

The Highland Council Development and Infrastructure Service

Report on Highland Archaeology Festival 2019



Photo ©Pete Moore, Laggan Heritage

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• Highland Archaeology Festival •
Fèis Arc-eòlais na Gàidhealtachd

1.0 Summary

- 140 events and 17 special exhibitions were offered during HAF, making a total of 157 offerings. 18 new organisations offered events or exhibitions.
- Over 10,000 people took part with numbers ranging from 1 to over 800 per event.
- 97% rated the events as excellent or very good, the same as last year.
- The conference in the middle of the festival was well attended, with very good feedback. Numbers were slightly higher than last year, with 174 attendees, compared to 167 last year. On the Saturday the Council Chamber was full.
- The festival continues to attract people from outwith the Highlands. At the conference alone, 24% came from outwith the Highlands and Moray. Organisers reported foreign visitors from the U.S.A and Europe. Events on the NC500 in particular appear to have attracted visitors from afar.

Altogether it was another very successful festival, with an interesting mix of events, some new to the festival, and good attendance. It clearly is a much anticipated and popular event, and the biggest of its kind in Scotland.



"A Walk Around Ashaig" [above] was a fascinating event. John MacLeod has a wealth of knowledge and all the sites we visited were very interesting'

'The HAF is an invaluable event, bringing archaeology and history amateurs and enthusiasts into contact with the professionals, an interaction that hugely benefits both sides. If there had been such events when I was young I am certain my work/career would have taken a completely different, and more rewarding, path, and that I could now have been one of the professionals helping, advising and encouraging others with similar interests.'

Please keep up the good work! This is our "stay-cation" each year (for the last 12 years – since we found out about it) we do many walks, attend various talks and exhibitions

It gets better each year.

2.0 Overview

2.1 The Highland Archaeology Festival (HAF) is co-ordinated by The Highland Council's Historic Environment Team with the aim of using the archaeological resources of the Highlands to enable communities to participate in and benefit from their heritage. As such the festival clearly relates to one of them main aims of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy (2015): Encouraging Greater Engagement. Coordination and promotion were undertaken by Archaeology for Communities in the Highlands (ARCH) for the fourth year, on behalf of the Council.

2.2 The festival took place 27th September to 18th October. As in last year, the festival was slightly extended, to ensure that some of it overlapped with the school holidays. It marked the 26th year of the festival, and is now the much anticipated heritage event in the Highlands for many individuals and groups. It is the largest regular event of this nature in Scotland.

2.3 There was the usual mix of walks, talks, workshops and exhibitions for adults and children, with the annual two-day conference this year in the middle. This year 161 events and exhibitions were offered. Events were offered by a number of organisations, large and small, and took place throughout the entire Highland Council area. This year 18 new organisations took place, offering events and exhibitions. The Moray area continues to provide some events, and Kilmartin Museum in Argyll also participated.

2.4 Event organisers plan their own events, and decide if they will charge for them. The festival organisers provide advice, a risk assessment template, and some publicity.

2.5 The Historic Environment Team and ARCH built on last year's successes:

- The website with events listings and online booking and payment for the conference is now well established and widely used.
- Keynote talks by experts to start the festival (on the 27th September) and on the Friday before the conference, held in the Council Chamber were again timetabled. Both were excellent, with over 40 people attending each. Donations at the door covered the travel and subsistence of the speakers.
- Instead of the afternoon workshops on the Friday before the conference, we organised with Inverness Museum a training event on identifying prehistoric pottery. It was aimed to provide CPD for professional archaeologists, museum volunteers, fieldwalkers or other interested people. This booked out immediately, and is being repeated in February 2020.
- The geocache trail continues to attract people, though no new caches were added this year. Vandalism is an issue in a few places, but many continue to be viable despite large visitor numbers. This remains a good way to attract a wider audience to HAF, as the caches contain the booklet.
- We promoted Adopt-an-HER monument in the booklet and website, but have had little take up. Like the geocaches and self-guided trail list, this can continue year round.

3.0 Analysis of events

3.1 The HAF 2019 brochure listed 137 individual events and exhibitions taking place during the festival fortnight. The 17 special exhibitions ran for a period of time during the festival, sometimes only a day, others for the full period, but in calculations here are treated as one event. In addition, 24 events were too late for the brochure and were listed only on the website. This resulted in 161 events. However, 4 events were cancelled due to insufficient bookings, weather or unavailability of organiser. Therefore in total 157 events took place. This is slightly higher than in 2018. Nineteen self-guided trails were also promoted. There was effort to attract new audiences with the geocache trail and exhibitions in non-heritage venues such as village halls.

3.2 During HAF, events (including exhibitions) take place throughout the Highland Council area and stretching into Moray and Argyll.

Area	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Caithness, Sutherland, E. Ross (total / % for year)	11 15 39 (65/41%)	6 21 26 (53 / 37%)	5 12 44 (61 / 40%)	7 16 33 (56 / 34%)	(67 / 50%)	(54 / 26%)	(34 / 29%)
W.Ross, Skye, Lochaber (total / % for year)	11 6 16 (33/21%)	8 6 9 (23 / 16%)	8 4 7 (19 / 12%)	16 2 6 (24 / 14%)	(26 / 20%)	(87 / 42%)	(41 / 35%)
Inverness & Inverness-shire Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey (total / % for year)	36 2 9 (47/30%)	43 2 4 (49 / 34%)	47 4 13 (64 / 42%)	23 23 2 26 (74 / 44%)	14 / 11%)	(29 / 14%)	(33 / 28%)
Outwith the area Moray Argyll (total / % for year)	6 6 (12/8%)	16 4 (20 / 14%)	4 5 (9; 6%)	12 (12; 7%)	(26; 20%)	(37; 18%)	(5; 4%)
Multi-area (total / % for year)	0	0	0	1 (1 / 1%)	0	0	(4 / 3%)
TOTALS	(157/100%)	(145 / 100%)	(153 / 100%)	(167 / 100%)	(133 / 100%)	(207 / 100%)	(117 / 100%)

Note: Includes exhibitions, does not include cancelled events. Previous years' figures from previous reports.

3.1 Of the areas, Nairn and Skye continue to be least represented, despite efforts to get more events offered in these areas, but extra work targeting Caithness proved successful, in part due to a trip by Susan Kruse of ARCH to the area early in the year. In Nairn's case, the area is so small, and there are few groups and museums. But there remains scope to encourage more events from these areas in the future. Badenoch and Strathspey numbers were better than 2018 but despite numerous efforts to get the new Badenoch Heritage project to participate, they put all their energies into a September festival. Events in Lochaber continued to grow.

3.2 The HAF mailing list has around 100 heritage organisations and 50 museums which are approached to offer an event. Some organisations said they could not offer anything this year, but might in the future. As last year, there was some feedback from organisations offering tours of buildings that they felt they could not do both Doors Open Day in September and HAF in October. However, we were successful in getting 18 new organisations to participate which is a major step forward. This year we also had more involvement with Countryside Rangers.

3.3 Few individuals offered events, and the concerns with insurance remain a hurdle. Costs for individual public liability insurance remain prohibitive.

3.4 The majority of events (66%) were offered as free, but with donations welcome, or with a suggested donation. This is down from 84% in 2018. The more established museums were more likely to charge for their events as funding becomes tighter.

3.5 53% of the events were advertised by their organisers as being accessible to people with disabilities. This is slightly lower than in 2018, where the figure was 62%. However, most indoor events were accessible for people.

3.6 Organisers were asked if their events were suitable for children accompanied by adults or aimed specifically at children. Of those who replied 62% were suitable for accompanied children and 11% were children's activities. This is higher than in 2018 (48% for children accompanied by adults and 14% children's activities). Museums and event organisers reported over 900 children attending HAF events, most of these at events, but data is less complete for this figure with some key events not reported. The events held during the school holidays were generally reported as well attended.

3.7 The CPD session on Identifying Prehistoric Pottery was a success and mixed professional archaeologists, museum volunteers and interested people from various community projects and groups. It was fully booked weeks before the event, and covered all costs, in part due to substantial donation of time by the course organiser. We hope to offer more CPD in the coming year.

3.8 The keynote lectures are now an established feature of the Festival. Steven Birch of West Coast Archaeological Services opened the festival with a talk on the High Pasture Cave and its context. Andy Heald of AOC Archaeology pulled together years of research on Caithness brochs for his keynote talk on the Friday before the conference Talks were

advertised with a suggested donation of £5 per person, and netted £433.22 (down from 2017 which had an exceptional turnout for Professor Richard Bradley). This more than covered the speakers' travel and subsistence, with surplus subsidising other costs of the festival.

3.9 There were 17 special exhibitions this year, down from 22 in 2018. These were held in museums, libraries, and village halls. Many museums felt unable to offer anything special, noting the pressures they are finding now with volunteers and funding.

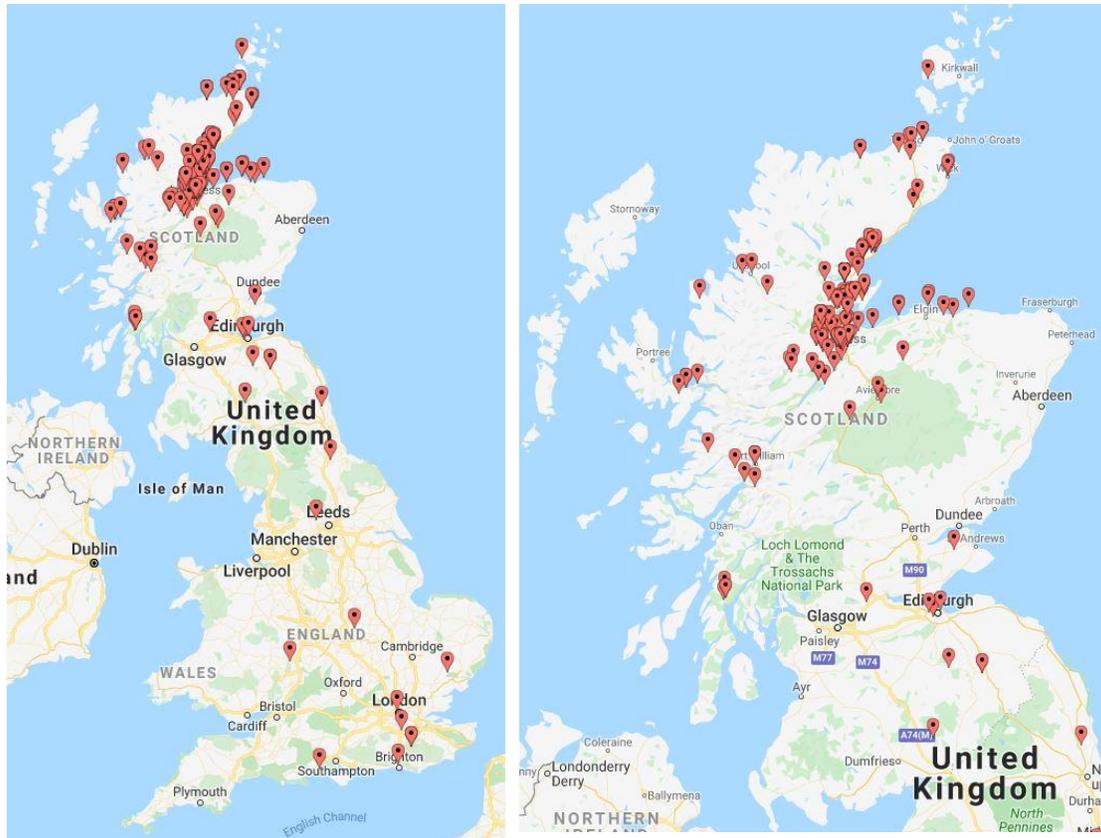
4.0 Event Attendees: Numbers and Origins

4.1 We asked organisers to let us know how many people attended their event, how many of these were from outwith the Highlands and how many were children. We repeatedly chased organisers for the information, and of the 157 events which took place, information about 127 events (81%) was received, reporting almost 10,000 total attendance of which over 900 were children and over 1000 from outwith the Highlands. The totals are to some extent skewed by the Strathnairn Vintage Agricultural Display (800) and the Black Isle Gathering (350), but in general the numbers show fairly good attendance for most events. We had fewer exhibitions this year, and are lacking some of the data, so although total numbers for exhibitions are down, there would still have been a good number more. Some people who attended more than one event will also be counted more than once. Nevertheless, we can certainly conclude again that we had well over 10,000 people attending this year, showing the continued if not growing popularity of the festival.

4.2 The average number of people per event (for those for which we have exact data, and excluding the Strathnairn and BIG event and the exhibitions) was 28 people, again slightly up from last year (26). If we add in the large events and exhibitions it is 82 people per event. Some events were extremely well attended, or ran at full capacity.

4.4 It is difficult to know for certain how many people living outwith the Highlands attended HAF events. Our best data comes from the conference, where 75% were from the Highlands, 6% from Moray and 19% from outwith the Highlands. This represents a slight decrease of visitors from 2018. Some organisers asked their attendees where they came from, and they estimated over 171 came from outwith the Highlands at events and over 800 to exhibitions. This is probably an underestimate.

We also asked people on their evaluation forms to list their postcode. This showed the vast majority from the Highlands, but of those outwith the Highlands, some came from as far away as the USA. The map however is also slanted towards those events where the organisers ensured feedback forms were filled in and returned. We know, for example, from conference booking forms that 23 people attending the conference were from outwith the Highlands, but the map clearly does not reflect this.



4.5 This year we linked to one large event: the Strathnairn Vintage Agricultural Rally on 28th September. It generally attracts significantly more people from outwith the Highlands, but we have no figures for this.

4.6 Many people attend more than one event. However, since the forms were sometimes handed in during the HAF fortnight, it is difficult to gauge how many events people attended. A few organisers made sure that people filled in the form on the day, and these tended to only list that one event. One respondent, however, attended 19 events during the festival! We also know anecdotally some people used more than one form.

HAF events attended	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
One event	77%	67%	70%	72%	54%	32%
Two events	9%	16%	11%	7%	20%	21%
Three events	6%	6%	4%	2%	4%	26%
Four events	2%	5%	3%	11%	4%	5%
Five or more events	6%	6%	11%	8%	17%	16%
Total (%)	161 (100%)	127 (100%)	114 (100%)	141 (100%)	24 (99%)	19 (100%)

Previous years' data from previous reports, and reflect intended number of events rather than actual attendance. 2017 data excludes on-line feedback which didn't ask this question, and people who did not answer the question on the feedback form.

5.0 Audience Feedback

5.1 Feedback forms were sent to each organiser for distribution and placed on chairs at events at the Council Chamber. They were also available online from the website. A survey monkey version was also available, linked to from the HAF website. A total of 170 printed responses were received, with 26 forms received via email, and an additional 10 survey monkey forms, making a total of 206 forms. This is much higher than in 2018 (147), 2017 (137) and 2016 (136), and a great improvement over 2015, when only 24 responses were returned. Nevertheless it is still only a small proportion of people attending the festival events.

5.2 Questions asked were designed to allow comparison with previous surveys. In addition, people were asked if they had used the HAF website, and if they had participated in the Adopt-an-HER record scheme and the geocache trail. The forms asked people to rate statements from 1 to 5, with one being the best and 5 being the worst. This year there were few signs of people being confused by the rating scale.

5.3 Overall Satisfaction with events

Feedback was obtained from people attending 313 events. Of these, 76% found them excellent, 21% very good, 0% satisfactory, 1% unsatisfactory and 2% poor. This is similar to 2018 and higher than 2017 and 2016, but it is difficult to compare with previous years when there were such few returns. In general satisfaction levels appear to remain at a fairly high standard over the years.

Rating of Event	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Excellent (1)	76%	77%	66%	70%	83%	72%	68%	72%
Very Good (2)	21%	19%	28%	22%	13%	22%	29%	25%
Satisfactory (3)	0%	3%	2%	7%	1%	2%	2%	3%
Unsatisfactory (4)	1%	0%	3%	1%	0	0	1%	0
Poor (5)	2%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0	0	0	0
Total	313(100%)	262(100%)	258(100%)	273(100%)	24(100%)	19(100%)	100%	100%

Data for previous years from 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 reports.

5.4 Organisation of the events

People also rated the organisation of each event, and again show high satisfaction.

Rating of Event %	2019	2018	2017	2016
Excellent (1)	75%	80%	67%	75%
Very Good (2)	19%	17%	26%	15%
Satisfactory (3)	2%	2%	2%	8%
Unsatisfactory (4)	1%	0%	2%	2%
Poor (5)	2%	<1%	2%	0
Total	99%	100%	99%	100%

5.5 Finding out about events

People learned about events from a number of sources, and many people used more than one source. Of the 206 responses to this question:

- By far and away the largest number reported hearing about events from the brochure (68). This year they were also asked where they got the brochure, with the most common answers being by post (17), at a local library (16), or at a museum (14). Several also reported picking up a brochure at an event, thereby learning about other events.
- 50 people reported learning about an event online, usually either on the HAF website or on facebook. A follow up question asked people if they had used the HAF website: of the 181 people who replied to this question, 109 (60%) had not used it and 72 (40%) had consulted it. However, statistics from the website show that it was used frequently (see below 9.0).
- Word of mouth (29) and local organisations (35) were next most popular. Word of mouth remains an important source. Local societies and museums also helped to promote, with people hearing about events from local organisations such as ARCH or NoSAS (35 people)
- 13 people said that they found out about an event from a local poster.
- 5 people found out from the newspaper.
- And 5 people said they found out while passing through at a local museum.

5.6 AOC Archaeology responded at the end of the festival saying how much they enjoyed the festival – and that they send staff there for CPD ‘because of the wide ranging subjects and groups that speak, and the opportunity to meet such a diverse group.’

5.7 There was a range of feedback received on all aspects of HAF, and these can be found in Appendix 1. In general most feedback was positive.

6.0 Organiser Feedback

We invited feedback from all organisers when chasing for numbers attending the events. Few provided any comments, but those who did were generally pleased by how things had gone. Some said that they would consider offering an event again next year.



7.0 Conference

7.1 The Recent Archaeological Discoveries and Research conference is a very popular part of the festival. In 2019 it took place again at the Highland Council Chamber in the middle of the festival (12th and 13th October). As usual there was a mixture of academics, professional contract archaeologists, community groups and individual researchers presenting talks, this year chaired by Andy Heald who gave an excellent keynote talk the night before, and Michael Stratigos of University of Glasgow. The conference also had 19 displays from professional organisations, community projects and museums (up from 2018). Two were new to HAF.

7.2 A total of 174 people attended the conference, 135 on both days, 26 on Saturday only and 13 on Sunday only. Of these, 136 were paying attendees. This is slightly higher than last year when there were 167 people (125 paying). The chamber was full on Saturday. One person from each display organisation and speakers were allocated a free place as per previous years.

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Attendance	174	167	162	137	142	117	145	122	117

7.3 Costs for the conference this year were £30 for both days and £20 for one day only, with this year a student rate of £20 for both days. This included teas and coffees twice during the day. Online booking remained popular; a small surcharge of £1 per booking was added to cover the paypal costs associated with this. 64 people paid online compared to 63 last year, and 42 in 2016. Only a few students took advantage of the special rate, and more outreach next year to UHI students should be undertaken.

7.4 The inclusion of the poster sessions during the lunch breaks meant that there was more to keep people at the conference venue. These sessions were again popular.

7.6 63 people responded in their evaluation forms about the conference, with 67% rating it excellent, 29% very good, 2% unsatisfactory and 3% poor. This is similar to 2018 (71 responders) where 72% rated it excellent and 28% very good, 2017 (56 responders) where 64% rated it excellent, 32% very good and 4% poor, as well as on 2016 (47 responders), where 68% rated it excellent, 23% very good, 4% satisfactory and 4% no data, and 2015 figures (39 respondents) where 74% listed it as excellent and 24% as good. We received a number of comments, most extremely favourable. See Appendix 1.

7.7 The sound system and hearing loops worked well this year, with only one critical comment.

7.7 Of conference attendees 76% came from the Highlands, 6% from Moray and 19% from outwith the Highlands. Compared to 2018, there were slightly more attendees from the Highlands and Moray, with fewer from outwith the Highlands.

7.8 The conference payments covered the speakers' travel and subsistence as well as venue and catering costs. Although coffees/teas are expensive, it is clear the people want lunch/afternoon coffees as well. The catering costs are substantial, incurring a 25% weekend rate.

8.0 Geocache Trail

The HAF geocache trail continues to be popular. Two geocaches have been withdrawn due to vandalism (Ardvreck Castle and Ferrycroft), one is awaiting replacement (Abriachan) but the rest continue, with West Highland Museum extremely popular (1194 logged entries now, an increase of 549 since last year). All are listed on the geocaching website (www.geocaching.org) under the account HAF Caches. People who find the geocaches sign a log book, post comments on the geocaching website or both.

The intent of the geocaches was to attract people who might not otherwise think themselves interested in heritage or might not know how to find out about what was happening, and the caches are big enough to hold HAF brochures. The comments show that the initiative succeeded, and in some cases have helped entice people into museums. They also attract an international audience, with a large number of entries on the website logs from foreign visitors. The geocaches also will continue to promote HAF during the other months. The number of locations should be expanded if possible in future years.

9.0 HAF Website

The website continues to be well used and useful, allowing events to be added, information about cancellations, fuller details than the brochure allowed, and online payment for the conference, a feature which has been particularly well-received. It also allowed events to be publicised as soon as they were confirmed.

Although only 72 (of 206 respondents) reported in feedback forms using the website, we know that it was consulted far more. Analysis of website statistics show that during the festival itself there were 1515 sessions, ranging from 9 to 124 per day. There were 4952 page views, with 1112 hits to the home page, 2681 to the events calendar and 447 to the conference. There was also activity leading up to the festival, as people clearly used the website from 30/07/2019 to 18/10/2019 to find out about what was on offer: 3323 sessions, comprising 8489 page views.

	2019	2018	2017	2016
Sessions during festival	1515	1168	1507	1194
Page Views	4952	3622	4192	3579
Hits for Home Page	1112	892	685	955
Hits for Event Calendar	2681	1772	2492	2085
Hits for Conference Page	447	380	442	350
Total sessions, including leading up to the festival	3323	3311	4188	2694
Total page views, including leading up to the festival	8489	10834	12803	9338

Comments show some people find navigating the website difficult, whereas others find it easy.

9.0 HAF publicity

9.1 HAF publicity consists of a press release submitted to the main newspapers, poster templates provided to organisers (this year again allowing customisation), and the brochure which is distributed to a mailing list comprised of those who have requested to be on it, all libraries, service points, museums, secondary and primary schools, leisure centres, tourist information centres and points and a few other suggested venues. The HAF website also promoted the festival, and the Historic Environment Team and some organisations used Facebook. Digit!2017 also listed some, as did Archaeology Scotland and the What's On website. The sheer number of events offered meant that none of these other providers listed all the events, because it would have swamped their listings. Emails were also sent to the list of museums and heritage organisations asking them to promote the festival to their members. Many organisations requested large number of brochures this year to pass on to their members. ARCH targets key events, including the UHI Freshers' Fair and lectures in September.

9.2 The brochure is also sent to people who have requested it in the past. Last year we required people to inform us if they wished to stay on the mailing list. The majority of people did not respond, reducing our mailing as a result. A number of people got in touch asking why they hadn't received it and have been added again to the list. However, it is clear people are getting the brochure and information by other means too.

9.3 The brochure clearly remains an important means of promotion, and a number of comments were received showing how much it is appreciated, and considered an essential way to find out about HAF, even for those who also use the website. Altogether this is a substantial part of the budget in terms of production and time. The design by and large remained the same, and people have stated they now know where to look for information. SPP printers undertake to find sponsorship and ads, but fewer appeared this year, and more attention needs to be addressed to this issue.

9.4 A poster which could be customised was sent to all organisers, and some made use of it. This provides good visual branding for the event.

9.5 It is clear that other methods will be needed to reach a larger audience. Feedback forms and comments suggest there are still people who did not know about the festival beforehand.

9.6 Other strategies for wider promotion should also be considered, though this will have budget implications.

28th Sept - 18th Oct 2019

The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Highland Archaeology Festival
Celebrating Archaeology, History and Heritage

Fèis Arc-eòlais na Gàidhealtachd
A' Comharrachadh Arc-eòlas, Eachdraidh is Dualchas

HAF2019 Launch Lecture

Out of the Dark: Looking Beyond the High Pasture Cave Complex, Skye

Talk by Steven Birch, West Coast Archaeology Services

Friday 27th September, 7:30pm, Highland Council Chamber, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness (parking permit available from door).

Suggested donation £5.

Steven Birch will place the important Iron Age High Pasture Cave complex within a wider contextual setting, drawing on evidence from excavated caves in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Europe. No booking needed.

Walks | Talks | Exhibitions | Conference

For further details visit our website at:
www.highlandarchaeologyfestival.org

-HAF- or pick up a programme from Libraries or Service Points.

10. Conclusions

10.1 The Highland Archaeology Festival remains a very popular annual event, with a loyal local audience and good support from a number of local, regional and national organisations. Numbers of events were high, and many people participated. The feedback shows 97% rated the events as excellent or very good. The success could not have been done without the many local organisations that volunteered their events – and then often participated as well.

10.2 This year we built on innovations of the last few years, but kept the festival fresh with a CPD event and worked to attract new event organisers. The variety of offerings resulted in a diverse and vibrant programme.

10.3 The conference continues to be a high point of the festival, with even better attendance this year. For the first time we had to close it to bookings on the Saturday. It is the only platform which allows the area's archaeological research and discoveries to be shared with professionals and the public, and as such is much anticipated. The fact that around a fifth of the participants come from outwith the Highlands shows that it has a wider attraction as well.

10.4 The festival and conference continue to fit very well with The Highland Council's organisational objectives:

- supporting sustainable economic group

As noted above, HAF attracts people from outwith the Highlands, but it also encourages visitors from the Highlands to explore other areas. Some museums see it as a way to encourage people into the museum, especially at a time after the main tourist season. Some societies use it as a way to promote their organisation and gain new members.

- Delivering health and learning benefits

The range of events, inside and out, promoting the Highland's heritage provides a varied and cost-effective learning platform. The conference provides an opportunity to learn about research and fieldwork which otherwise would not be available. The hands-on workshops provided opportunities to learn new skills. Many of the events were outdoor walks, and encouraged healthy activity, hopefully encouraging people to continue to explore the rich heritage on their doorsteps.

- Protecting the natural and cultural heritage of the Highlands

The cultural heritage of the Highlands is a rich asset. By promoting local heritage, including opportunities to learn more about it, its importance will be better appreciated and protected for the future. HAF is an important aspect of the outreach work of the Highland Council Historic Environment Team – and is much appreciated by the public.

10.5 There is much to build on for 2020. We hope to continue to expand the number of groups taking part and to encourage more people to explore museums. We want to promote the Adopt-an-HER record initiative to encourage more people to use this valuable resource. We will also continue to reassess our publicity to see if we can better spread the word to those who are unaware of the festival and to support local organisations. And we will try to identify areas where cost savings can be made.

Appendix 1 Comments 2018

General

- Excellent Programme
- Need more events in the Badenoch & Strathspey area
- It should be on for longer. So much of interest to see and do in our area and further afield. Many more events were of interest that I was unable to attend this year
- Well run and very interesting events
- It was first class information – well done
- Excellent
- Well done to the organisers
- Lots of information – so many calendar events to visit next
- Keep up the wonderful work
- All good
- Excellent
- Please continue with the HAF each year! Unfortunately I was away from home for a large part of HAF – otherwise I would have gone to more events
- Super events on offer again. Council PA System not the best
- Most enjoyable
- Great set of events this year
- Depth and Breadth of events amazing
- The HAF is an invaluable event, bringing archaeology and history amateurs and enthusiasts into contact with the professionals, an interaction that hugely benefits both sides. If there had been such events when I was young I am certain my work/career would have taken a completely different, and more rewarding, path, and that I could now have been one of the professionals helping, advising and encouraging others with similar interests.
- It is wonderful to go on the guided walks. The leaders are so knowledgeable, it is always very interesting and educational. A lot of the “routes” would be difficult for us to find and follow. We explore a lot of areas we know nothing of, and learn more of the areas we do know a bit about. The experience of a guided walk, especially with an experienced and knowledgeable leader, is so much better than a walk just undertaken by yourself. Also, members of the group add comments and ask questions enriching the experience further. I have attended the HAF for several years, and hope it will continue for several more years.
- Please continue to publish the brochure, also to send it out as early as possible as we plan other commitments, and going away for a holiday afterwards, around it
- Please keep up the good work! This is our “stay-cation” each year (for the last 12 years – since we found out about it) we do many walks, attend various talks and exhibitions
- I attended the one nearest to my home as transport is an issue. I was dropped off and picked up, by my daughter. I enjoyed my afternoon very much. It would be grand fun to discover or pick up an artifact. We came to Scotland 2 years ago from S Africa and we have a grand collection of fossils already. Now to know where to look and recognise other things, I made a note of places to visit nearby. Flint and chert are stones we are always on the lookout for when on the beach. Thank you to Susan for a very informative afternoon, it is always lovely when someone is enthusiastic about their subject
- Too many interesting events to participate is all I would like to
- Excellent programme. Very varied topics and locations
- Very interesting
- Look forward to the next one!
- Very interesting
- Excellent variety of events
- Pretty good with some interesting stuff
- It was nice

- Great! Keep it going
- A fixed point in my calendar, always interesting and informative and worthy of the trip from Birmingham
- Long may it continue
- Just very good
- I think you have designed a format that really fits your mixed audience – more of the same please for next year
- It's a great festival, it's important that it continues
- A fantastic experience and very well organised
- It gets better each year.
- Would prefer more medieval and post medieval, and slightly less prehistoric. (this won't stop me coming next year)
- Excellent opportunity for locals and visitors to learn about and enjoy highland Heritage and Archaeology
- As usual, a well-organised forum to allow the professionals to network with the amateurs for the benefit of both camps
- Spectacular event, really valuable resource/event/place to engage with Highland Heritage. Thanks
- Gets better every year
- Generally, this is a useful gathering, to share knowledge and information relating to research and current developments in archaeology and heritage. Useful platform for this.
- Keep it up!
- I would like to know more about it and attend future events
- Lots of interesting things
- Love it!
- All excellent as usual!
- Great activities
- Fascinating to have access to records of our heritage
- Well done everyone for a great Festival and for those who have organised it!
- Brilliant – Keep going
- An excellent showcase for interesting historical places and past ways of life in the Highlands
- It was very helpful when you posted the brochure to those who had registered an interest. Failing that, could you email the dates to those who registered this year?
- Long may it continue!
- Tried to book another local HAF event (Dunrobin castle museum) but that one was fully booked by the time we found out about it

Website

- Locations were not easy to find on the website
- Good
- Very easy to find events using the calendar
- Excellent
- Very informative, clear, and easy to use
- Once people were booked onto a tour, if it was changed or cancelled they were contacted directly, which is good, but I feel it should also be entered onto this website for all to see
- it's very useful and easy to search for events by calendar
- Very informative
- Preferred the booklet
- Not the easiest to find events, dates, etc
- Start times could be more obvious
- Very easy to use – A relevant and quick way to gain information
- Keynote lecture wasn't clearly advertised, or didn't see it in the programme
- OK
- Links to program could be clearer

- Great resource. Doesn't display that well on mobile devices – content gets a bit squashed – but still useful/works!
- Useful to find the programme of events for the conference
- Quite good, but found it less comprehensive than a brochure
- Easy to navigate

Conference

- It would be nice to have coffee available at lunchtime, even if we have to pay extra for it
- An all round excellent conference, in a fantastic facility and very well organized
- Could there be guidelines for PP presenters on font size and number of words max? Too many words, hard to read, hard to bother
- Would have appreciated a cup of tea at lunchtime and at afternoon break, would be willing to pay for it. But nice to have gluten-free biscuits provided! Good range of topics, good to have a chance to hear about latest discoveries/developments
- Very good conference, well organized, good variety of speakers
- The venue is excellent and attractive for participants. However, the arrangement of units forming the well-placed screen in the council chamber is very distracting. The lines dividing it into nine made the power point presentations a little awkward to see/read at times
- Good diverse content, one or two talks a little dry. Coffee in PM please!

Specific Events

- (E10 – Wartime Cameras) Excellent Workshop. Very informative
- (E27a – Kilmartin Glen Walk) Excellent tour, very interesting and informative
- (E27a – Kilmartin Glen walk) Excellent tour. Also highlighted other events/ places I now plan to fit into my schedule
- (E30 – Northern Barrage Conference) Excellent Event
- (E32b – Tain walk) Really knows the subject. Good to keep the group small to walk around the streets
- (E50b- Plockton walk) The tour was excellent and, although we have been to Plockton many times, we learned lots of new information
- (E50b – Plockton walk) A fantastic and informative event. Thank you!
- (E51 – Brora walk) Some first class events by description. This one was EXCELLENT
- (E51 – Brora walk) Far too much content at each number on list. After hour of walk only got a shot way standing in cold. We aborted this event sadly. Much explanation could have been given in the heritage centre. Very knowledgeable guide but too many maps and charts held up outside. Large group of people and difficult to see the chart and standing too long at first 3 stops. We decided to leave as we could not see how all could be completed with 20 points on the tour. Just hadn't thought it through – but very well informed guides in our personal opinion.
- (E51 -Brora walk) Exhilarating, Instructive. Delighted to have taken part
- (E51 – Brora walk) I was disappointed that the last section of the walk did not take place as the people at the front wanted to go back to the centre. I feel the rest of the group should have been given the choice to do the complete walk.
- (E52 – Inchindown film) Very Interesting Event – Looking forward to seeing the image
- (E52 – Inchindown film) The film was interesting. It was also very interesting to hear about and ask about the man taking his photos. If the main film is shown again (and I think it would be well attended) please announce it in an ARCH email as we cannot make eden court on. Also, if the photograph is ever on show in Scotland, please can you put the details in an ARCH email
- (E52 – Inchindown film) Very interesting Event
- (E53 – Ashaig walk) “A Walk Around Ashaig” was a fascinating event. John MacLeod has a wealth of knowledge and all the sites we visited were very interesting
- (E53 -Ashaig walk) We had a fascinating walk and talk round Ashaig. Very enlightening!
- (E54 – Redcastle burn walk) Good parking but hall toilets not open
- (E56 – Dunrobin Castle tour) Good to limit to 10 per group, and meet inside entrance

- (E67 – Andy Heald’s talk) It is not so interesting when people “read” a talk/lecture
- (E71 – Bronze Age pottery workshop) Very informative, great fun and Julia was very experienced and gave lots of facts about the pottery and the area
- (E87 – Wolf Brother event) The hand out sheet for this walk is excellent, very informative and enhances the experience of seeing the buildings and locations
- (E90 – Bridgescapes talk) Excellent speaker: very knowledgeable and also entertaining
- (E91 – Highland Artefacts) Opportunity for primary school outreach
- (E91 – Highland Artefacts) I thought everything was amazing because it was amazing how they made them.
- (E91 – Highland Artefacts) I liked it because it was explained well
- (E97- Old St Peter’s Kirk tour) good to put out information boards
- (E105 – Brora talk) Not enough seats

Selected comments from Geocache visits posted on www.geocaching.com during HAF.

- Found while visiting on vacation from Ontario, Canada. Enjoyed exploring Fort William and the West Highland Museum. TFTC!
- Thanks for the cache. Now I know about the archaeology festival and will try to learn more. TFTC (Brora Heritage Centre)
- Have been visiting this museum on & off for the last 35 years Looking forward to the new one opening at the end of June. Sadly we will have gone home by then but roll on next yearA quick find TFTC (Gairloch Museum)
- Found during the visit of the Highland Folk Museum. Tftc and greetings from Germany,,Die Frolics“
- A relatively simple find here. though the containers outer bag was very wet and pretty minging : Contents nice and dry though. Popped into the museum and loved it. Started my Christmas shopping with a couple of Nessie's and Angus coos. (Highland Museum of Childhood)
- Very quick find here and nice look around the museum. Thank you. (Nairn Museum)
- During our journey through Scotland, we tried to find a cache in every place we stopped to visit a castle, to admire the landscapes or to sleep. Many thanks for allowing us to stop at places which otherwise we wouldn't have visited. (Glen Coe Museum)
- Novel hiding method and the best kept one we've found so far (Arisaig Land, Sea and Islands Centre)
- Staying for a few days at Applecross Campsite and went out for a nice walk to the Heritage Centre. At GZ had the cache quickly in hand and log book signed before having a look round the centre. Well worth the visit with excellent information about the history of the area. TFTC (Applecross Heritage Centre)

