

Since our first newsletter, what seems like a long time ago, in March, the Directors and Volunteers at ARCH have been very busy.

We held our third **Open Meeting**, in Tain, on 15th April with a great turnout of 25 people and a number of apologies. It was another lively event, expanding our list of projects. Ideas are not a problem – only the time and funding to carry them out! Many thanks to everyone who has shared their thoughts and interests with us.

This meeting coincided with another exciting event: **ARCH's TV Premiere**, when we were chosen as a feature item for the BBC Alba news magazine programme *An Lar*.

Arch Director, Sandra Bain, Volunteer, Cait McCullagh and young participants Katrina Gallacher and Eilidh and Caillean Welsh gave interviews at the location of some of their favourite sites throughout Ross-shire – celebrating their passion for the wealth of archaeological heritage that can be found within reach of their doorsteps.

Dingwall Academy pupil, 14 year old Katrina, a fluent learner of Gaelic, shared her enthusiasm for being able to participate in ARCH's programmes designed to enable local communities to learn about, identify and record their local archaeology: "Archaeology is very fun. It's exciting to discover more about people so similar to us in some ways and so different in others. I am very grateful towards ARCH, because they are making it a lot easier to develop this interest".

Interviewed at the site of one of her own discoveries – a cup and ring marked stone, believed to have been decorated in the Neolithic Period (4,000BC – 2,500BC), that she identified whilst out walking close to her home in the Heights of Fodderty – Katrina and friends Eilidh and Caillean, all agreed that that people who are interested in the Highlands' past need to have an awareness of the Gaelic language. Many of our place names record perceptions of places and features of archaeological significance that may no longer be visible in our more developed and intensively farmed landscape. ARCH is looking forward to being able to research many of these local names, and we would be delighted to hear from all those who can share their knowledge of both Gaelic and Norse place naming and what they can tell us about the historic and ancient landscape.

ARCH Director and local historian, Sandra Bain, was interviewed at The Temple, a Neolithic cairn at Croftcrunie, near Tore, one of the many 'on the doorstep sites' that Sandra has been familiar with from childhood. Sandra's interest in the scholarly research regarding this site, and in the local knowledge about the site that has been shared and handed down through the communities that have continued to preserve its significance in the landscape, reflects ARCH's commitment to encouraging the investigation and recording of both formal and traditional learning perceptions of our archaeological heritage. She enthused: "The past is our heritage - it is part of who we are. Knowing about the past fleshes out the people who were our ancestors. I **imagine** what life was like for them and I would like to **know** more."

The *An Lar* item also covered ARCH's third public Open Meeting at the Duthac Centre in Tain. Here participants shared their positive responses to ARCH, seeing the proposed projects, as a kind of 'glue', bringing together peoples' interests in and desire to learn more about and enjoy the rich environment, history and archaeology of the Highlands; views that were certainly reflected in the interviews given by ARCH's very own TV stars, Katrina and Sandra:

"There is so much 'out there' – in actual sites and also in local knowledge which needs to be explored and recorded. There is also a great deal of enthusiasm in the Highlands for finding out about the past and ARCH will provide an outlet for this enthusiasm."



ARCH at Scotland's first national Community Archaeology Conference

ARCH Volunteers Lynn Fraser and Cait McCullagh, travelled to Musselburgh this May, in order to participate in Scotland's first ever National Community Archaeology Conference, organised jointly by Archaeology Scotland and East Lothian Council. Joining others representing projects from Shetland to the Borders; investigating all manner of archaeological heritage from sea caves to brochs, Lynn and Cait exhibited a display illustrating ARCH's project plans and ideas and gathered expressions of support.

Additionally, Cait facilitated a workshop entitled 'Archaeology for All'. Cait presented practical techniques and shared some inspiring examples of removing barriers to the physical and intellectual enjoyment of archaeology. It was exciting to be able to exchange aspirations with many of those coordinating projects across the country who are open to accept the challenges of making archaeological investigation accessible to everyone regardless of age, ability and circumstance.

You can find out more about Archaeology Scotland and the conference at <http://www.scottisharchaeology.org.uk/> If you would like to hear more about what Lynn and Cait discovered at the conference or would like to find out more about the workshop Cait facilitated, please do get in touch with us at the ARCH contact addresses.



ARCH nets Awards for All grant

The hard work over the past few months has finally started to bear some fruit. ARCH heard that it has been awarded £7500 from Awards for All, as part funding to run a project collecting memories of the local heritage on the Black Isle. The project will provide sessions where members of Black Isle communities gather together to remember buildings, sites and other aspects of their heritage, using old maps and photographs as inspiration. We will also link up with local schools to share this knowledge. Results will be publicised widely to the community on an ARCH website (which will also invite on-line contributions), a booklet, a local exhibition, the council HER, and Am Baile website. We also hope this will be the first of similar oral history projects throughout the Highlands, and will be keen to work with other local history groups and loan the recording equipment in the future.

The next step is to complete an application to LEADER for the remaining funding needed for the project. If successful, we hope to start after the summer.



Insight - On site & Viking series

ARCH's Viking series, delivered by Susan Kruse, got off to a successful start on Monday 8th & 15th June at the Dingwall Community Centre. There are a further two lectures to complete the series so, if you missed the first lectures, there is still time to join. Further details from Susan on 01997 421171 or email ARCHhighland@googlemail.com

Cait McCullagh kicked off the Insight - On site series with an interesting tour of Medieval Inverness. This proved popular with 32 people joining her. We look forward to welcoming more participants at the forthcoming events:- **Picts & Prophylactics, Strathpeffer 20th June; Clava Cairns, nr. Inverness 21st June; The Temple Chambered Cairn, Tore 27th June and Pictish Cross-slabs, Nigg Church 28th June.** Again, if you would like more information the contact details are as above.