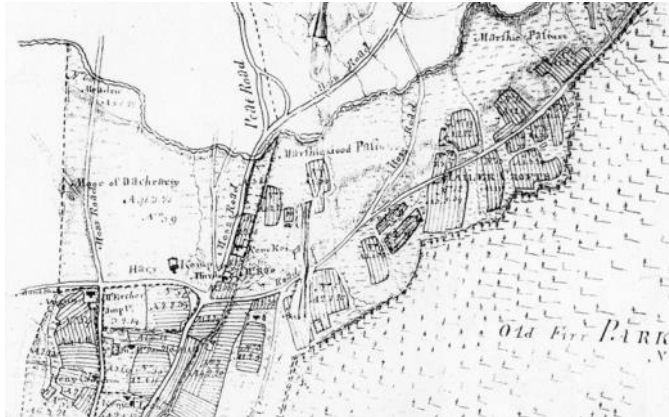


Welcome to the June 2026 newsletter containing information about ARCH's new project for 2026 on Digitising Highland Maps and Plans, a new bursary scheme, project reports and a focus on Caithness. Do check out the ARCH website Events page for a range of talks, workshops and events taking place in the near future.

## Digitising Highland Maps and Plans – maps and volunteers needed



This project aims to get as many local maps as possible relating to the Highlands into the public domain, available for researchers, genealogists, clan diaspora, historians and archaeologists and anyone else with an interest in old maps. At the same time, it will provide local landowners and museums with high quality digital copies of their collections.

In 2018 the North of Scotland Archaeology Society led a [project](#) to hire a large flat bed scanner, and then volunteers scanned the Lovat Estate maps. The resulting scans were passed back to Lovat Estate who now use the digital maps instead of the paper ones. Importantly, the maps are also available on the National Library of Scotland (NLS) [Maps website](#).

Over the years other estates have suggested that they might be interested if such a scanner could again be made available. This project builds on this interest. ARCH will hire again an A0 flat bed scanner for two weeks. We hope to be able to scan over 700 maps in this period. The NLS will take the resulting images and add them to the NLS maps website.

The scanning will take place at the Highland Archive Centre 17-28 August. A number of estates

and museums have already expressed an interest.

ARCH is appealing for volunteers to help with logging the maps as they arrive or with doing the scanning. Perfect for anyone with a love of old maps! If you are interested in helping email or phone. (details on p. 4).

ARCH is also seeking a project officer to oversee the work during the scanning, and help before and after. Details are in the ARCH [website library](#), in the ARCH Jobs folder. Closing date 26th June.

## Selected Events

This is only a selection of events listed on the ARCH [website](#). Some events are also noted in articles in this newsletter.

Saturday 13th June 10am-12:30 **Dingwall 8000**. Susan Kruse looks at prehistory in the area, with real and replica objects. Organised by Dingwall Museum; details on their [website](#).

Thursday 18th June 2pm. **Jacobite Afternoon Tea** at Culloden Battlefield Centre. Tea, costumed interpreters, 18th century letter writing. £38. Bookings on [Eventbrite](#).

Thursday 18th June, 3:30-5:30. **Stories, Places and People of Kinlochewe**. Guided walk organised by Gairloch Museum. [Bookings](#) essential.

Friday—Sunday 19th-21st June. **Everyone Blames the Weather**. [Helmsdale Museum's](#) innovative summer solstice festival.

Thursday 25th June 10am-4pm. **Crofting Experience Day**. Organised by [Historylinks Museum](#). Cost £95. Limited places.

Thursday 25th June, 7:30. **What Lies Beneath? Pictish Monsters and the Living Frame**. Online talk organised by [Groam House Museum](#).

## Launching the Jinty Nelson Highland Bursary appeal

ARCH is all about learning, with opportunities for everyone. Most of our courses and workshops are for people of all ages, and in the past we have also targeted young people. But we were very conscious that we wanted to involve university students as well. Dr Nicola Martin of UHI Centre for History joined the Board, and has been helping us reach out more to students.

At the same time, one of our trustees, Susan Kruse was given some funding from the sister of Professor Jinty Nelson. Jinty was the eminent Carolingian scholar and a long-time friend and associate of Susan, visiting sites and museums in the Highlands many times. Jinty sadly died in 2024, but with the money given to Susan, ARCH is setting up the Jinty Nelson Highland Bursary.



This will be available to any UHI students (History or Archaeology) who need some funding, up to £500, for their undergraduate or postgraduate dissertations, perhaps to visit a museum, archive, travel to a conference etc. The dissertation must focus mainly on the Scottish mainland covered by UHI (Perth to the south, Moray to the east, Argyll to the west), and combine archaeology (material culture), history and community engagement. Jinty would have loved it!

We thought the idea so good, that we are inviting people to contribute to this bursary fund so we can continue to offer it in subsequent years. ARCH will administer the finance, and the UHI departments will oversee the dissertations. If you are interested in donating to the fund, see the ARCH website on ways to [donate](#), and make sure to note that it is for the Jinty Nelson Highland Bursary.

## Focus on Caithness

Caithness is home to some spectacular preserved archaeology. The list below is only a fraction of the places to visit, many of which often feature in Doors Open Day in September.

**Yarrows Heritage** has recently updated their walk leaflet, which can be downloaded from their [website](#). There is also a guided tour on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June, again details from the website.

**Dunbeath Heritage Museum** has created a trail and interactive map of some of the important sites recorded in the Dunbeath Archaeological Survey, available from their [website](#).

**Caithness Broch Project** has an ambitious project to build a broch. See their [website](#) for details. Their website also has a [map](#) with links to a variety of sites (see p. 4 of newsletter).



**John o'Groats Mill**, the last working watermill in Caithness, was recently renovated and is now [open](#) for visitors. Joanne B. Kaar's Shipshape exhibition will be at the mill until 12 July, focussing on traditional boat building techniques and tools.

**Nucleus**, the Nuclear and Caithness Archives, in Wick has a range of archive materials relating to Caithness, as well as a special archive relating to the nuclear industry. They have regular drop in sessions on Wednesday afternoons, as well as special groups focussing on reminiscence about Dounreay, and Caithness Football memories. [Contact them](#) directly for further details.

## Highland Heritage Day 2026



The fourth annual Highland Heritage Day was held on 14th March in Dingwall Academy. Once again ARCH provided support with organisation and financial admin. We welcomed around 100 attendees and a fantastic range of stalls from organisations and museums across the region, all coming together under this year's theme: Collaboration and Working Together. The day was filled with insightful small group discussions, where successes and challenges were openly shared, followed by regional sessions in the afternoon to explore ways to strengthen local collaborations going forward. There was a real buzz throughout, with plenty of meaningful conversations, networking, and idea-sharing.

Feedback showed a clear desire to meet again next year. A huge thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to making the day such a success. If you'd be interesting in helping with next year's event, or have ideas for topics or talks, we'd love to hear from you:

[highlandheritageday@gmail.com](mailto:highlandheritageday@gmail.com)

### Norwegians in the Highlands in WWII

Although the two courses exploring the Norwegians in the Highlands have finished, like most projects, research never completely finishes. Talks about the subject usually result in new information, such as a visitor book to the Castle Hotel in Portmahomack signed by Norwegians brought in to a talk at Portmahomack. New material continues to be found in museums and archives.

We have also been very fortunate that three researchers in Norway, George Bratli and brothers Odbjørn and Kjell Johansen shared their findings with us during the course of the project. They have published a book relating to the first years the

Norwegian Brigade were in Scotland, in Hamilton and Dumfries. They will soon publish the second volume, focussing on 1941-1945, the time when Norwegians were in Edderton, Tain, Nigg and Portmahomack (1941-1943; described in ARCH newsletter 62, February 2026), and then in Dingwall and Contin (1942-1943, described in ARCH newsletter 60, February 2025).



We were pleased to welcome George, Odbjørn and Kjell in June 2026, showing them sites and information we had uncovered in our research. They were thrilled to meet up with Freddy and Harold who had been boys when the Norwegians were in Contin. As Harold said, it was incredible to think that he was speaking to people whose fathers might have given him treats at the Norwegian NAAFI. The impressive remains of the Norwegian camp at Newfield near Tain was a highlight for their visit.

We too gained so much more information from the visit. We also tried to convince them to have their books translated into English!

Talks about the Norwegians in the Highlands are planned for Tain and Edderton later this year. The first will be at the Duthac Centre, Tain on 16<sup>th</sup> June, 7:30 pm, organised by the Tain and Easter Ross Civic Trust. On 12<sup>th</sup> September as part of the [St Duthac Book and Arts Festival](#), there will be a talk and displays at Edderton Village Hall 10am-2pm, with the talk 12:30-1pm.

## ARCH Friends Trip

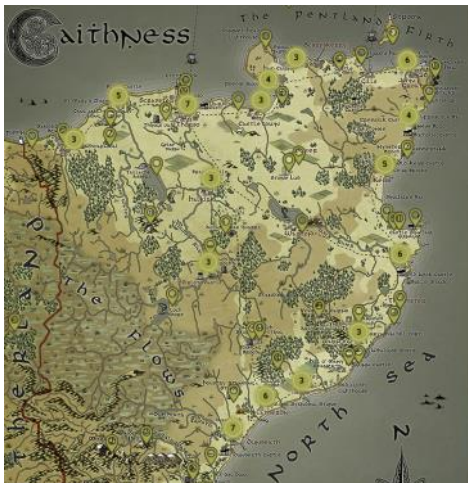
The Friends of ARCH are a group of supporters who help ARCH in many diverse ways (see right). In return ARCH organises a special day just for our Friends. Planning is underway for the ARCH 2026 Friends Trip. Details will be sent to all Friends – so if you want to be kept informed, do join up.

## HAF conference dates for diary

The Highland Archaeology Festival conference this year will be 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> October. As usual there will be a number of talks relating to recent archaeological discoveries and research, including ARCH's map project, together with displays from various organisations. An event not to be missed.

## What to do in the Summer Holidays

Many museums have special heritage-related activities during the summer. Check out their websites and facebook pages for details. High Life Highland also publishes a [summer activity programme](#), though unfortunately yet again does not have a way to search for heritage-themed events. They include The Highland Folk Museum's Heritage in Action days on Wednesdays from 8th July to 26th August.



Caithness Adventure Map from [Caithness Broch Project Website](#)

## 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](#).

Name:

Address:

Email:

Phone:

How to donate:

- BACS payments to  
Sort code: 80-05-61  
Account Number: 06001571  
Account: Archaeology for Communities in the Highlands
- Cheques payable to 'Archaeology for Communities in the Highlands'
- Gift Aid:  
Please tick if you are eligible and happy for ARCH to reclaim Gift Aid on your donation.

THANK YOU!

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