

Welcome to our May newsletter, full of project reports, a call for HAF events, and other information for the summer.

Highland Regional ScARF

Susan has been busy over the last months visiting museums throughout the Highlands. As noted in our last newsletter, the Highland Historic Environment Record (HER) and Canmore have limited information on finds from the Highlands. As part of the Highland Regional ScARF project, we will want to produce distribution maps of key, diagnostic objects such as Neolithic arrowheads or Bronze Age metalwork. Museums have been helping with this, filling out a questionnaire, and



Looking at the Iron Age Bracadale bowl at Skye and Lochalsh Archive Centre

meeting up to show some of the finds in their collections. There have been many interesting objects to look at, and each museum has held some surprises! Over the next months, key finds will be profiled in the Find of the Month slot on the ARCH

website. Two museums have most of their collections online: [Historylinks](#) on their online archive and [Ullapool Museum](#) on the ehive website.

The National Museum of Scotland has kindly provided a list of all Highland finds in their collection – over 3600 entries, many not already on the HER. Grace Woolmer, ScARF Project Officer, will hopefully start putting new data gleaned from this into the HER during the summer. We now also have information about past Treasure Trove allocations to museums in the Highlands and will also start adding this information.



Lithics Workshop

Information about stone tools in particular is often vague, and they can often be difficult to identify. High Life Highland funded a training session in March for museum staff and volunteers and people who do fieldwalking. It was run by Torben Ballin, one of Scotland's foremost experts in lithics. We hope to arrange more artefact workshops in the coming year.

Inventories and cataloguing

Volunteers have been helping in several museums. Dunrobin Castle kindly let us examine and photograph their archaeology finds in their wonderful museum. Inverness Museum has the largest collection of artefacts in the Highlands, and volunteers have been helping the museum update their catalogue. Some of this involves updating previous entries on their AdLib catalogue, while others are new. If you would like to help, get in contact with Susan at ARCH.



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Project Reports

Experimental Archaeology

Work is going on behind the scenes in the Experimental Archaeology Project as learning materials are being prepared by archaeologists Lachlan and Lynne McKeggie and teacher Dave Peers. If your school, community group or class would like to test out some of these materials, do get in touch!

The project has attracted a good deal of interest. It has featured in the online journal of EXARC, an international organisation devoted to experimental archaeology and open air museums, as well as their printed digest which has just come out. See Issue [2019/1](#). For anyone interested in experimental archaeology, the EXARC [website](#) is recommended reading. The project is funded by Historic Environment Scotland and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Dalmore Wartime Remains

A dedicated group has been researching wartime remains at Dalmore distillery. In WWI, the distillery was taken over by the U.S. Navy to assemble and deploy bombs for the Northern Barrage. We have examined plans, a rare aerial photo dating to this period, and a number of photographs. New railway lines were built, linking to the main line, and the routes have been the subject of intense focus. The detonator store building still survives in the field to the west of the distillery, visible from the A9, but only foundations survive of some of the large hangars pictured below.



The distillery was again requisitioned in WWII, this time by the RAF as it moved its operation from Invergordon in 1942. This involved a large number of small camps and facilities in Dalmore and Alness. The distillery buildings were not taken over, but the field to the west was the

technical area, housing fuel storage, bombs and other arms, a photographic unit, crew rest areas and other facilities, but no accommodation blocks. The aerial photos and plans show that most of the buildings were nissen huts, but the field still has a number of blast shelters and a brick transformer building.



The group is now pulling together all this information into a display, which will launch at Invergordon Museum on **Tuesday 18th June, 4-8pm**. The Cromarty Port Authority and Orion Group have provided funding.

As part of the project, we had a joint day in March in Inverness with Inverness Local History Forum, the Groam House Museum WWI project members and Petty and Ardersier Community Heritage Group, focussing on the story of the U.S. Navy in the area during WWI. There was so much interest that there are plans to have a one day conference in Inverness on 3rd October, and then create a joint publication. More information in our next newsletter.

From the Black Isle to Normandy

Members of the Groam House WWI project which ARCH helped facilitate were keen after the project finished to continue to research wartime activity in the area. They turned their attention to the WWII activity. The group has focussed

initially on the little known activity on the Black Isle in preparation of the D-Day



landing in Normandy. They have created a display which is currently at Fortrose Library until mid June.

Highland Archaeology Festival

It's already time to start planning for this year's Highland Archaeology Festival in October. Once again ARCH is helping to organise the event on behalf of Highland Council. This is the biggest (and we would argue the best) local heritage festival in Scotland, with talks, walks, workshops, exhibitions and other activities offered by museums, local heritage organisations and individuals, most for free. Last year over 10,000 people took part in events in every corner of the Highlands. If you are involved in a museum or heritage group, do think about offering an event for the festival. The deadline is 1st June. Contact Susan at ARCH if you would like to discuss ideas.

SCHA roadshow

ARCH was involved last year when a survey of heritage groups was distributed to see if there was interest in networking at the grassroots level, and to identify problems local heritage organisations identified. A large number of groups responded including in the Highlands.



The organisers have now formed an alliance – the Scottish Community Heritage Alliance – with representatives from a number of grassroots organisations, aiming to bring about positive change for community heritage in Scotland. SCHA has been working with the University of St Andrews, the National Library of Scotland and Ergadia Heritage to organise the series of 12 community heritage research workshops around Scotland, funded by the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

The roadshow begins this month, aimed at anyone involved with heritage in any way. There are Highland dates in Strathpeffer (31st May), Helmsdale (4th June), Kyle of Lochalsh (18th Sept.) and Fort William (19th Sept.).

The days will be informal, and follow a simple format with an opening speaker followed by lively discussion workshops. We will be talking about networks, sharing ideas about how a new national network might look, and what it could do for community heritage.

There will be information from a variety of heritage organisations at each event, and feel free to bring your own stands and leaflets. Let the organisers know in advance so they can make space!

The discussion days are free to attend (although the organisers ask people to bring their own lunch or pre-book a packed lunch). Booking is [now open](#) and you can find out more about the tour [here](#). Do spread the word. For further information please contact Catherine Gillies on 07833 133928 or at scottishcommunityheritage@gmail.com

Industrial Archaeology in SE Sutherland

The wonderfully named PHEW group (Panel for Historical Engineering Works of the Institution of Civil Engineers) has organised a 3-day industrial archaeology tour based in southeast Sutherland, 5th-7th July. The talks and field trips are open to all, and people can come to all or only selected days. Details on costs and itinerary are on the [ICE website](#) on their Events page.



Photo courtesy Fiona Newton

Napier Commission online

In 1884 the Napier Commission published its Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry into the Condition of the Crofters and Cottars in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. It is a fascinating record giving voice to people who often do not make it into history books.

UHI Centre for History is now hosting an [online version](#) of the report which was originally digitised by West Highland College UHI. See www.uhi.ac.uk/en/research-enterprise/cultural/centre-for-history/research/the-napier-commission/

ARCH lectures

The remaining two ARCH lectures before the summer break will be held as usual at Dingwall Community Centre, 7:30pm. No booking necessary



Tues 28th May. **Corrugated Iron Vernacular Buildings of the Highlands**

The processes of corrugating and galvanising wrought iron sheets into strong, durable, lightweight and readily transportable building materials were developed in 1829-37. Nowadays, the visible legacy is fast-disappearing or dilapidating but, as illustrated in this talk by Graham Clark, a surprising variety of fine corrugated iron buildings are still standing throughout the Highlands.

Tues 25th June. **The Coastal Heritage of the Highland Region: reflections from SCAPE.**

SCAPE has been working with the public documenting and investigating the coastal archaeological heritage of Scotland for 20 years. During that time we have learnt an enormous amount about the archaeology; about how coasts change and the drivers of change; and about working with people in projects that make the most of our eroding heritage. Joanna Hambly will reflect upon what we have learned about coastal heritage and coastal change in the Highland region, and consider what lies ahead.

HER workshops

As part of the ScARF roadshow to museums, Susan has been offering workshops in using the HER, showing how easy it is to find out about Highland past and to add information and photos to existing records. The next one is at Timespan in Helmsdale on 29th May, 2-4. Free but booking required to ARCH. If your group of museum would like a free workshop, please get in touch. We are keen to make more people aware of this useful resource.

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