

Welcome to ARCH's spring newsletter. In this issue we introduce ARCH's new Development Officer who starts work in May, report on the hugely successful Highland Heritage Day held in March, and highlight some upcoming events and opportunities.

## Welcome Tessa!

We are delighted to welcome Tessa Till who will be starting work as ARCH's new development officer in early May. Here she introduces herself:

*I have had a passion for archaeology since an early age and took steps to requalify into the field from my career as a lawyer several years ago. I am a past Trustee of Archaeology Scotland who I then went on to work for. I'm particularly focussed in engaging people of all ages in their local heritage and am very much looking forward to expanding on this in the Highlands. I am relatively new to the area having moved to Sutherland in 2021 from East Lothian with my partner, daughter and animals. I am also Chair of the Go Golspie Development Trust and this experience has helped me to understand the needs of local communities in the Highlands and how that links in with their heritage. I am very much looking forward to starting my role as Development Officer with ARCH.*

Tessa will be taking over existing projects such as organising HAF and planning a Family Heritage Day during late September, as well as exploring new directions for ARCH. If you have any ideas, she'd love to hear from you on [archhighland@googlemail.com](mailto:archhighland@googlemail.com). Meanwhile Susan Kruse has moved to the ARCH Board, and will be helping out in the transition.



## Forthcoming Events

There are a number of events coming up – too many to list here! Check out the [ARCH website Events calendar](#) for those which have been sent to us. A few to single out:



Tues & Wed 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> April, 10am-3pm. **Recording Dunballoch EAM.** The weather defeated us in March! Join Aird Heritage Group and ARCH to photograph and measure a WWII EAM (Equipment Ammunition Magazine) at Dunballoch, Kirkhill before demolition. No experience necessary, but booking essential to [jim@airdcommunity.com](mailto:jim@airdcommunity.com). Stout footwear, warm and waterproof clothing, packed lunch needed. Queries on the day to 077888 35466.

Thur 13<sup>th</sup> April, 10am-12pm. **Walk to Cairn, Auchterflow, Black Isle.** Julian Paren registered a previously unreported cairn at Auchterflow on the Black Isle with the HER this year. This is an opportunity to have a look with Julian, and add information to the HER record. Parking below the Mount Eagle Transmitter where the Forest Road goes off at NH 63945 57874. Booking ideally to [archhighland@googlemail.com](mailto:archhighland@googlemail.com) so we can gauge numbers.

Clyne Heritage's 25th anniversary celebration events continue this month. On Saturday and Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> April Bronzesmith Neil

Burridge returns to the Highlands to run special **bronze casting workshops** in Brora. There is a charge to attend – contact

[info@clyneheritage.com](mailto:info@clyneheritage.com)

for details. There is also a Salt Making workshop on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> April. Check out the [Clyne Heritage Facebook page](#) for other events.



The weekend of 14<sup>th</sup> through 16<sup>th</sup> April also has a number of events at **Culloden Battlefield** Centre and online to mark the anniversary of the Battle of Culloden. See their [website](#) with links to [Eventbrite](#) for details and bookings.

**Thurster Community Excavation**, 15<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> April of a probably 18<sup>th</sup> century building near Thrumster in Caithness. Volunteers welcome. See Yarrows [Heritage Trust website](#) for details. There will also be open days on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2-4pm and Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 10am-1pm.

## Scottish Community Heritage Alliance

Susan at ARCH has been involved with the Scottish Community Heritage Alliance for several years now, attracted by its focus on grassroots heritage organisations. SCHA aims to provide support and networking; to provide advocacy representing grassroots concerns; and to initiate research which can support our work.

Why a new group? Many individuals and heritage groups feel that the big players claim to speak on behalf of grassroots organisations without adequately canvassing their views or understanding regional and local difference. A new grassroots organisation can represent these views. SCHA intends to hold regional meetings throughout Scotland, using the successful Highland Heritage Day as a model (see page 3).



If you are interested, do join us – either as an individual or your organisation (or both!). Members will have a direct input into priorities, potential membership fees and ways of working.

Further details and membership forms can be found on the [SCHA website](#). If you are not on the internet, and would like to join, contact ARCH and we will send you a paper form.

## Highland Archaeology Festival

The Highland Archaeology Festival will take place this year 23<sup>rd</sup> September to 13<sup>th</sup> October, with the conference in Inverness on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of October.

The first call inviting organisations and individuals to offer events in this period will shortly go out. HAF is the largest event of its kind in Scotland, with many groups offering a range of walks, talks, workshops etc. Last year 183 events and 18 special exhibitions were offered, taking place throughout the Highland Council area and Moray. Details of all events were on the HAF [website](#).



The festival is funded by the Highland Council Historic Environment Team, who arrange the conference, some online lectures, and invite organisations to offer events which are then publicised on the HAF website. As noted in the last newsletter, in these cash-strapped times the Council is looking for savings, and it is important that the Team can demonstrate just what HAF means to you. Should HAF continue to organise and promote a full range of events or just focus on a conference? Without evidence that people value the range of events offered, this could be the last year of organising and promoting events from other groups. Please email comments to [archaeology@highland.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@highland.gov.uk) or write to Historic Environment Team, Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX.



## Highland Heritage Day

There are around 100 heritage organisations and over 50 museums in the Highlands – and a number of community trusts and individuals who have heritage projects on the go. Few of us know what others are doing, and we rarely have a chance to meet up.



It seemed time to organise a day when we could meet up, promote our activities, and share problems and successes. The last time was over 15 years ago in Strathpeffer – and a lot has happened since then. ARCH applied for funding from Historic Environment Scotland to cover venue hire, catering and transport costs for people, with organising time donated by ARCH. Representatives from NoSAS, Museums Heritage Highland, Wardlaw Trust and Highland Archaeology Services also helped to plan the heritage day, leaving lots of time for networking and discussion. A number of volunteers also helped with lunches and logistics on the day.

Around 130 people from 60 organisations from throughout the Highlands came to Dingwall Academy on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2023. Most groups brought a stall to showcase their work. In the morning there were discussion groups to explore common problems facing heritage organisations, including thoughts on how to



address these, and ways to collaborate with one another. In the afternoon five parallel workshops were run addressing issues of volunteering, engaging with the community, climate change, organisation sustainability, and funding.



There was a great atmosphere to the day, as people chatted, discovered organisations and project inspiration, and shared their successes and failures. Feedback showed many similar concerns: difficulties in attracting and keeping volunteers, especially younger ones, fundraising, how to engage the wider community, and organisational sustainability. Crucially most attendees felt they came away with some ideas on how to address these issues and how to collaborate with others.



Further details with links to presentations on the day and a summary of responses to the feedback form can be found on the ARCH website in the [Highland Heritage Day page](#) within the ARCH projects folder.



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## Heritage Along the Pylon Lines

ARCH organised a meeting at short notice on 21<sup>st</sup> March with SSEN and members of local heritage groups along the proposed line of the pylons which will run from Spittal to Beaulieu. The main purpose was to alert SSEN that there is a lot of unrecorded heritage along the proposed routes – and it is fair to say that the SSEN staff were bowled over by the amount of local knowledge in the room. Ways to make sure this data was sent to SSEN over the next couple of months were agreed, and other heritage concerns along the route were raised. It was a great example of heritage groups in the Highlands working together, providing a collective voice.

If you were not at the meeting and know of any unrecorded heritage along the proposed routes (eg not in the HER), please contact Susan at [archhighland@googlemail.com](mailto:archhighland@googlemail.com) on how to get this information to SSEN. Of course heritage is only one consideration on pylon line siting. The consultation closes on 14<sup>th</sup> April, and everyone is urged to [feed back their views](#) on heritage and other aspects of the proposal.



## Easter Ross and Black Isle Churches Trail

Highland Historic Buildings Trust (HHBT) has launched a new website trail which highlights many of the historic churches in Easter Ross and the Black Isle. This expands on a trail originally compiled by Jim Mackay of the Kirkmichael Trust, substantially edited and extended by Mary Meirs of HHBT. Check it out at <https://easterrosschurches.co.uk/>

If you are interested in other trails of heritage sites in the Highlands, see the [list with links](#) on the HAF website.

## Friends of ARCH

If you enjoy what ARCH provides, please consider becoming a 'Friend of ARCH'. The Friends are a group of supporters who help ARCH in many diverse ways. ARCH relies on Friends' and lecture donations to help pay for office space, insurance, postage on newsletters, HAF walks, and the other mundane but important matters which allow us to continue. We value your help and support! Friends of ARCH are requested to give an annual donation of £10 (or more if you wish). There is an annual Friends' invitational event. To become a Friend — or to renew — contact ARCH or fill in the form below. If you prefer, you can pay by [Paypal from our website](#).

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THANK YOU!

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