

**Welcome** to our our second newsletter for 2011! As usual, there's a lot on offer, including information on ARCH's first excavation this summer, surveying opportunities, courses, lectures and much more!

## Get Digging!

Ever wondered what happens on an archaeological excavation? This summer is your chance to find out! ARCH will investigate a possible medieval castle and old routeway at Foulis near Evanton in July. If you've ever wondered about digging, this is a chance to learn what it's all about.



What makes the ARCH excavation different from many others? First of all, it will include indoor classes before and after the excavation. Secondly the site can be reached by public transport. And thirdly ARCH provides childcare so parents can attend!

The pre-excavation class, beginning 7th June in Alness for 4 weeks, will look at the sites and sources in detail including historical maps, aerial photographs and documentary sources.

The excavation will take place 9th-24th July. Participants will learn a variety of excavation, survey and recording techniques while digging on site. All levels of experience welcome, from first-time diggers to seasoned excavators.

The main focus is a possible motte site near Foulis Castle, Evanton. By opening a few trenches on this site we aim to find out more about the character and date of this enigmatic mound. Trenches will also be opened over the

possible location of an ancient routeway running through the site. We aim to determine exactly where this route runs and how it relates to the possible motte feature.

The field season in July will be followed in September 2011 by a post excavation course looking at how archaeologists deal with all the data and finds produced by excavations. Sessions will include looking at the site records from our excavation, implementing post-excavation techniques, analysing and presenting any finds and presenting our initial interpretations through a display. Dates and times will be in the next newsletter.

For those coming by public transport to the dig, there will be a meeting place in Dingwall, followed by taxis to and from the site. There is also parking is available near the site.

Free childcare is provided in Dingwall – please ring ARCH offices for further information and to book spaces for your children on the days you want to dig.

**Booking essential:** We ask that people book ideally for a minimum of 3 days, and that you know which dates you can dig before phoning to book.



ARCH is sorry to say goodbye to Janet who most recently led our Heritage along the Kyle Line and Pathways into the Past courses. Her enthusiasm and hard work will be missed by all. We wish her success in future work and hope that she will work with ARCH again on future projects.

**ARCH:**  
Education Centre  
Castle Street      [www.archhighland.org.uk](http://www.archhighland.org.uk)  
Dingwall            [info@archhighland.org.uk](mailto:info@archhighland.org.uk)  
IV15 9HU            01349 868230



## ARCH Touring Displays

ARCH exhibitions continue to travel!

- Pathways into the Past: Dingwall to Evanton
  - ◊ Alness Heritage Centre until end of May
- Picture the Past Dornoch to Tain
  - ◊ Dornoch Library until late April, then moving to Tain Library.
- Heritage Along the Kyle Line: Strathcarron to Lochluichart
  - ◊ Until early May at Achnasheen Village Hall (visible from station platform!), then moving to Friends of the Kyle Line Museum, Kyle Station
- Community Timeline Displays for Auldearn (Nairn Community Centre) and Tomatin (Tomatin Village Hall) - until end of April



## Culbin Sands Display

A dedicated group in the **Display the Past** course at Nairn Museum researched, designed and constructed a display based around the archaeological finds found at nearby Culbin Sands. The display covers aspects of the finds and activity at Culbin from early prehistory to present day.

The display includes finds, photographs and information about Culbin as well as an accessible children's section and the opportunity to handle and investigate finds for yourself. **Catch it before the end of June.** Many thanks go to Elgin Museum who have loaned some finds for the duration of the display.



## Community Timelines at Auldearn and Tomatin

Groups in Tomatin and Auldearn researched their heritage, producing a large binder of information and travelling displays. A number of new sites were recorded, from windmills to settlements, and old and new photographs obtained of known sites and finds. As a result of all the hard work, a large amount of information and pictures will shortly be submitted to the HER. Participants in both areas hope to continue exploring local heritage.



## Heritage Along the Kyle Line

An ARCH class explored the middle section of the Kyle line route, investigating the heritage between Strathcarron and Lochluichart. A surprising amount was recorded, including remains of transport, hydro activity, and even prehistoric burials. The results can be seen on a temporary display currently at Achnasheen, and later to be kept at the Friends of the Kyle line museum on Kyle station.

The focus now switches to the last section of the line, Lochluichart to Dingwall. Details of the course can be found on p. 4.





## Picture the Past Dornoch to Tain

During a long weekend in February, we explored, photographed and recorded a number of buildings and sites in Dornoch, Tain and Camore thanks to funding from Moray Firth Partnership, Highland Council and the BBC (which featured the work as part of their Hands on History programme tied in with the Ancient Britain series). Despite challenging weather in Tain, a good time was had by all. The results will form a valuable addition to the Highland Council HER.



## Cameras wanted

Have you upgraded your digital camera and have an old one lying spare? ARCH would welcome donations of any inexpensive digital cameras (with download leads) to add to our pool for use in courses and recording sites for the HER.

## Surveying and Recording Sites

Now that the weather has finally improved, it's possible to get outside to explore and record sites! ARCH will run two courses this spring:

- ◇ Survey a crofting site in Boblainy Forest, 28th April—1st May. This is part of the Boblainy Forest Archaeology Project run by Kiltarlity Community Council. Contact the ARCH office if you are interested in coming along for some or all of these sessions.
- ◇ Surveying a routeway at Foulis near Evanton in May, with indoor sessions in Alness before and after an outdoor weekend on 14th/15th May. Details on p. 4

Both offer a chance to learn how to observe and then make an accurate record of the sites by planetableting. No experience necessary.

## ARCH Walks

### 1. Around Alness

20th April 10-4pm. Explore the heritage of Alness relating to routeways, including Alness Parish Church and a variety of other sites. Meet at Alness Heritage Centre. **Booking essential.**

### 2. Red Smiddy Blast Furnace Site, Poolewe

11th May, 11am-1pm. Meet at car park on River Ewe, Poolewe. No need to book.

Bring waterproofs and stout shoes, and lunch for Alness walk. All welcome. Children welcome if with parent/guardian.



## Living in the Past

Brian Wilkinson, Education Officer from the Scotland's Rural Past project, came up for a weekend in March to work with ARCH helping children to explore and record a crofting site near Tore. Tore Primary school had spent the months before preparing for the day. On the Friday the school explored the site in the morning and followed this up indoors in the afternoon.

The following Saturday it was the turn of the local Young Archaeologists Clubs. During the morning the 8 to 15 year olds made a detailed record with sketches and photographs (including a high-spy shot). Then in the afternoon they were helped by local artist Lizzie MacDougall to create an interpretation of the site. These will be completed in April, and then featured at the Scotland's Rural Past final conference in June as a powerpoint and picture display.

## ARCH Courses and Events

All courses are low cost and free to anyone on low income—and coffees and teas are provided. Everyone is welcome on any course - no previous experience necessary. Help with childcare may be available—please contact us if you need childcare. To find out more or to book a place, please get in touch with us at [info@archhighland.org.uk](mailto:info@archhighland.org.uk) or 01349 868 230.

### Heritage Along the Kyle Line: Lochluichart to Dingwall

The final section of the Kyle line, from Lochluichart to Dingwall, will be the focus of this 8 week course looking at evidence of the heritage along the line.

**Dingwall Community Centre**  
**Mon, 25th Apr-13th June 2:30-4:30pm**

£2 / £1 optional for seniors / free to low income

If you will be travelling by train on the Kyle Line to and from classes, contact us to arrange passes.

### Community Timeline Focus on Your Past

A chance to research sites, buildings or finds in either the Gairloch or Glen Garry areas, contributing to the creation of a Community Timeline display. New members welcome.

**Invergarry Community Hall**  
**Tues, 26th Apr-24th May, 10am-1pm**

**Gairloch Community Centre Annex**  
**Weds, 27th Apr-25th May 2-5pm**

£3 / £1.50 optional senior rate / free low income

### Delve into the Past

#### 1. Preparation for Excavation

Learn what to expect and how an excavation is planned, and look in depth at written sources relating to the site.

**Alness Heritage Centre**  
**Tuesdays, 7th-28th June, 10am-12:30pm**

£2.50/£1.50 optional senior rate / free low income

#### 2. Excavation!

Get involved on a community training excavation focussing on old routeway remains and a possible motte near Foulis, Evanton. Training provided in excavation, survey and recording techniques. All abilities welcome! Childcare and transport from Dingwall provided if needed, but must be booked in advance.

**9<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> July inclusive (Monday 18<sup>th</sup> day off) 10am-4pm. Booking essential.**

Participants must be able to commit to excavation for a minimum of 3 days (ideally consecutive). Please phone ARCH for further information or to discuss any special needs or concerns.

### Surveying Your Heritage

Learn practical survey techniques. There will be two introductory sessions (**5th & 12th May, 7-9:30pm**) at the Alness Heritage Centre, then a practical outdoors session over the week-end of **14th-15th May, 10am-4pm** near Foulis Castle, Evanton. This will be followed by a third session indoors at the Alness Heritage Centre (**19th May, 7-9:30pm**) to look at the results.

#### Booking essential.

Indoor sessions: £2.50 / £1.50 optional senior rate / free for low income

Outdoor practical sessions: £5/£2.50 per day/free

### Pathways into the Past—Reporting

These sessions will pull together previous work exploring routeways around Alness and the survey created in May. All welcome.

**Alness Heritage Centre, Alness**  
**Thurs, 26th May-23rd June, 7-9:30pm**

£2.50/£1.50 optional senior rate / free low income

### ARCH Lecture Series

All lectures will be in Dingwall Community Centre at 7:30pm and will be followed by coffees and teas. Suggested donation of £3 per lecture.

Monday 25th April: ***The Excavation of Caird's Cave, Rosemarkie***

Simon Gunn will describe a community dig at Caird's Cave, Rosemarkie last year which investigated the history of the cave where Dr William MacLean excavated almost 100 years ago.

Monday 30th May: ***Mapping Made Easy***

Cathy MacIver of ARCH will provide a simple and accessible introduction to digital mapping and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) for archaeologists, by exploring a variety of interesting case studies taken from all over Britain.

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> June: ***Birsay - political and religious power centre in Orkney. A retrospective look at 75 years' investigation (Rescheduled from March)***

Prof. Chris Morris will look back at over 75 years' work on the Brough of Birsay, a notable Pictish and Norse site on Orkney, drawing together archive and unpublished work of Dr Raleigh Radford, and excavations and surveys which have taken place over the years, including many by himself.