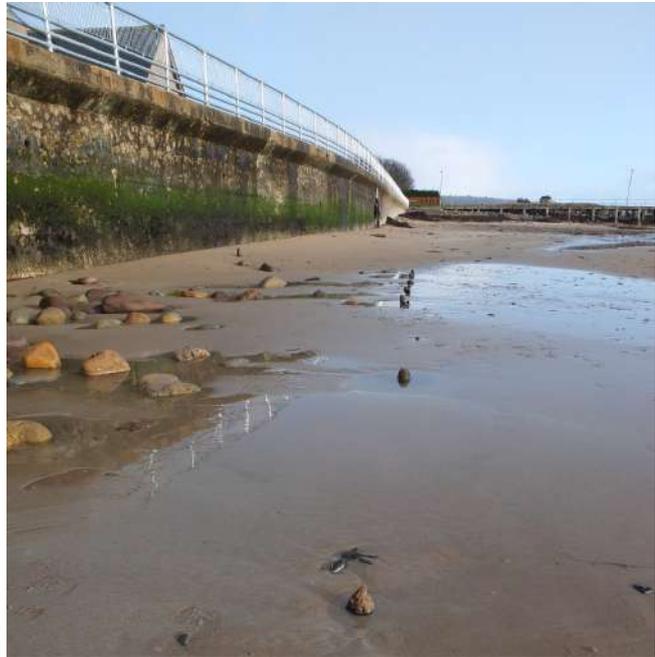
Jetties at Golspie

Anne Cockroft

We walked on beside the badly damaged breakwater where workers were engaged in repairs. They provided useful local knowledge confirming that a large metal structure wedged under the pier was, as we suspected, an old winch. We noted the surrounding coastline and speculated as to whether there was evidence of structures such as fish traps.

We recorded 14 wooden posts, approximately 12 inches proud of the sand lying in a NE direction at the sea's edge. We walked up the beach to Golspie Links finding flint and artefacts thrown up by the storms. As usual the diverse professional backgrounds of NOSAS members proved an excellent source of information by identifying the diverse rocks and pebbles encountered including Lewisian Gneiss, unusual on an East Coast beach.

Arriving at Golspie Links the massive storm damage was evident with work on-going to build up the sea defences and repair the greens. The friendly green keeper provided more local knowledge, describing the day of the storm and showing us photographs of the flooded course and caravans floating at the adjoining site. We continued past the kart track and headed for the dunes where we observed the old shooting range. Anne delivered an interesting explanation of the historical importance of such structures to local communities and the military.



Wooden posts

Alan Thompson



Clay pigeon firing mechanism in box with people on shooting stances

Roland Spencer-Jones

We searched unsuccessfully for a previously recorded inscribed stone in the machair grass in the vicinity of the old clay pigeon shooting range. We found the firing mechanism inside a metal box and the firing stances - concrete bases with metal inserts allowing cartridge holders to be inserted and secured a few feet above ground. The sun came out whilst we examined a raised concrete target platform surrounded by shattered clay targets, and as it suggested the perfect luncheon table we took full advantage and stopped and enjoyed our picnics.

Further evidence of the force of the storm was visible with large amounts of sizeable detritus and structures thrown a good distance inshore. We noted a large metal container displaced some distance away from the railway sleepers which once formed its base.

Duly refreshed we continued along the beach searching for a wreck John was interested in learning more about.



The wreck

Alan Thompson



Container with strand line behind

Alan Thompson

A structure was noted some distance away at the edge of the sea and five of us hastened over before the tide turned. A sizeable piece of wreckage lay at a slant a few feet above the sand. We agreed it was likely to be a boat and probing with poles suggested that more wreckage lay below the sand, perhaps covered during the December storm surge.

We all gathered at Littleferry noting the shell midden. Anne gave an insight into the historical importance of the area with respect to its once having been the main route South and the site of a noteworthy Jacobite skirmish. Remains of the jetty were clearly visible on both sides of Loch Fleet with Skibo Castle in the distance.

The ten of us divided into five pairs and updated field survey forms on sites such as the jetty, pier, wrecked ferry boat, boundary walls and surrounding buildings and girnle.



Littleferry girnle

Anne Cockcroft



Boat incorporated into jetty

Anne Cockcroft

The more techno savvy amongst us made use of the SCAPE applications learned on the training day.

On the way to the cars we discovered the ice house door open and although this was outwith our survey we took the opportunity to venture inside this large cavernous building with two openings at the top to load ice through. Anne explained that ice houses were used solely for the storage of ice, not provisions, and were associated with the salmon fishing industry, unlike the smaller domestic ice stores.



Littleferry ice house

Anne Cockroft

We did a head count, everyone was present and our drivers returned us to Golspie. Someone suggested that we debrief over tea and cakes in a nearby café. Good craic ensued with subjects discussed ranging from the coastal erosion threats observed that day and the historical importance of tonic water to gin consumption.

The most amusing find of the day was agreed to be Anne's surprisingly intact ceramic piggy bank found under Littleferry pier. The most charming image of the day was Jonie looking every bit the Edwardian lady adventuress complete with very smart hat and umbrella to protect her from the elements.

Karen Clarke

Field Day at Raigbeg, 9th February 2013

Elsbeth, Meryl and Beth returned to the Corrybrough estate at Raigbeg near Tomatin on a snowy day in early February. The task was to complete the recording of the 7 buildings of the post Medieval settlement at Tombeg, quite a complex site complete with a horse engine platform and a kiln.



Corrybrough head dyke

Beth Blackburn

After completing the missing vital statistics, they waded through the snow across to the Braenrerich area, stopping to note a possible hut circle and shielings. They followed a huge almost metre high wall which is most likely the head dyke demarcating the improved land on the Corrybrough estate.

Then up the hill to Burnton, not visited before. At the draughty elevation of 400m it was a surprise to find a settlement of at least 9 buildings, one an immense 30m long. There was a substantial well preserved kiln, and also a

large enclosure. This was surely not a location of choice for the inhabitants.

Time was getting on and there was too much snow, so brief notes were made and the group will return to make a more detailed recording later on.

Beth Blackburn



KINGSTON-UPON-SPEY

(original name Port of Garmouth)

VISIT

OS Grid Reference: NJ264688-NJ388642

www.jncc.gov.uk/page-2731_V28

Colin taking photo

(right to left) Alan, John, Jonie, David, Beth,

Marion, Brian, Anne, Susan, Ann

(not in photo George)

Jim (James) Mackie was at the Moray Firth Partnership AGM and spoke about coastal erosion at Kingston. Jim is a resident at Kingston. There was a wild storm on 15th December 2012 when the sea broke through the gravel/shingle bank that separated the village from the sea. Luckily no property was damaged on that occasion but the sea defence is now so damaged a small sea will be able to break through and cause damage to property.



Being interested in gravel/shingle banks and the sea I then arranged with Jim to visit Kingston with other members of NOSAS. So a hardy troupe of 12 visited Kingston on 14th January 2013. It was a cold, windy and sleety rainy morning when we arrived at the Bird Watchers car park. www.scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/visit/spey-bey-walk/ Jim met us and as we walked along the gravel/shingle bank explained the situation of the erosion. We then toured the village with him as he explained the history.

It was named after Kingston after Kingston upon Hull in England. The local landlord brought ship builders up from Hull to build sea going schooners and clippers in the lagoon behind the shingle beach. Some of the ships can be found on Canmore.

<http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/search/?keyword=spey+river+at+kingston&submit=search>

Trees were felled in the Rothiemurchus area near Aviemore and floated down the Spey in big rafts before being pulled ashore for ship building. Over a period of about 130 years some 200 plus ships were built. www.suntree.us/geddieworld/gedshipyards.html

A local man Jim Skelton www.henryrobb.wordpress.com/2011/01/20/speybuilt/ who still lives in the village has written a book about the Spey shipbuilding industry. The last boats built at Garmouth/Kingston were steam drifters for the herring industry circa 1910. The site of at least one ship building yard is known. A wood mill is now a house. King Charles II came ashore at Kingston in June 1650 and signed the Solemn League and Covenant in Garmouth.

<http://www.british-civil-wars.co.uk/glossary/solemn-league-covenant.htm> and

<http://www.loughbrickland.org/articles/slc.shtml>.

Garmouth has the oldest and longest continuously running Fair, The Maggie Fair which celebrated its 425th birthday last year in June. The Duke of Cumberland crossed the River Spey on his way to Culloden in April 1746. There is also a group of prehistoric standing stones in the village next to the 19th century water tower of concrete.

The oldest building in Garmouth dates to the 1600. The village hall is well over 130 years old and has a long history associated with the village. Originally it was built as a smoke house for salmon before becoming the Drill Hall with armoury and cells circa 1903. Around the area there are remnants of WWII.

www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_listed_buildings_in_Urquhart

After Jim left us, John became our guide. What was not known to me at the time when I arranged to visit Kingston, is that John and Tri lived in Kingston for 10 years in one of the shipyard owner's houses dated 1853. John explained above the kitchen and garage there was a sail loft with door opening onto the street. They had a tidal burn at the bottom of the garden and it flooded up the garden and they could not grow much for two years. John also said that Garmouth golf course and several houses have been flooded more than once in the past. John and Tri moved away from Kingston in 1968. At least three cottages were swept away which resulted in another new mouth to the Spey being cut to the east. If you want to know more detailed information please contact John.



After Jim left we managed to have our break in cars, pretty chilly and wet. It was decided then to walk up to the standing stones and the water tower.



The bench on the path just past the water tower between Garmouth and Kingston gives a lovely view over Speymouth.

["http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/16957/contribution/garmouth+church+street+garmouth+church/](http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/16957/contribution/garmouth+church+street+garmouth+church/)

The weather abated and we then decided to walk along the old railway line across the viaduct bridge to Tugnet on the other side of the River Spey.

<http://transportheritage.com/find-heritagelocations.html?sobi2Task=sobi2Details&catid=130&sobi2Id=49>



We sat on the tables outside near to the Ice House
<http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/84463/details/tugnet+fishing+station+and+ice+house/>
and ate our lunch.



We then walked along Tugnet gravel beach and to our surprise there were a number of golf balls being found.



Why should there be golf balls at this particular place on the beach? *Can anyone shed any light on this mystery?*

Jim says there are golf balls washed up also on the beach at Kingston.

We then walked the reciprocal back to our cars.

The community council is setting up a voluntary organisation to look at the environmental (land and marine) and community damage caused by coastal erosion. A campaign is underway to get the Government policy changed on the way coastal erosion and deposition is currently handled.

The village council hope to contact every coastal Community Council within the Moray Firth area to discuss and ask for volunteers to join the Steering Group which will focus on the impact of the sea and try to understand the Moray Firth environment and share information.

Jonie Guest, Secretary.

<http://local.stv.tv/aberdeen/news/208337-calls-for-formation-of-group-to-study-changes-to-the-moray-shoreline/?fromlocal=elgin>

<http://local.stv.tv/aberdeen/news/208989-hopes-that-kingston-community-are-reassured-over-council-flood-plans/?fromlocal=buckie>

<http://www.northern-scot.co.uk/News/Kingston-flood-summit-31122012.htm>

http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_60780.html