



Welcome to the first ARCH newsletter! It has been a busy few months since our first open meetings, and we wanted to let you know what has been happening.

We have had two open meetings, one in Dingwall and one in Inverness. Over 80 people have either attended or asked to be kept informed about ARCH activities. At the meetings we introduced the Stop, Look and Listen (SLL) project – ideas for 8 interwoven programmes – and invited questions, comments on SLL or suggestions for other projects. A third open meeting will be held in Tain on 15th April, St Duthac Centre, 7:30-9pm. All welcome!

Your comments and feedback

'This is really needed and useful! It will raise the profile of the past in the Highlands, and help groups network together.'

The feedback has been very positive, with many people enthusiastically endorsing SLL and suggesting new ideas or research areas.

Courses

'Varied and open, inviting every interest.' Your comments showed strong support for a variety of learning opportunities, from introductory courses to advanced research projects.

What's on offer

'I like doing hands-on activities, and am glad this has opportunities for them.' 'I really enjoyed working with archives and would like to do more.' From the comments it was very clear that people learn in different ways and want a variety of opportunities.

Website

'A website would be really, really useful' – not only for information about ARCH but also for

activities of other groups, and to form an on-line community. 'Wouldn't it be great to be able to discuss finds and sites with others using a website?'

Other project ideas

You responded with **lots** of ideas of possible additional research areas including industrial archaeology; WW1/WWII remains; mills; tunnels and castles; in depth look at local areas (usually where a participant was from!); linking heritage with other disciplines like fiction, storytelling, or art; and many more. ARCH now has a list of well over 30 possible projects!

ARCH and other heritage groups

As we discussed possible heritage projects, it became clear that there are more potential projects than organisations, and that there were definite gaps, especially for learning opportunities.

There was general consensus that ARCH should work with other groups. It has always been the intention of ARCH to work in collaboration with other groups, and to avoid duplication and competition. We have contacted a number of other groups to discuss our plans, and for the most part the reaction has been favourable. Many have written endorsements to help with our funding applications.

In our initial SLL proposals, ARCH listed partners for some of the programmes. We would like to make clear that these referred to potential groups ARCH might collaborate with. All are subject to discussion with the groups involved.

Funding Report

We took these ideas and submitted pre-application proposals—and immediately discovered that hard times have hit the heritage sphere indeed. The Heritage Lottery Fund Heritage Grants have been reduced from £7m to £1m—and this has had a knock on effect to others. As a result, ARCH has had to cut the costs to have any chance of success, and will have to start small and build up. As many of you noted, the initial proposal was ambitious!

We have now submitted our first application to HLF for 6 of the 8 projects: Community Timelines, Pathways into the Past, Display the Past, Delve into the Past, Living in the Past and Heritage along the Kyle Line. We have submitted a separate application for Remembering the Past, to focus in the first instance on the Black Isle. We will also take on board other ideas from the open meetings or sent to us, and apply for funding in our own right, or with other organisations.

We also have a number of applications outstanding for business start up costs. Once we get some funds we can purchase insurance, and then we are up and running!

Events / Opportunities

ARCH open meeting. 15 April, St Duthac Centre, Tain, 7:30-9pm.

Conference on Beakers, Bones & Birnie 26th & 26th April, Elgin. Contact Elgin Museum at 01343 543675 or curator@elginmuseum.org.uk for details and booking form.

Scottish Community Archaeology Conference, 16-17 May, Musselburgh. For details and programme see www.eastlothian.gov.uk/archaeology, or phone 01620 827 408

There are several **community excavations** this spring and summer in the Highlands (note that many will require a minimum commitment):

High Pasture Cave, Skye, May – September. Contact Steven Birch (skyesub1@aol.com or tel: 01471 822124); or Martin Wildgoose (jwildgoose@aol.com or tel: 01471 822562) or see <http://www.high-pasture-cave.org/>

Brora Salt pans 15-30 August (subject to funding). Contact Jacquie Aitken of Clyne Heritage on jacquieaitken@btinternet.com. Further details on www.shorewatch.co.uk/brora

Birnie, near Elgin, important Iron Age site. 23rd Aug – 18th Sept contact Fraser Hunter F.Hunter@nms.ac.uk; for information on the site see www.nms.ac.uk/discover_celts_romans_birnie.aspx

Applecross Broch, 5-20 Sept. Further info from Cait McCullagh on 01349 867733 or cait.mccullagh@gmail.com

There are also several above ground **field survey** and recording projects.

NOSAS has several projects including recording all remains in Strathconon. For information and details on membership, see www.nosas.co.uk or contact the secretary on 01349 861824.

Anna Welti is surveying hut circles in Wester Ross and looking for interested volunteers. Please contact her on annawelti@btinternet.com or 01854 612647 if you would like to know more

<p>We welcome comments and suggestions for future projects! Contact ARCH by e-mail ARCHhighland@googlemail.com or phone Susan Kruse on 01997 421171</p>
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