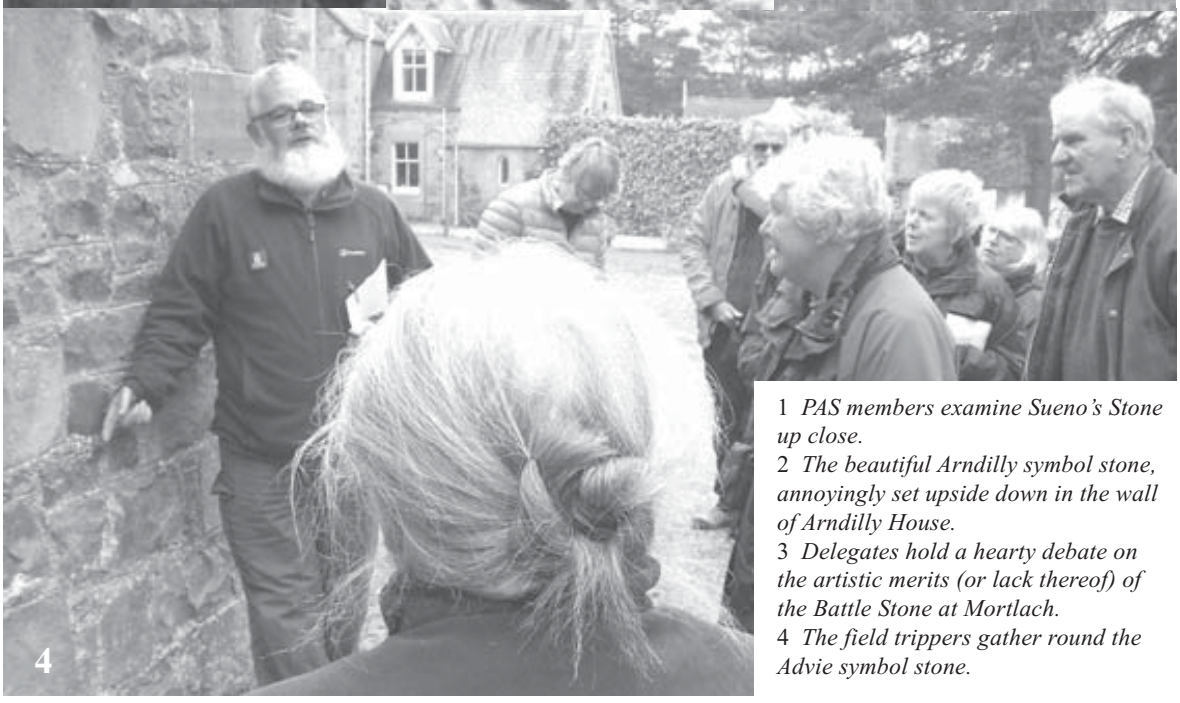
THE PICTISH ARTS SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER 90 SPRING 2019

Moray and Beyond — PAS Conference fieldtrip 2018

After the excellent Friday evening soirée in Elgin Museum and an equally excellent (and sell-out) conference on Saturday, those that were quick enough off the mark boarded the coach for our sell-out Sunday fieldtrip around Moray and Beyond.

First stop was Sueno's Stone on the outskirts of Forres. For the past 20-odd years, this monumental cross slab has been behind glass in order to protect it from the elements. However thanks to HES, who look after the site, PAS delegates were able to enter the glass box and get up close and personal with this outstanding sculpture. By the time we arrived, the brisk westerly wind had brought some light rain, so being under cover brought additional benefits.

Those with cameras got a rare opportunity for close-up shots and then we gathered round to debate what was being depicted in that battle scene. Was it one would-be Pictish king triumphing over another to cement his claim to the throne? Or was it perhaps the merciless subjugation of the Picts by a MacAlpin descendent, moving the Scots inexorably towards political supremacy? Or could it show a victorious Pictish or Picto-



1 *PAS members examine Sueno's Stone up close.*
2 *The beautiful Arndilly symbol stone, annoyingly set upside down in the wall of Arndilly House.*
3 *Delegates hold a hearty debate on the artistic merits (or lack thereof) of the Battle Stone at Mortlach.*
4 *The field trippers gather round the Advie symbol stone.*

Scottish army routing Norse invaders? And that curious figurative scene below the cross – does it show the anointing and crowning of the victor, whoever he may be?

We had in no way exhausted the topic but as ever on a fieldtrip, there is a timetable to adhere to and we had to depart. By the time we exited the glass box, the rain had blown through and although the chill wind persisted, it remained dry for the rest of the day.

We headed then to Rodney's Stone in the grounds of Brodie Castle. Although now slightly truncated and in parts badly eroded, it is still abundantly clear that this was an incredibly ornate sculpture. On one side, a cross completely filled with interlace is flanked by six panels of complex zoomorphic knots. On the reverse, four large figures – a pair of opposing S-dragons, a Pictish Beast and a double disc and Z-rod – along with five smaller geometric figures, all filled with an abundance of ornament. There's nowhere to rest the eye here. And to cap it off, the longest ogham inscription in Scotland incised down both edges.

Leaving Moray and entering Highland District, our next port of call lay just beyond Grantown-on-Spey. As our route took us through the town, it seemed sensible to offer a 'comfort break' to those who felt the need. Having heard stories of local authorities closing down public loos left, right and centre, I stopped off in Grantown on my way north on Friday to check availability. I was pleased to see them open and doing a brisk trade. However I had not taken the Sunday Factor into account. So despite the fact that there was a farmers' market in town that day, Grantown-on-Spey could offer no public loos.

We pressed on to Finlarig Farm House and the Ballintomb symbol stone. Its two symbols – a crescent and V-rod and a notched rectangle and Z-rod – are very elegantly delineated but very difficult to see. A torch did little to help. We then journeyed to Inverallan cemetery, situated on the banks of the Spey. The symbol stone here bears the same two symbols as Ballintomb. These symbols are much clearer but lack their neighbour's refinement. This sparked some discussion on the different artistic merits on offer in Pictish sculpture. Inverallan is also home to one of the very few cross slabs to be found along the Spey – a simple affair with a linear Latin cross incised on both faces.

Then it was back to Grantown-on-Spey for a spot of lunch before pressing on to Advie Church. Now decommissioned and used as a wedding venue, it has a symbol stone built into the back wall. Bearing a crescent and V-rod over a so-called mirror case, this stone is in a parlous state. There was much debate about what, if anything, PAS could do to intervene on behalf of this sad specimen. Travelling a few miles up the road to our next stop, we crossed back into Moray. Inveravon (or Inveraven) Church is still an active place of worship with a pro-active congregation. A few years back, they took it upon themselves to gain the necessary permission and secure the necessary funds to remove four symbol stones that were clamped to the outer wall, have them professionally conserved and redisplayed in an unused vestibule. This endeavour was an absolute triumph of people power and a beacon of good practice.

We journeyed on to Mortlach Church on the south side of Dufftown, which houses a symbol stone in its vestibule and a rare (for this part of the world) Pictish cross slab in the burial ground. The symbol stone has a Pictish Beast over an unusual, indeed unique motif, described as an S-shaped symbol. Sadly, it is built into one side of a narrow passageway connecting one half of the vestibule with the other, so only two people can view it at a time. Whilst waiting their turn to examine this stone, everyone took the chance to look around this large church, parts of which date back to the 13th century. We then visited the Battle Stone which stands in the centre of the modern burial ground. The rather naive (to put it kindly) attempt at ornament and figurative carving on this cross slab returned us to the topic of the qualitative aspect of Pictish sculpture.

There was no such debate at our last port of call. All agreed the Arndilly symbol stone, with its notched rectangle and Z-rod side by side with a mirror case, is a work of great beauty. Unfortunately it was placed upside down when it was built into the wall of Arndilly House in the 1760s. There is something very disconcerting about seeing something important upside down and I'm sure I wasn't the only one there that day who just wanted to turn the damned thing the right way up.

We returned to Elgin in time for those travelling south by the last train and the hat that was passed around came back with a generous collection for our driver. The lack of toilets aside, everyone had a great day and we send our thanks to HES, the owners of Finlarig Farm and Arndilly House, and the church officers at Mortlach for facilitating our visit. *JB*

PAS Conference 2018
Moray and Beyond

(afternoon session)

The afternoon session of the conference was kicked off by Dr Gordon Noble from the University of Aberdeen, with a paper entitled *Recent Excavations at Burghead*. Over the last few years, Gordon has been working on two major projects, Northern Picts and Comparative Kingship. These have involved excavation at a number of northern Pictish-period sites. Although Burghead is very much larger than other fortified sites of this era, such as Dunadd, Dundurn, Craig Phadraig and Clatchard Craig, little in the way of targeted excavation has been carried out here.

Gordon began by summarising the post-medieval history of the site. The first map of Burghead was by

Roy in the late 18th century. This clearly shows the upper and lower citadel, with banks across the neck of the promontory, the older village outside and a harbour to the west of the fortified site. Cordiner, who was a minister in Banff, described Burghead as a 'peninsula made into an island,' giving a sketch plan of the site and noting details of the timber-laced ramparts in a letter to Pennant in the 1780s. On an estate plan of 1789 parts of the lower citadel are clearly under cultivation.

The early 1800s saw a group of landowners (including William Young, whose family continued to have a long association with Burghead) plan a new harbour and village at Burghead. The work involved extensive demolition of the old fort; this phase of destruction, coupled with the use of at least part of the site for arable agriculture was thought to have removed most of the evidence of early occupation. Aberdeen University has a long association with Burghead: Professor Stuart noted in 1809 that there were as many as thirty carvings of bull figures found here which were built into the new harbour. He also commented on the remains of burned timbers associated with the ramparts. James MacDonald, in 1862, described coins, battle axes and spearheads found during these works, and told of antiquities handed out as souvenirs to English tourists there. He also recorded that most of the bull carvings were found in the north-east corner, near the entrance to the upper citadel. (This positioning was similar to Rhynie.)

The first Principal of Aberdeen University, Hector Boece, may have been writing about this site when, around 1527, he described a Danish fort on the Moray coast, known to the locals as 'The Burg'. Pont's map shows it as an 'Old Brugh,' in the 1580s, while for Roy it was the Ultima Ptoroton of the map falsely attributed to Richard of Cirencester (an 18th-century fake), or the Alata Castra of Ptolemy. Following this belief, the well, found in 1807, was also held to be a Roman construction. Cordiner believed the remains to be those of a Danish fort, while MacDonald associated them with the eleventh-century Earl Thorfinn.

The earliest recorded excavations were in the latter half of the 19th century, when (in the 1860s) James MacDonald cut a section through the lower citadel rampart, revealing it to have been at least seven metres wide and five to six metres high. He found evidence for a timber framework faced with stone on either side, and with a rubble fill, with an accumulation of midden material against the inner wall-face. In the 1890s, Hugh Young confirmed these findings and found the oak timbers to have been pinned with iron bolts up to 20 centimetres long. Within the ramparts, he found traces of stone buildings. From the midden layers, he recovered an ox skull. The animal may have been poleaxed. An axehead of the type carried by Rhynie man was also found, as well as a spearhead and an ingot mould. The report of this work included the earliest photographs of excavations at Burghead.

In the 1960s, Alan Small was the first to obtain material for radiocarbon dating. The technology was still in its infancy, with a huge margin of error, but the resulting date span of AD300–1000 covered the Pictish period. No archive material and very few photographs of the excavation are known to survive. (If anyone has any information to the contrary, please get in touch with Gordon.) However, Small is known to have lowered student 'volunteers' by ropes to record the outer face on the seaward side of the upper citadel rampart. More recent excavations have been largely driven by development within the area of the fort (roughly half of which lies under the modern town). These have added little to our understanding of the building and occupation of the fort, but confirmed earlier findings of midden material and of the wall structures. It was thought that little more had been preserved, thanks to earlier agriculture and wholesale destruction by 19th-century developers.

Gordon and his team turned their attention to the Coastguard station garden in 2015. This was excluded from the scheduled area of the fort, so there were no difficulties in excavating here. In the first season, the floor and a hearth of a ninth century building were uncovered. A coin of King Alfred, pierced for wearing, was also recovered in this area. Only two other coins of this king have been found in Scotland, both unearthed at Burghead (another from the current excavations and one in the 19th century). In addition, iron objects including possible shield fragments, a sword grip, a leather-working tool and a buckle were recovered. Dates from material found in this area covered the sixth to the tenth centuries.

Over the next few years, a sunken-floored structure, with plank settings around the outside was revealed. In England, such buildings are only known from royal Anglo-Saxon sites. Material from the floor was dated to the seventh century, and the plank slots to the seventh–eighth centuries. The fill of a massive pit nearby included iron tools and material dated to the ninth centuries. The building seems to have been used over a fairly protracted period. Also in this area, part of a stone-walled building was exposed. The rest of this lies partly under the modern house and greenhouse.

A restricted pit was cut in the lower citadel at the rampart. The team encountered difficulties due to the loose nature of the collapsed rubble through which they dug. The sides of the excavation required to be shored up to allow safe working. However, after making their way down through a collapsed revetment and layers of midden they eventually reached the basal course of the wall-face. The facing stones still bear the marks of point chisels used to dress them. Artefacts from the midden here include two bone pins, one bramble-headed and one mace-headed, and an iron ring.

Excavation at the upper citadel rampart, where Small had worked in the 1960s also proved difficult. Here the team dug through two metres of sand before getting to the midden layer, then had to abandon the effort for safety reasons. However, they showed that the rampart here had been faced with coursed stone to at least two metres in height. Burnt timbers and slots for transverse timber beams were found in the core of the wall, which had suffered a fire that was intense enough to redden the stones.

Floor deposits have survived in the lower citadel just below the level of the plough soil, and there is geophysical evidence to suggest that structures have been to some extent preserved there.

So far, over forty radio-carbon dates have been obtained. These suggest that occupation or defence of the headland began in the second half of the sixth century AD, around the time when the site at Rhynie came to an end, and lasted until the early tenth century (around AD910–965), when, according to the Annals, the men of Fortriu were battling Dublin Vikings. In terms of preservation of early medieval material, the potential of this site is massive – there may be much to learn from what is still underground. However, coastal erosion presents a real threat. The wall-face traced at the upper citadel is only about half a metre from the cliff edge. We have probably already lost the outer face over which Small's students dangled in the 1960s, with perhaps five to ten metres of land taken by the sea in the last fifty years. Gordon and his team are applying for Scheduled Ancient Monument consent to work on the upper citadel seaward rampart before it disappears. They also hope to get permission to investigate the north-east corner near the upper citadel entrance, in the area where the bull sculptures are said to have been found, and in the lower citadel to examine some of the structures there.

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The second paper of the afternoon by Dr Oisin Plumb from the University of the Highlands and Islands was entitled *Beyond the range of human exploration: Cormac and the north in the seventh century.*

In his 'Life of St Columba,' St Adomnán recounted three voyages made by Cormac Ui Liathain, an Irish monk and contemporary of Columba. Oisin examined these passages to see what light they could shed on Adomnán's world view as well as the political and ecclesiastical situation nearer to home. He also asked what these passages could tell us about Adomnán's source material.

Columba operated within three main spheres of action – Dalriada, the territory of the Picts and Ireland. Cormac's adventures took place in and beyond all three. In his account of the voyages, Adomnán gives us the earliest of such tales of Irish clerics in search of an island retreat in the ocean, a genre that was to grow in popularity over succeeding centuries.

In the order in which these episodes appear in the Life of Columba, Cormac's first voyage (from Erris in County Mayo) ended in failure through no fault of his. The second voyage took him to Orkney, while on the third, he sailed north beyond the range of human exploration. Adomnán's final mention of Cormac places him in the company of Comgall moccu Araidi, Cainnech moccu Declann and Brendan moccu Altae at a mass celebrated by St Columba on Hinba. Cormac is included with this group as founders of monasteries in Ireland. His role in this episode is very small, and it has been suggested that part of the story was lost at this point.

Adomnán's order of Cormac's voyages probably does not correspond to the original source material. The second and third voyages are clearly labelled. In introducing the (apparent) first voyage, Adomnán was explicit that Cormac made 'not less than three voyages' and his language seems to suggest that this was not the first. However, there is a logical progression in that the three voyages appear in order of increasing distance. It is possible to read in Cormac's final appearance as a founder of a monastery (or monasteries) that it was only after he had given up his search that he found his true destiny at home rather than on a remote island in the ocean.

Before considering Cormac's voyages in more detail, Oisin sketched out what we know or can surmise about Adomnán's world view. In an earlier work 'Of Holy Places,' he used the persona of Arculf, a Gaulish bishop who had travelled on pilgrimage, to describe in three books Jerusalem, Palestine and the neighbouring lands and finally Constantinople. Whether or not Arculf existed and visited Iona, his itinerary fits in very well with Isidore of Seville's geographical writings, which would have been familiar to Adomnán. It has been suggested that Adomn·n was the first to take St Jerome literally and place Jerusalem at the centre of the physical world. This is how the world is portrayed in medieval mappae mundi, such as that at Hereford cathedral. Adomnán had used Arculf as an expert witness to the centre of the world; is it possible that Cormac was to play a similar role at its northern extremities?

The last times of the earth had long been linked with the last places: St Matthew explicitly states that the gospel would be carried to the ends of the earth and then the world would come to an end. Earlier, Isaiah and Jeremiah had described the north as a source of evil and disaster. For Adomnán and the Iona community, the ends of the earth lay in the far north and west; they were confronting the last places. Cormac's first voyage began at Erris in far western County Mayo, at St Patrick's farthest bound. Although Patrick had brought the gospel thus far, the world had not yet come to an end. Clearly, there must be more beyond Mayo.

Anecdotes of Columba's time spent among the Picts can be split between those which are said to have

happened 'in provincia Pictorum,' where the events unfold in an atmosphere of drama involving druids and monsters, and those which happened 'trans dorsum Britanniae', which are much more mundane in character. Columba's miraculous powers have a quieter tone in these passages – he uses his power to see future events and to influence their outcome, either by prayer or by directly appealing to the king. The second voyage is set in the latter milieu, and saw Cormac reach Orkney. Regarded in classical literature as the most northerly possible place for men to live, for early writers these islands had an almost mythical quality. For Adomnán, however, Orkney was no literary conceit but a tangible place with whose politics and ecclesiastical allegiances he was familiar. Although there is quiet drama in the account of Cormac's second voyage and Columba's intervention, Adomnán's own times are reflected in the way in which Orkney is portrayed as territorially Pictish and ecclesiastically Columban.

If, as Fraser has suggested, the events occurring 'trans dorsum Britanniae' were taken from the version of the life of Columba written by Cummène the White around 640, the account of Cormac's voyages must have existed by then. Cummène's sources almost certainly included men who had known Columba, and the background of his version of events would more closely reflect the period when the Saint was alive. Orkney had been the object of an expedition led by Áedán mac Gábrain, king of Dàl Riata. Orkney may have been under Pictish control at that time, but we have no record to suggest that was so. By Adomnán's time, Bridei had laid waste Orkney and defeated Ecgfrith's Angles. Lamb has suggested that ecclesiastical links were in place between Orkney and Northumbria within a short time of Adomnán's death, based on the appearance of Saint Peter dedications in the northern isles and the similarities between the Knowe of Burrian eagle and one in a Northumbrian gospel held in Corpus Christi College library, Cambridge. However, it is quite possible that there was a Romanising faction within the Columban church. Adomnán himself may have been part of this, and it may have included Curetán of Rosemarkie, who was contemporary with Adomnán and who appeared as a signatory to the Cáin Adomnáin, promulgated at the Synod of Birr in AD 697. Oisin suggested that the story of Cormac's later voyages, set against a background of Pictish overlordship and ongoing Ionan ecclesiastical influence, may have been written by a member of such a group and subsequently used by Adomnán.

The third of Cormac's voyages took him into unknown waters, far to the north of any other travellers. Driven by a wind from the south, Cormac and his companions arrived in a region where the sea seemed full of small creatures with sharp spines which threatened to puncture the skin of their boat and which interfered with the use of their oars. Columba, seeing the threat, summoned the monks of Iona to pray for help, and a north wind blew the sailors south to safety. These creatures are not monsters, as the beast Columba and his companions encountered in the River Ness was, and the miraculous escape involves Cormac and his companions sailing out of danger: the threatening spiny beasts remain. Adomnán treats them as mundane beasts living in a real, tangible part of the ocean, where men may sail. There have been a number of attempts to identify these creatures with present day denizens of the northern seas.

In Adomnán's account of the voyages of Cormac, we have fragments of a narrative that had political and cosmological relevance for Adomnán's own time. Whether Adomnán composed or rewrote these fragments himself, or used a recent source which shared his background, is not certain. However, Cormac, with the spiritual and practical aid of Saint Columba, carried the word of God toward the dangerous northern ends of the world. His northern voyages are set within or begin from a milieu that was politically Pictish and spiritually looked to Iona for leadership.

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The final paper of the day came from Steve Farrer and Dr Nicki Scott, both of Historic Environment Scotland, and was titled *Pigments of Inspiration? Recent HES interpretation of Pictish Stones.*

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) is responsible for the maintenance and presentation of three hundred and thirty six properties in care. Among other things this involves the preparation of interpretation materials for each site – display panels used at both manned and unmanned sites, written and audio guides, material suitable for different age groups and so on. All of these require to be updated on a rolling basis. This process is a joint effort between the Interpretation Unit, represented by Steve, and the Cultural Resources Unit represented by Nicki. Together they explained some of the thinking behind the controversial choice to display Pictish stones as coloured at seven sites where interpretation panels were replaced last year.

There are a number of requirements and restraints facing the designers of HES' information panels. They must carry a huge amount of information. They must be easy to maintain and survive the Scottish weather for a number of years. They must provide good value for money. They are static and rely on text and images to inform and provoke but are limited in space. And the resources available must be portioned out over the full range of interpretative material that is supplied at HES sites. In some instances, such as at Iona, HES has been able to call on the services of a large number of experts who have explored and brought together the most recent research, employing current techniques to enhance our understanding of the site. In other cases, existing

panels are reviewed to check that the information they contain is still in line with current thinking, and text and illustrations are refreshed before a panel is replaced.

Nicki covered some of the thinking behind the decision to introduce colour into the illustrations of Pictish stones. Pigments have been used since very early times and across the widest range of cultures. Neanderthal people used pigments in their cave art; very early aboriginal art used bright pigments, while early cave art in India was coloured, and recent work has revealed lost painting on the walls of Angkor Wat. Closer to home, traces of pigment have been found on stone Roman distance markers from the Antonine Wall, while the use of colour on sculpture and architectural stonework was widespread throughout the classical world. nIt had a very long history by the early medieval period: why should it not have been used on Pictish carved stones?

Climate need not have discouraged the use of pigment. In the Pacific north-west of America, totems and masks exposed to a similar climate were painted and repainted, possibly at fixed times in a set ritual. Without regular maintenance, pigments painted on stone could easily have been lost through exposure to the elements over the centuries. In addition, pigments may have been removed by later conservation practices which were generally informed by aesthetics of the day – consider the Elgin Marbles. It is likely that the Parthenon was once highly coloured, but the use of light shows to convey this has not been uncontroversial. Greek schoolchildren, surveyed for their views, expressed the notion that 'old should look old,' and that generally does not mean coloured.

HES has caused controversy in the past by the introduction of colour. Stirling Castle stands out as an example of a site where the use of colour resulted in deeply divided reaction between those who approved and those who preferred to see the past as lacking colour. At Elgin Cathedral Museum, HES has used coloured light to illuminate the effigy of Bishop Archibald.

There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that the medieval world was a colourful place. Abbot Suger wrote of how he valued the use of many brightly coloured gemstones inset into liturgical objects as an aid to devotion; Bernard of Clairvaux, in condemning the use of colour in saintly images, gave us more evidence for its common presence. Nearer to the Picts in time and place, the Aberlady cross has traces of metal foil, possibly as a backing for glass or semi-precious stones, inset to highlight the bright eyes of the carved beasts. Similar examples are known from Jedburgh. Use of X-ray fluorescence has yielded evidence of colour on the gravestones of Osgyth and Beannah at Lindisfarne; colour was used on stone at Wearmouth/Jarrow, and the Lichfield angel, unearthed at the cathedral in 2003, was also painted. Traces of red have been found on interlaced fragments at Portmahomack.

It is also worth considering that monuments which stood in the landscape and were visible from a distance may have been painted to enhance that visibility: the totems which marked the waterways of the Pacific north-west are again a good example of the use of colour in such a situation.

Finally, there is abundant evidence for the incorporation of colour in other art forms in northern Britain from an early period: the use of enamel, glass or semi-precious stones on a wide variety of metalwork, colourful glass beads, and vividly illuminated pages from gospel manuscripts all bear witness to a love of colour. If colour could be used to heighten the experience of reading a gospel manuscript, why not on sculpture?

The arguments against the use of colour on stone also need to be carefully considered. The case of Meigle 2, where the stone may have been chosen for its colouring was noted. Here, would it be considered necessary to detract from the impact of the stone by adding colour? The work of trying to get across the complexity of ideas around the use of colour was a task for the interpretation unit.

Trying to explain the decision to raise the possibility that Pictish stones may have been painted was Steve's task. He made some general points about the interpretation panels. The old panels were in some cases twenty or more years old, and contained much generic material. They were good, but of their time. Advances in technology have allowed for good quality, high resolution colour to be used in the illustrations on panels which should be more resilient in Scottish weather. None of the panels under consideration are at manned sites: HES makes no charge for visitors to these stones. The Interpretation Unit had the opportunity to take material supplied by the Cultural Resources unit and use it in a way to show the sophistication of Pictish culture. A wide range of experts in Pictish art, historians, archaeologists and so on were consulted, and a correspondingly wide range of views was obtained. A study of place names was commissioned, and kite photography was employed to give a better understanding of location within the landscape. Each panel would touch on the local Pictish place-names, draw on folklore and recorded history and describe some of the changing conservation practices used on the stones. There was to be no mention of 'mysterious' or 'enigmatic' in the text!

While the interpretation panels are there to inform and engage visitors, there is no reason for them to be uncontroversial. The idea that the Picts may have painted their stones was not particularly new: it had been raised in the 2010 HS publication 'The Picts' and was used on the 2015 interpretation panel at Hilton of Cadboll, where a half-coloured drawing of

the stone is shown. Steve emphasised that the use of such drawings on the seven recent panels was a choice. It does not represent an HES policy that must be applied in all cases.

Interpretation has its own theories and principles of practice. Steve highlighted some of the most relevant to his aim of designing fixed panels at sites such as the Pictish stones: the information content must be accurate, but where space/resource is limited, then the most relevant, compelling, revelatory and engaging elements should be selected from the mass of information available. The panels are most memorable when provocative, and when they produce both emotional and intellectual responses. If such a panel engenders debate, so much the better. Colour in this case provoked such responses. The ideas of coloured stones is memorable indeed – there is a tendency to see the world as increasingly lacking in colour the further back in time we go (perhaps the influence of black and white television or photographs?). Steven went on to give examples of discussions he had held with Isabel Henderson and Heather Pulliam over the use of colour. While the possibility of the use of colour remains, there is no evidence for what pigments were used, or what parts of the sculpture may have been painted (all or merely highlights). If the panels had shown only highlights coloured, would that have conveyed more certainty than colouring everything? Should the palette be garishly bright or subdued? How could HES best portray an engaging possibility, that the stones were once painted, without suggesting that any authentic representation of original colours was possible? At the end of the day, he had to make a choice.

There is a compelling amount of evidence to suggest that any more than 250 words of text is too many for the average visitor to read on interpretation panels at historic sites. Only about a fifth of that (50 words) could be devoted to making the case that the Picts may have painted their stones, but that this was still in the realms of speculation, that there is no direct evidence and, if they did, we do not know what colours were used. The illustration on the panel is only an artist's impression. Steven's monitoring of visitors' responses on such sites as TripAdvisor found that they commented most on folklore or history, rather than on the colouring of the stones.

It is worth remembering that the purpose of the interpretation panels is to help people to enjoy their visits to the stones. If visitors are encouraged to learn more about the subject, to revisit or visit other stones and to value these sites, then the interpretation has been successful. The panels themselves are ephemera; the stones survive. *Sheila Hainey*

Autumn Lecture Series

16 November 2018 – Ali Cameron

Let Dear be its name from now onwards: the search for the monastery of Deer

For the last lecture of the autumn series, Ali Cameron came to speak to us about the search for a monastery of Pictish date in the vicinity of Old Deer in North-East Scotland. The search has been developing over the last ten years and Ali shared with us some of the turning points and highlights along the way, as well as discussing discoveries from the 2018 dig. Besides looking for evidence of building structures, archaeology for such a site might include artefacts relating to vellum manufacture (as at Portmahomack), writing and cross slabs.

The search began in the village of Old Deer itself, where small trenches were excavated in back gardens and on council-owned land. After geophysical survey of the present churchyard, certain areas of it were deemed suitable for excavation. Although nothing was found to suggest a medieval site, volunteers and residents got stuck in with sorting and recording finds.

The team moved their focus to the site of Deer Abbey, the ruins of a Cistercian monastery situated to the north-west of Old Deer. The Cistercian monastery was founded in 1219 but much of its ruins were cleared in 1809 during the expansion and renovation of the Pitfour Estate. Historical evidence suggests that the Cistercian order usually favoured greenfield sites for their monasteries, but the team decided to conduct a geophysical survey the whole of the scheduled area. Nineteenth-century alterations to the site made interpretation difficult and initial excavations revealed only modern paths, garden features and much spoil material. However some potentially earlier structures were identified and

The Hnefatafl gaming board found during the 2018 excavation

pottery finds were dated to the 13th/14th century. Carbon dating of a hearth gave an even earlier date of 1147–1260 cal.

During the 2018 dig, the Heritage Lottery Fund and Aberdeenshire Council funded a larger project involving 431 people, mainly school pupils, volunteers and Young Archaeology Club members. This time a JCB was used to dig six trenches. Post holes and stake holes were found all over the site, suggesting at least three structures. It was possible to date one of the post holes to AD669-777, as Ali said, a nice date for a possible Pictish monastery. In addition, there was much excitement at the discovery of a stone gaming board. A grid and dots are incised onto a flat stone which has subsequently been broken or cut down. The board is thought to be a Tafl type game such as Hnefatafl and could date as early as the post hole (7th/8th century) up to the 1200s.

It is not certain whether this is the site of the Pictish monastery, but clearly there were buildings here which date to the right period. The project has certainly been a great opportunity to get many children and volunteers involved and interested in their local archaeology, learning how to dig, record and interpret. If further funding can be raised, Ali hopes to continue to excavate the site and to continue with post-excavation work. *Jenny Rayner*

The Picts reach France
(well, French bookshops)

With his new book ***¿ l'Origine de l'Écosse: les Pictes*** (Yoran, ISBN 978-2-36747-050-4)**,** PAS member Frédéric Kurzawa has provided the first history of the Picts in French. This is a great step forward in spreading the word! His clear and thorough account of the development of the Picts – from the first mention by Eumenius in AD297 to present day *Astérix chez les Pictes* – will now reach new audiences. Frédéric emphasises the importance of Pictish art and artefacts, and his book is"well illustrated with photographs. We thank the author for presenting the Pictish Arts Society with a copy. 'His other recent publications include *Saint Patrick, Aputre des Irlandais* and *Saint Colomban et les Racines Chrétiennes de l'Europe*. *ER*

PAS Archive finds a new home

It is a few years since we lost our headquarters when Pictavia, the visitors centre at Brechin, was shut down. At first this seemed a bit of a setback, but there turned out to be an unexpected benefit. We discovered that audience numbers actually rose at the winter and spring lectures once we transferred to our new venue, Brechin Town House Museum.

PAS Archive, boxed up for delivery to its new home.

However, we were still left with the problem of where to house the PAS archive. It consisted of around 100 books on the Picts and related material, half a dozen boxfiles full of early correspondence from the founding of the society, as well as photocopies of hard to find books, the whole series of PAS Journals and some early newsletters. For the past few years they have been cared for by the archivist (me) but we wanted everything to be available to anyone interested, not out of reach in a private house.

Committee members Stewart Mowatt and Barbara Thompson had the idea of approaching Angus Archives (the excellent Hunter Library) at Restenneth. The staff there were very pleased at the prospect of Pictish and related material becoming available to their visitors and agreed to house it all. Thus in December the archive was boxed up and transported to its new home, where it is available to all between 10am and 4pm every Monday to Friday except for public holidays. There is free car parking and the library is fully accessible for those with disabilities.

Angus Archives, Hunter Library, Restenneth Priory,
by Forfar DD8 2SZ Tel: 01307 46844
angusarchives@angusalive.scot
www.facebook.com/angusarchives

Over the years the Pictish Arts Society has been donated books by members, authors and publishers. We wish to thank them all for their generosity. We have now found a way to keep the collection open for public use.

While you are there, Angus Archives is a few hundred metres from Restenneth Priory, the earliest masonry of which dates to the 1100s. It may even stand on the site of an early Pictish church. The Priory is free to visit and always open (being roofless and doorless). *Elspeth Reid*

The Picts reach Spain (apparently)

In September 2018, news broke of a Spanish historian who claimed to have found the gravestone of Sir James Douglas, the Black Douglas, in Spain. This would have been a bold enough claim in itself but it became even more intriguing because this newly found stone was in fact a Pictish cross slab. And not just any old Pictish cross slab – it was the Inchbraoch 1 cross slab from Angus.

The ripple of panic which ran through the Pictish arts community was quickly stilled when Montrose Museum confirmed that Inchbraoch 1 was still safely in their care, as it has been for the last 159 years. So not only was this historian out by about 500 years when it came to dating the carving, but he clearly mistook cast concrete for carved stone!

PAS member Jennifer McKay has translated the article, published on 1 September 2018 in the Spanish national daily newspaper, *ABC*, and written by Monica Arrizabalaga. (The comments in italics are Jennifer's.)

Sir Douglas and the enigmatic Celtic memorial stone in Alora

A historian insists that it is the gravestone of the Scottish knight who was carrying the heart of Braveheart and who died at the taking of Teba castle.

A man from Alora was looking for somewhere to rest during a long day's hunting in 2003; he noticed a stone in a heap about 11 kilometres from town, in the Antequera to Malaga AVE (*high speed train*) construction works area. He thought it perfect for his purposes, but on pulling it out of the heap and turning it over, he discovered to his surprise that it had been carved with a Celtic cross and strange figures. Maria Jose Sanchez, the archaeologist who is in charge of the municipal museum in Alora, says, "He took it home and when the museum opened, he brought it to us." It was a medieval Celtic stele, of that there was no doubt, but, when and how had it arrived there? The Antequera historian, Isidoro Otero, believes he has solved the mystery. In his opinion, it is the gravestone of Sir James Douglas, also known as the Black Douglas, a Scottish knight who had a leading role in the true story of Braveheart.

Although Mel Gibson attributed the name Braveheart to William Wallace in his film, the real Braveheart was Robert the Bruce, the first king of independent Scotland. Before dying of leprosy in 1329, the king, who had been unable to go on crusade, gave the order that on his death his heart should be removed, embalmed and taken to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The person entrusted with this delicate mission was his right-hand man, Sir Douglas, who, with the king's heart in a reliquary hanging round his neck, set out for the Holy Land with a handful of his best men.

Museum Director Marîa José Sanchez poses beside her concrete cast of Inchbraoch 1

On the way to Jerusalem, the Scottish expedition stopped to help Alfonso XI take the castle of Estrella in Teba. And so, it was that Robert I's heart finally participated in a crusade. They say that before he died in combat, the victim of a Nazari cavalry entrapment manoeuvre, Sir Douglas tore the reliquary from his neck and throwing it in front of him, shouted, "Forward, brave heart, I will follow you or die."

Otero, who told this story in his book *James Douglas, the crusade of Braveheart* (2015), believes that the Scots who survived the encounter and returned to Scotland with King Robert's heart couldn't take Sir Douglas's body because it would have decomposed on the way, and stripped the flesh from his bones. They took his bones and embalmed heart to the family pantheon in the chapel of St Bride (St Bridgit) in Douglas, and, continues the historian, his other remains were buried in "this frontier zone, this no-man's land", between the Christian castle of Teba and the Muslim one of Alora. "It was the spot chosen by the Scots in which to leave a testament in stone of a warrior who always wanted to be in the front line of combat," he says.

He believes that they set up this unique stone carved by an anonymous hand, ("possibly a member of James Douglas's crusade expedition or a local mason advised by the Scots") carved in local limestone. "It is a wayside cross, put there to commemorate soldiers who died in battle," he explains.

Various clues from the funerary stele have lead Otero to this conclusion. Although it lacks any epigraphy, the stone has a cross with Celtic knots ("the bond which cannot be broken", he explains) and "various triskeles are also present", these Celtic triple spirals which symbolise the solar circle. On the left, a zoomorphic figure, carved in a very schematic form, suckles its young. In the scene on the right, "there is a laying on of hands", according to the historian. The principal figure, of greater size, places its hands on the head of a figure who seems to be a knight and

hands him "a torque, a ring which goes around the neck, a collar from which can hang an elongated cone shaped object", the historian explains. In his opinion, it is a representation of the Scottish regent during the King David's minority, entrusting Sir Douglas with the mission of taking King Robert's heart to Jerusalem.

The Patron saint of the Douglas family

There is no trace of the Douglas coat of arms on the stone, with its three stars, "perhaps because his remains were interred with the other Scots who died in the battle", but there is a coincidence which points directly to sir Douglas. "Near Alora there existed a small field called Santa Brigida" where the first priest who arrived in the village after the Reconquest founded a chaplaincy. "The place name appears in the libros de repartimiento". (*The books holding information about land holdings which were used by Ferdinand and Isabella as a basis for granting land to Christians after the Reconquest*). Otero insists that "it could have been there before then". (*Ferdinand and Isabella finally took this territory from the Muslims in the 1480s*.) Perhaps the place was known as the resting place of sir Douglas's stone, he hypothesises, as St Bridgit was the Douglas family's saint.

The pagan Irish goddess, Brighid, who according to legend was fed by a white cow with brown ears (the zoomorphic figure on the stone?) was Christianised as Saint Brigid and her cult reached Andaluc̀ia in the Middle Ages. Otero's hypothesis is that it was brought by this expedition of Scottish knights who fought at Teba.

The Andalusian historian, who put forward the results of his enquiries at a conference in Teba during the Douglas Days, will shortly publish his research in the Review of Antequeran Studies of the Royal Academy of Noble Arts of Antequera, of which he is a member.

The mayor of Alora said, "I believe this is quite an important find." Although he seems rather put out that Otero did not explain his conclusions in Alora before doing so in Teba. It was the mayor, Jose Sanchez Moreno who contacted Otero after approaching various historians and archaeologists without success. "I was very interested in finding out where it had come from and why, as it is a rather unusual piece in these parts," adds the mayor who hopes that the investigation will be published so that other experts can corroborate the hypothesis.

"Although Otero is the greatest expert on this personage, there remain various gaps which could be filled by other researchers, be they archaeologists with expertise in the Middle Ages, in materials which give clues in the techniques of the time." adds the director of the Museum of Alora, who encourages "everyone who is interested to come and see the stone and try to draw conclusions".

According to Sanchez (*not clear whether this is Sanchez, director of the museum or Sanchez, mayor of Alora*) the find spot of the stone is 9 kilometres from Santa Brigida, where the AVE station has been built; "it was Muslim until 1484". But these doubts do not discourage Otero. "The stone wasn't found in an excavation, which means it could have been brought to the find spot, which is between the castles of Teba and Alora, at any time," the historian reasons. He adds the question, "Why is this area called Santa Brigida? The place name has existed here since that time and must have been brought by the Scots. There is no other reference or other fact which justifies it."

Jennifer McKay (translator)

Ecclesiastics on Pictish sculpted stones: reflections of reality or symbolic constructs?

An analysis of relevant Pictish sculpted stones that the author has visited in the counties of Perth and Kinross, and the county of Angus

(Conclusions from a MA dissertation)

Part Three - Depictions of SS Paul and Antony not hitherto recognised as such

Definition of the term 'symbolic construct': Human figures with attributes depicting 7th–9th century ecclesiastics who are combined with additional symbols that indicate these figures represent persons who are not commonplace ecclesiastics, e.g. saints.

Previously the symbolic construct representing the meeting of SS Paul and Antony has been derived from the saints sharing a loaf of bread miraculously delivered to them by a raven (Jerome, *Life of Paul of Thebes* in C. White (ed.) *Early Christian lives*, ch.10). In this construct the recognised symbolism has been two ecclesiastics (representing SS Paul and Antony) depicted with a circle between them (representing the loaf) upon which each ecclesiastic has placed at least one hand (representing them pulling the loaf apart). The two sculpted stones within the geo-graphical area under discussion previously identified as employing this construct are Kirriemuir 1 and St Vigeans 7 (J. R. Allen and J. Anderson, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland* (henceforth *ECMS*) p.227 and p.268; G. Henderson and I. Henderson, *The Art of the Picts*, p.140).

However, it is proposed that there are additional aspects of this meeting that were employed by Pictish sculptors as symbolic constructs to represent SS Paul and Antony that have not previously been recognised as such. Where ecclesiastics are present these are: when the saints are together, their conversation regarding Christianity is indicated by them facing each other seated either side of a cross; for St Paul, his clothing of a cloak of woven palm leaves, the

date palm that covers his cave and rocks with coin stamps strewn upon them; and for St Antony, the presence of the Holy Spirit in the guise of an angel and a centaur and the lions with whom he interacts (Conversation: Jerome, *Paul*, ch.10; St Paul: Ibid, ch.5 and ch.6; St Antony: Ibid, ch.7 and ch.16). The sculpted stones upon which these constructs are utilised are: Dunfallandy; Fowlis Wester 2; Eassie; and Meigle 2. However, there are also instances where St Antony is represented without the inclusion of a human figure, but by a centaur alone as depicted upon Aberlemno 3 and Glamis 2.

1 *Dunfallandy reverse detail*

SS Paul and Antony together

Dunfallandy Stone

On the reverse face of the Dunfallandy Stone are two seated ecclesiastics (**1**). By their appearance these ecclesiastics could be interpreted as reflecting everyday ecclesiastical life. Indeed it could be said that they are bishops or abbots given that they are wearing *paenulas* and are enthroned. However, their seated position in relation to each other with the cross between them indicates that these ecclesiastics are in fact part of a symbolic construct representing SS Paul and Antony. It has been stated elsewhere that the position of the cross in not blocking the figures' view of each other makes the cross look like 'a piece of household furniture, or topic of conversation' (Henderson and Henderson, *Art*, p.153). Here this statement is developed further to propose that the cross symbolises a conversation during which questions on Christian faith are discussed and is a reference to the conversation between SS Paul and Antony (Jerome, *Paul*, ch.10). Furthermore it is suggested that the identity of one of these saints is shown by detailing on his throne. The ecclesiastic to the right of the cross has a curl on the top of the side-pillar of his throne similar in shape to the head of a crozier. It is suggested the symbol of the crozier signifies St Antony. Despite St Antony never being an abbot, the advice sought from him by followers and the leadership position to which his followers elevated him in all practicality accord him this status (Advice sought: Athanasius, *Life of Anthony* in C. White (ed.) *Early Christian lives*, ch.55-56; leadership: Ibid, ch.54).

2 *Fowlis Wester 2 detail*

Fowlis Wester 2

The ecclesiastics on the front face seated either side of the cross shaft form part of a symbolic construct representing SS Paul and Antony (**2**). These ecclesiastics could be interpreted as reflecting real ecclesiastics, even as being bishops or abbots given that they are wearing *paenulas* and are enthroned. Nevertheless their additional attributes indicate that this scene is a symbolic construct.

The two ecclesiastics sit facing each other as if in conversation. The cross between them indicates that the topic of the conversation is the Christian faith as was one of the topics under discussion between SS Paul and Antony (Jerome, *Paul*, ch.10).

3 *Fowlis Wester 2 detail*

4 *Date palm detail*

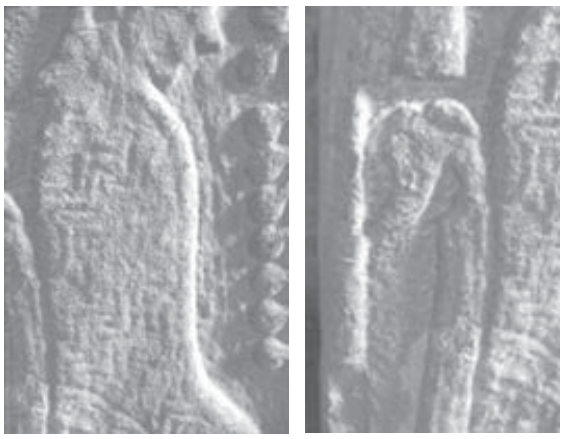
It is proposed that the ecclesiastic to the left of the cross shaft is St Paul (**3**). Behind him is a depiction of a date palm (**4**). The cave wherein St Paul made his home was covered by the branches of such a tree and from the leaves of this tree he plaited fabric for his clothing (Date palm: Jerome, *Paul*, ch.5; Clothing: Ibid, ch.12). The proposed interpretation of this tree as being a depiction of a date palm is

5 *Date palms*

supported by two pieces of evidence. The sculpting when compared to photographs of date palms (**5**) has the same shape of a tree and its fruit as trees growing today. The depiction is also similar to a tree portrayed on the Farnell Stone where it stands between Adam and Eve as the Tree of Life (**6**). In early hagiographies the Tree of Life is the date palm. Furthermore, the presence of this tree in conjunction with the detailing on the figure's cloak and the wolf's head on his throne indicates that this is St Paul and not any other saint or biblical character.

6 *Farnell Stone reverse*

Close scrutiny of the pattern carved onto St Paul's cloak reveals that it is depicting a plaited fabric (**7**), unlike the patterns of squares and fretwork that infill the clothing of the other ecclesiastic depicted on this stone. The top of the side-pillar of his throne is carved in the shape of a wolf's head (**8**). A wolf enters St Paul's cave ahead of St Antony being admitted (Ibid, ch.9).



7 & **8** *Fowlis Wester 2 details*

It is submitted that the ecclesiastic to the right of the cross shaft is St Antony (**9**). Behind the seated ecclesiastic stands an angel that represents the Holy Spirit (**10**). St Antony set out on his journey to find St Paul after it was revealed to him as he slept that this holy man existed (Ibid, ch.7). The Holy Spirit in the guise of an angel also appears on St Vigeans 11 (article by same author *PAS Newsletter 83*). The top of the side-pillar of his throne indicates that this ecclesiastic is St Antony because, like the Dunfallandy Stone, it is carved in the shape of a crozier.

St Paul

St Paul's cave is described as being covered by a date palm and having evidence scattered around of coins having been minted therein (Ibid, ch.5). It is proposed that a portrayal of St Paul appears on the Eassie Stone. On the reverse face of the Eassie Stone is an ecclesiastic standing near a date palm and a rock with coin stamps resting upon it, this is a representation of St Paul.

9 & **10** *Fowlis Wester 2 details*

Eassie Stone

The figure in the top right-hand corner of the reverse face could be interpreted as reflecting an everyday ecclesiastic (**11**). It is suggested that the lack of hair indicates a Petrine tonsure – as this contrasts with

11 *Eassie reverse detail*

the long hair of the secular figures nearby on this stone. The ecclesiastic is wearing a short tunic, similar to those worn by the ecclesiastics on Aberlemno 3 (identification of an ecclesiastic on the reverse of this stone – forthcoming article) and St Vigeans 11 (article by same author *PAS Newsletter 83*). Fine lines around his shoulder and neck indicate a hood. However, additional symbols used in conjunction with this figure transform him from a depiction of an ecclesiastic into a symbolic construct representing St Paul.

Behind the ecclesiastic is a date palm identifiable by the shape of the fruits being similar to those on Fowlis Wester 2 (**4**) and the Farnell Stone (**6**). This date palm is standing with its branches spread over a square block herein interpreted as signifying a rock. Into this rock circular indentations have been carved, indicating the coin stamps in St Paul's cave (Ibid, ch.5). Close observation of the stone's surface reveals that these two indentations are deliberately carved and thus part of the sculptor's original design, whereas the roughly circular indentation on the cloak of a nearby figure is created by natural flaking of the stone's surface. It is made evident that the ecclesiastic is connected with the square block and the date palm in a scene separate from other figures on the reverse face by the carving of a thick line upon which only they are stood.

St Antony

St Antony is guided by a centaur when searching for, and is assisted by lions when burying, St Paul (Centaur: Ibid, ch.7; Lions: Ibid, ch.16). It is suggested that there are three sculpted stones within this research's geographical area that portray St Antony individually. On Meigle 2 is employed the symbolic construct of an ecclesiastic standing with lions with a centaur in an adjacent panel. Whereas Aberlemno 3 and Glamis 2 both utilise centaurs not in combination with a human figure.

Meigle 2

This cross-slab has on its reverse face two symbolic constructs representing St Antony (**12**). The reverse face is divided into four panels. From the top

12 *Meigle 2 reverse*

down these show: a hunting scene; a scene that it is proposed is of an ecclesiastic surrounded by lions and not the biblical Daniel; a centaur; and a human figure with one beast holding a second beast by its head.

The human figure on the second panel from the top is re-classified as an ecclesiastic due to him having the most common attributes of appearance that reflect everyday ecclesiastical life. The evidence for his

13 *Meigle 2 reverse detail*

14 *Meigle 2 reverse detail*

tonsure is his exposed ears. He is wearing a *tunica talaris*. However, despite these attributes, it is proposed that this ecclesiastic is part of a symbolic construct representing St Antony because of the presence of the lions and the centaur. The lions (**13**) are approaching him with their ears laid back, licking him in order to receive his blessing as described of St Antony's interaction with the lions who help him bury St Paul (Ibid, ch.16). In spite of there being four lions instead of two, that this is St Antony and not the biblical Daniel is evinced by the figure's hair length and the presence of the centaur in the panel beneath St Antony's feet (**14**) (Previous interpretation as Daniel: Henderson and Henderson, *Art*, p.133; L. Alcock, *Kings and warriors, craftsmen and priests* Alcock, p.387).

15 *Aberlemno 3 reverse detail*

The other biblical character portrayed on sculpted stones examined for this research is David. He is depicted on Aberlemno 3 (**18**) and the Aldbar Stone (**19**) below panels with ecclesiastics, and on the Dupplin Cross. In each example he has long hair (**15**&**16**), whereas the ecclesiastic on Meigle 2 has a Petrine tonsure.

When trying to locate St Paul, St Antony is guided by a centaur (Jerome, *Paul*, ch.7). The Pictish

16 *Dupplin Cross detail*

depictions of centaurs (**14**) carrying an axe and branches may derive from a medical or herbal treatise and thus indicate the centaur Chiron who was knowledgeable about medicinal drugs (Henderson and Henderson, *Art*, p.133). It is entirely reasonable that such a book would have been present in the infirmary or library of a Pictish monastery.

These scenes would have been interpreted as scenes depicting a Desert Father by theologically trained viewers. This conclusion is supported by the top panel on this stone that also relies on this type of theological education in order to be able to comprehend its message. This is a hunting scene but its allegorical nature is indicated by the presence of an angel on the top left of the panel that suggests a scriptural meaning for the scene. It has previously been proposed elsewhere that the angel signals that this is not a secular scene, but no further interpretation was given (Alcock, *Kings*, p.387). Here it is suggested that this panel is another representation of Psalm 42, the other being on Aberlemno 3 (identification of an ecclesiastic on the reverse of this stone – forthcoming article).

Aberlemno 3 and Glamis 2

Both these cross-slabs have centaurs carved upon them and it is suggested that in both instances these centaurs are symbolic constructs representing St Antony.

On the reverse face of Aberlemno 3 (**18**) in front of the centaur (**19**) is 'a much defaced figure of some kind below his fore-legs' (Allen and Anderson, *ECMS*, p.215). It is suggested herein that this is the satyr that St Antony met after meeting the centaur (Jerome, *Paul*, ch.8), thus strengthening the argument for the centaur being a symbolic con-struct representing St Antony. The remainder of the reverse face has other symbolism that would require eccles-iastically trained per-sonnel to interpret it. Thus there would be no impediment to the symbolic construct for St Antony being placed on this face.

On Glamis 2 the centaur is in the top right-hand panel above the cross (**20**). In the panel on the opposite side of the cross from the centaur is a creature that it is suggested is a lion. It does not have a thick-set

17 *Aldbar reverse*

18 *Aberlemno 3*

19 *Aberlemno 3 reverse detail*

20 *Glamis 2 front*

21 *Nigg front*

lion body like the bodies of the lions on Meigle 2; however, it does have the physique of the lions accompanying SS Paul and Antony on the Nigg Cross (**21**). The presence of a lion alongside the centaur provides the basis for an argument for this centaur being a representation of St Antony.

Sarah Louise Coleman

To refresh your memory of parts 1 and 2 of Sarah's essay, please see PAS Newsletters 80 and 83.

PAS Newsletter 91

The deadline for receipt of material is

Saturday 18 May 2019

Please email contributions to the editor:

john.borland@hes.scot

Spring 2019 Forthcoming lectures at Brechin Town House Museum

Friday 19 April

Dr Adrian Maldonado

Art after the Picts – carved stones of the 9-12th centuries

Friday 17 May

Dr Kelly Kilpatrick

Manuscripts and Writing in Pictland: New Thoughts on the Newton House Inscriptions

Doors open at 7.00pm for a 7.30 start.

Tea, coffee and biscuits will be available after the talks, which are free to members and £3.00 to non-members. All are welcome

A note re the Spanish 'stone'

John Hendry, having been alerted to the Spanish report (see pp 9-10), posted on PAS Facebook page describing the 'find' as 'a one-sided, wall hanging, unpainted, dental plaster cast of his making'.

About 30 years ago, John along with Rob Walsh traded as Angus Rock Art and, under licence from Angus Council, started to make casts (in concrete, and fibreglass) from old original moulds in Angus museum's collection. At that time they rented 'Freetown', a farmhouse close to the old Free Church Manse at Aberlemno.

It is no surprise that their products turn up in odd places – even their own publicity pics showed casts in unexpected locations, for example, washed by the sea on Lunan Bay beach or a whole collection in a pop-up graveyard in the snow-covered field beside their house. Over the years, I have received reports and photographs of 'discoveries' of 'Pictish stones' from people who have spotted one of their casts, usually sited in someone's garden. *DH*