



Archaeology for Communities
in the Highlands

Annual Report

2015-2016



1. About ARCH

Archaeology for Communities in the Highlands (ARCH) was set up in January 2009 to provide a range of exciting and innovative community archaeology projects. It provides opportunities to encourage people with diverse interests and abilities in the Highlands to learn about, record and participate in celebrating and increasing knowledge of their local heritage. ARCH does this in a number of ways including classroom learning, practical outdoor sessions, community group project work and via a virtual community.

The charitable purposes of ARCH are to advance education, community developments, heritage and culture by working with individuals, local groups and agencies in the Highlands of Scotland, and encouraging people to learn about, record and become involved with their heritage. This report highlights the projects and activities which took place from April 2015 to end of March 2016.

Trustees

The Board of Trustees were appointed on the establishment of the organisation. Appointments and replacements are made in accordance with the Articles and Memorandum which require a minimum of three trustees and a maximum of 7 trustees.

The trustees for 2015-2016 were:

Dr Graham Clark (Chairperson)
Sue Mitchell (Company Secretary)
Malcolm Bangor-Jones
Simon Berry
Alasdair Cameron
Carolyn Samsin
Roland Spencer-Jones
Lorna Cruickshank (adviser)

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Archaeology for Communities in the Highlands (ARCH) is a registered Scottish Charity, No. SC040624, and a Company Limited by Guarantee, Company No. 353054

2. ARCH Activities 2015-2016

ARCH had another busy year. Thanks to the many funders who have made these activities possible this year: the Heritage Lottery Fund, Mackenzie New York Villa Trust, Historic Environment Scotland, High Life Highland and Highland Council. Sessions were delivered by Susan Kruse unless otherwise noted. Further information on these projects can be found on the ARCH website.

www.archhighland.org.uk.

2.1 Invergordon in World War I

In 2015 a large group including pupils at two primary schools met to explore World War I Invergordon in a project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund First World War Then and Now programme. We were lucky to have access to naval plans from the period, and when combined with the map evidence of the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey, a large number of old photographs, documentary sources, detailed aerial photographs from World War I and 1930, and walks in the town we were able to chart some of the changes which occurred during the period.

The results of the project were launched at an Open Day on 17th October 2015. Primary school pupils contributed to the display, and the trail leaflet produced by the adults was launched. The leaflet is available locally on the ARCH website. A geocache hidden along the trail (see www.geocaching.com) has proved to be very popular. Binders with further information have been deposited in Invergordon Museum, Invergordon Library and with both primary schools. Details about sites - over 300 from WWI as well as over 200 later ones - were submitted to online heritage databases: the [Highland HER](#) and [Canmore](#). A selected list can also be found on the ARCH website.



2.2 Remembering the Strathpeffer Area

In the latter part of 2015 people in the Strathpeffer area met to remember the built heritage of the area, in a project organised by the Strathpeffer Community Centre and ARCH, and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Mackenzie New York Villa Trust.



Using a now well-honed ARCH technique, people explored maps and photographs to spark memories, while volunteers wrote down what had been said. In this project we focussed on the spa village of Strathpeffer, the nearby hamlet of Jamestown which was a planned 19th century village, the hamlets of Achterneed and Blairninch to the east of Strathpeffer and the crofting landscape of the Heights on the high ground between Dingwall and Strathpeffer. We also had sessions to remember the wartime years in Strathpeffer, involving the P7 class at Strathpeffer Primary with their topic.

The project built on the previous short sessions but there was plenty of new material to add. We had sessions indoors and then walks to explore our findings, trying to determine what still remained, what had changed, and what had gone. Open days were held in Strathpeffer, and a well-attended two-day one on the Heights. The group also researched and produced a walking trail leaflet for Strathpeffer, a popular destination for tour busses. A large amount of information was submitted to the HER, and binders of information deposited throughout the village.

2.3 On-Line Heritage Explorations (Ardersier and Invergordon)

In a series of short courses funded by High Life Highland in 2015 and 2016, participants learned about or expanded their computing skills, focussing on heritage internet sites. There is a wealth of information available out there, and we explored heritage databases, maps on the National Library of Scotland website, aerial photographs, photographic archives of local areas, websites for tracing family history and much more. We also explored various computing basics and skills, such as organising files, moving pictures from camera or phone to the web, and useful tools such as the snipping tool.

Two courses were held in Ardersier (at the Heritage Cafe in the Old School) and one in Invergordon (at the Museum). In both cases, images and text about local sites were submitted to the HER and Canmore. At Invergordon a final drop-in session was held at the local Library, where course participants were able to show others some of the interesting sites we had been exploring.



2.4 Focus on Finds (Nairn Museum)

The popular Focus on Finds course funded by Highland Council Independent Museums Officer Lorna Cruickshank was rolled out to Nairn Museum. Museum volunteers and other interested people explored Highland heritage through finds.

2.5 Home Front Legacy Training (Invergordon and Dalmore)

Archaeology Scotland, Historic Environment Scotland and ARCH joined together to host a training session in Invergordon in February 2016. ARCH's work recording [Invergordon's World War I remains](#) (begun before the Home Front Legacy app was available), was showcased by a presentation by Susan Kruse and a walk around Invergordon. There was also a field trip to Dalmore, a site used by the US Navy in World War I to assemble mines for shipping from Invergordon, and then again in World War II. Using old photographs and documents participants were able to identify some of the distillery buildings used in World War I, and then discovered a previously unrecorded World War I building in a field nearby, in what would have been near one of the many railway sidings which were



built during the war. Documentation and characteristics of the brick building suggest that it was used to store detonators - well away from other buildings. This building was duly recorded and submitted on the app. Other probable World War I foundations were probed, and there is certainly scope for going back for a more comprehensive survey. Funding for the day was from Historic Environment Scotland.

2.6 Pottery Jig Saw Puzzle workshop (Cromarty)

ARCH helped at the Cromarty Medieval Burgh Community Archaeology Project dig, providing a workshop piecing together some of the many medieval and later sherds of pottery.

2.7 Carn Glas 'Adopt-A-Monument' (Kilcoy)

The joint project with the North Kessock and District Local History Society and the North of Scotland Archaeological Society (NOSAS) under Archaeology Scotland's 'Adopt-a-Monument' finished this year with some last minute reinstatement work and an official launch during Highland Archaeology Festival. The project has been profiled in *Discovery and Excavation Scotland* vol. 16 (2016) and will feature in *Scottish Local History* vol. 95 (2016).



2.8 Remembering Strathpeffer Station

ARCH ran a number of sessions in late 2015 and early 2016 for the Highland Museum of Childhood exploring the history of the station and line. Participants used the research to help create interpretative panels which will be installed when the refurbishing work is complete. They also helped with the blog which summarises some of the research.

2.9 Telford's Highland Heritage

Over the past few years, ARCH has worked towards a Highland-wide project exploring Telford's heritage in the region. Although successful with a large HLF application for over half the costs, it has proven difficult to find the remaining match funding. The Board continues to try to find match funding or a way to carry out the intended project, even if in an abridged form.

2.10 Canadian Forestry Camp at Migdale



With NoSAS, ARCH explored a midden at the Canadian Forestry Camp (CFC) near Loch Migdale, and then helped survey the remains. Scanty remains survive of the sawmill area, including remains of a railway for moving the wood around, and even more ephemeral remains of the accommodation area. Now that we know what to look for, we can examine other CFC sites with fresh eyes. A report of the work generated interest when reported in Canada.

2.11 Highland Querns

ARCH is currently progressing a project to record hand querns throughout the Highlands. As part of the preparation, displays were shown at the Highland Archaeology Festival and at the Black Isle Show in Muir of Ord in August. There appears to be real interest in progressing the project, and ARCH is working with the National Museum of Scotland to create a pilot for a larger Scottish-wide study.



2.12 Scottish Archaeology Strategy consultation meetings

ARCH project officer Susan Kruse is a member of the Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee and has been active in promoting community archaeology perspective in the new Scottish Archaeology Strategy. ARCH held two consultation meetings in Brora and Inverness for people to contribute their views.

2.13 Networking and Consultation Meetings

ARCH has participated in consultation meetings with HES on future funding strategies. As part of the wider community learning network in the Highlands, ARCH attended an East Ross networking fair in Dingwall and the Mid & East Ross Adult Learning Partnership meeting in Invergordon. We also had a display at the well-attended Black Isle Gathering in Fortrose and the UHI Centre for History Firths and Fjords conference.

2.14 Highland Archaeology Festival (HAF) activities

As usual ARCH arranged a number of events during the festival in October this year with guided walks at Heights of Brae, Jamestown, Strathpeffer, the Canadian Forestry Camp near Loch Migdale, Invergordon (with leaflet launch) and the Kilcoy cairns, as well as a talk in Ardgay. We also had a stall at the two-day Festival featuring our work.



2.14 Other community outreach activities

Communications with our supporters continues to take high priority. In 2015-2016 we held:

- talks to local schools (Park School and East Lodge primary schools in Invergordon, Strathpeffer Primary School);
- talks to local societies (Caithness Field Club, Culbokie Men's Shed, Lairg History Society, Kyle of Sutherland Heritage Society (for HAF), Invergordon Museum, 6-7-8 Club in Inverness);
- a programme of ARCH lectures held monthly in Dingwall;
- four newsletters to our mailing list (currently over 1000); and
- notifications of events via the ARCH web-site (www.archhighland.org.uk), Facebook pages, e-mail alerts and press releases. The website events page is heavily used by Archaeology Scotland in their 'Out and About' e-newsletter.

We register all participants who attend ARCH courses, workshops, field trips, surveys, lectures and walks. In 2015-16 these totalled 3123 (although there are participants who registered for multiple events). It is difficult to assess the numbers who attended unregistered talks at conferences or who visited display boards at festivals, but conservative estimates based on visual observations suggest that these are at least as many again, making it probable that ARCH activities attracted over 5000 people throughout the year. This total does not include the considerable number of people who did not actually participate in an event during 2015-16, but will have made a connection with ARCH electronically or via our paper-based information and marketing activities and our publications.

3. Friends of ARCH



ARCH has 62 Friends, who provide financial assistance or offers of help at events. In 2015-2016 the annual Friends trip was to Ardross, looking at the Victorian gardens, the church and the reconstructed round house in the school premises. ARCH is very grateful for everyone who supports us as a Friend. We have no yearly membership fees, and keep all our events free, donation-only or at a nominal price so that finance is not a barrier to participation.

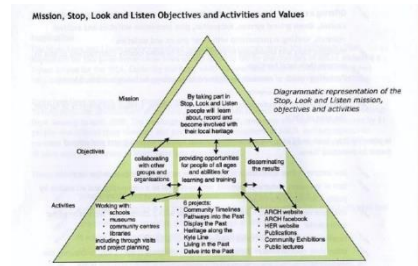
4. Financial Report

ARCH's activities continue to be project-funded, and therefore most income is restricted for specific activities and projects. However, ARCH continues to generate unrestricted funds via donations from

our lectures, book donations, our Friends and other events. These are used to provide cash flow where funders pay in arrears, and will increasingly be needed for overheads. A copy of the annual accounts is available separately to anyone who wishes to see them.

5. Other news

The Heritage Lottery Fund's Programmes Evaluation and Outcomes Review (2010-2013), published in 2015, singled out ARCH for praise in its project evaluation of our Stop, Look at Listen project (run 2010-2012). We are cited as the Best Community Archaeology evaluation report they received, with the Social Audit undertaken by project seen as an example of a 'robust or innovative approach to making evaluation matter'. ARCH is also cited as an example of good practice in setting out a 'theory of change' in diagrammatic format (credit for this goes to Caroline Vawdrey, the outreach officer of the project).



Altogether this is high praise, since of the 92 reports considered by the review, only 16% were seen as very good, 22% as good, 40% as fair and 22% as poor, and the sample included projects from throughout the UK. The evaluation report can be downloaded from the [Heritage Lottery website](#)

6. The Future

ARCH continues to pursue the final funding for the Telford's Highland Heritage project as well as progressing a new project to record Highland querns. We are often approached by other organisations, and are working with a few to help progress their applications. We actively encourage individuals and groups to get in touch with ideas of projects they would like to take forward, and we expect 2016-2017 to be another good year.

