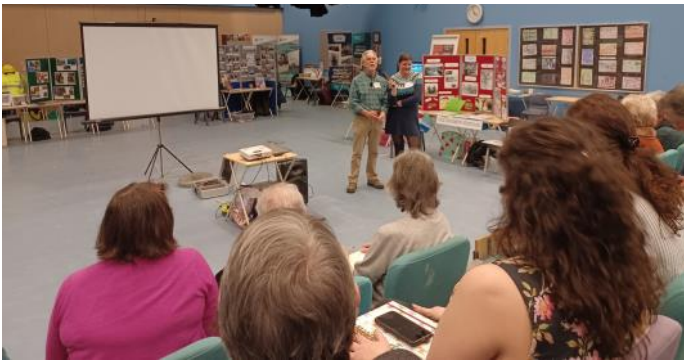


Welcome to the February 2025 newsletter. We have project reports on the Golspie Fishertown Project and Norwegians in Contin in WWII, plus information on a number of events coming soon.

Highland Heritage Day 2025

The third annual Highland Heritage Day will take place on Saturday 15th March at Dingwall Academy. It's a chance for heritage groups, museums, projects and anyone interested to meet up, promote their work, and discuss common concerns and solutions. Past events have been exciting and informative. This year focusses on fundraising and organisation sustainability. Over the long lunch (12:45 to 14:05pm) there is an opportunity to network, and the general public is invited.



If you are a member of a group, do think about coming and having a table to showcase your organisation. Thanks to funding from Scottish Community Heritage Alliance and Highland Archaeology Services the day is free, and there are travel bursaries and lunch for groups available. Booking forms and the programme are available from the ARCH website [Library](#).

Forgotten Stories of the Highlands: Writing and Adapting Texts on Wikipedia

Do you or your group have a story about a Highland person, place or organisation which deserves to be known wider? The WEA Inverness Local Association has organised training in writing and editing texts for Wikipedia. On 19th March & 2nd April 1:30-4pm Susan Kruse will lead sessions at Inverness Library covering how to write for Wikipedia. Then on 23rd April and 14th May Sara Thomas, Wikipedia Programme Manager will lead sessions at Inverness

Library 10am-4pm where we'll get practical help in getting these stories uploaded into Wikipedia. In between sessions participants can work on texts. Free. Preference given to those who commit to all sessions. Bookings and questions to wikihighlands@gmail.com

New Scheduled Monuments and Listings in Highland

Historic Environment Scotland provides legal protection for some sites (by scheduling) or buildings (by listing). The HES publication [LINTEL](#) in its latest issue provides details of some new sites, including the scheduling of the important Mesolithic rock shelter and midden at [Sand near Applecross](#), and [Kraiknish dun](#) on Skye. They do not unfortunately include links to the Highland HER—for Sand [MHG35892](#) and for Kraiknish dun [MHG4881](#).



Members of the public can also recommend sites for scheduling and listing. ARCH did just that, pointing out to the Scheduling Team that the communal air raid shelter on Joss Street in Invergordon was a unique survival. The site was identified and recorded as part of ARCH projects on [wartime remains in Invergordon](#), with details to the [HER](#). This is now a [listed building](#)!

The information on the scheduled monument or listing pages is often a good summary of importance, especially for those created in recent years.

Project Report: Norwegians in Contin in WWII



After the invasion of Norway in World War II, the Norwegian government relocated to the UK. Norwegian men and women joined the Norwegian army, navy and air force, and there was significant military training in the Highlands by the army. A group led by ARCH met in Contin in September 2024 to January 2025, exploring memories and researching documents to shed light on the Norwegian presence in the area.



We were very lucky to have two participants who were boys during the war, and remembered the Norwegians providing treats to them at the NAAFI. Other participants contributed stories they have been told. Ken Cumming described in his booklets about Contin watching the Norwegians training in the area – and seeing the officers at Coul House driven by horse and carriage each Sunday for lunch at Brahan Castle. Jessie Benkowski remembered the mules in the area – and the Norwegians eating horsemeat. In addition we made contact with several Norwegian researchers who have been very generous with their findings. We had two very interesting zoom sessions connecting to people in Norway, Dumfries and elsewhere in Scotland.

During 1942 and 1943 the Norwegian Independent Mountain companies were based in Contin, Dingwall and Nigg. Each company had over 200 men, training to aid in the liberation of Norway. The companies had little in mechanised transport, so horses and mules were used. Coul House was taken over by the Norwegian Horse Service, which was to provide pack animals and carts for the companies. Stables were needed for over 200 horses, as well as an ongoing supply of food and fodder. The foundations of some stable remains can still be traced.



Finding accommodation for so many men was challenging. They reused a camp in Contin built by British troops who were stationed at Coul earlier in the war. These consisted of nissen and wooden huts, mainly built over now by the housing on Woodland Park. The camp is clearly visible on an aerial photo from 1947 which the group located.

But there are also lots of memories of Norwegians being billeted in local houses, in Contin, Strathpeffer and Fodderty. The Achilty Hotel was used as well. The headquarters for all the troops in the Highlands was at Brahan Castle where officers stayed. We believe the female Norwegian recruits were also stationed there.

Newspapers have provided insights into what the Norwegians were up to when not training (whist, sports and dancing, and doubtless drinking as well). We have found evidence of a half dozen marriages, and no doubt there are more to be discovered.

King Haakon and Crown Prince Olav visited the area several times, signing the guest book at Brahan Castle. During their visit of July 1943, an



official photographer accompanied them, and the group has been trying to identify pictures of the Contin area from the thousands available on the Norwegian Archives [website](#) (Riksarkivet). No military buildings remain from the period, nor even the village hall where the dances took place.



A surprising amount of information was found about this little known part of our local history. The group made a display which launched at the Open Day in January 2025, attended by around 80 people. It is now touring locally—in March it will be at Dingwall Library. The ARCH website Library has the transcript of memories collected during the project, together with a timeline of Norwegian activities in Scotland. Binders of research are in Contin Hall and in Dingwall library.

What next? Some members of the group would now like to explore remains and memories of Norwegians when they were in the Edderton / Tain / Nigg area before coming to Contin. If you are interested in joining us, get in touch!

Funding for the project was from the SSE Renewables Fairburn Community Windfarm Benefit Fund.



Golspie Fishertown Project

Since our last newsletter report, the Golspie Fishertown Project has held a very successful Open Day and booklet launch. Over 40 people attended the Open Day on 16th November, with a chance to see the display, attracting a number of people who had not been able to join the course. More memories shared, and home baking to enjoy.



Local historian Malcolm Bangor-Jones and Project leader Tessa Till have drawn together memories and research into a booklet *The Story of Golspie Fishertown*. This was launched on 13th February at the Golspie Heritage Society in a packed out event. All proceeds from the book will support the Golspie Heritage Society. Books can be bought for £6 from Lindsays or the Chemist in Golspie, or online from [The Golspie Heritage Society](#) with prices to include P&P.



The final element of the project—a signboard about Golspie Fishertown to be placed at the shore— is currently in preparation. Funding for the project was from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and SSE Gordonbush Community Fund.

New: ARCH Online Displays

If you were not able to see the Contin or Golspie displays, they are available online! Links are from the [ARCH website](#). Over the year, we will gradually add displays from previous ARCH projects onto the website.

Upcoming Heritage Events

It's a busy time between now and the summer break, with a number of lectures, talks, digs, workshops and other activities. Special events include:

Dornoch Firth Coastal Heritage Walks

The SCAPE Trust invites interested volunteers to a series of walks along the southern Dornoch Firth to explore and record remains—and to contribute any memories you might have of the area. No experience necessary. Dates are 7-9 March & 4-6 April. Contact Paul Murtagh for information or to book: pjm32@st-andrews.ac.uk or 01334 461605. Further information is also available from this [link](#) which also has detailed timings, maps, meeting places etc.

Essentials of Collection Care for Community

Archive Heritage Groups. 27th March, Highland Archive Centre, Inverness. Free. Bookings from [Eventbrite](#). Organised by Scottish Council on Archives.

Supporting the Roof in Pre-Improvement

Vernacular Buildings in Scotland. 5th April at Highland Folk Museum, Newtonmore. Organised by NoSAS. Cost £15/£20. Bookings from [NoSAS](#).

Rock Art Workshop.

17th May, Culloden. Organised by ScARF. Free. Bookings from [Eventbrite](#).

See the ARCH website for details of these and other events which have been passed to us.



Heritage Events

The [ARCH website](#) posts any events we know about. If you are member of a local heritage society, or know of something interesting, forward the details to ARCH, and we'll post them on the website and include them in our monthly newsflashes.

Friends of ARCH

If you enjoy what ARCH provides, please consider becoming a 'Friend of ARCH'. The Friends are a group of supporters who help ARCH in many diverse ways. ARCH relies on Friends' and lecture donations to help pay for office space, insurance, postage on newsletters, HAF walks, and the other mundane but important matters which allow us to continue. We value your help and support! Friends of ARCH are requested to give an annual donation of £10 (or more if you wish). There is an annual Friends' invitational event. To become a Friend — or to renew — contact ARCH or fill in the form below. If you prefer, you can pay by [Paypal from our website](#).

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