

There seems to be a good deal to report, both in the "field" and out of it. News of prime importance must be the setting up of our website. At last the NOSAS website is getting off the ground, funded by a grant from the National Lottery "Awards for All" scheme. The website will have entries and reports from members on projects which have been undertaken both as a group and as individuals. If anyone has a project or a survey report which they wish to put on the website please submit it to Paul Humphreys or any other committee member. Paul has agreed to be "webmaster" and will take over the operation of the site from Ken Bowker, who is "constructing" it for us, in due course. Also on the website will be news items, links and a "members only" page, accessed by a password. The website is to be launched during Highland Archaeology Week - so come and try it at the NOSAS display stand! Incidentally, any offers of manning the stand over the weekend will be gratefully received.

May I remind folk of the AGM which is to take place after the Sat. seminar session of HAW.

The equipment and the library lists are being revised and will be on the website under the "members only" section. The equipment is still with Jim and myself, although we hope to get it back to Allan by the end of the year.

Meryl Marshall, 10 Riverford Crescent, Conon Bridge, Ross-shire, IV7 8HL, tel 01349 861824 or email

Meryl.Marshall@tesco.net

I will also be updating the contact list for the AGM. In the meantime George Grant has a new phone no. - 01479 851263, and Anne Wilson has an email address - annewilson@bofg.fsnet.co.uk

NOSAS Annual General Meeting

Sat 16th October 2004 - 5pm (approx)

at the Highland Hotel (formerly Station Hotel), Station Square, Inverness

The AGM will follow the Saturday session of the HAW seminar as usual. The agenda has been circulated. This year Paul Humphreys is stepping down as President and Emma is leaving the area. This means that there will be at least two vacancies on the committee. We are eager to encourage new faces onto the committee, if you feel you can make a contribution to our efforts please let us know.

Autumn Weekend - 19th to 21st Nov

This year we have chosen to go south, to Lochaber. The Spean Bridge Hotel is to be the base for the November weekend. We will be exploring and recording sites on Highbridge Farm, where a number of multi-period features have been reported. The Wade road makes its way through the area and some of the buildings, including a limekiln may be associated with this military road. There are other features too, of other periods and of course High Bridge itself. A walk along the still extant Military road back towards Fort William is also planned. The Spean Bridge Hotel offers single, double and twin bedded rooms, all en-suite, from £28-£38 (B&B). Book direct to the hotel mentioning that you are a member of the NOSAS party - they are expecting us!! Contact them by tel: 01397 712250. or write Spean Bridge Hotel, Spean Bridge Road, Spean Bridge, PH34 4ES - www.speanbridgehotel.co.uk There are other B&Bs in the area. We will be organising a sit down meal in the restaurant for the Saturday evening. For more information about the weekend or if any queries please contact myself. It would be useful to know how many people coming and for which nights. MM

Highland Archaeology Week Sat 9th - Sun 17th Oct - This is the 11th Annual Archaeology Week and Hazel Anderson of Rowan Tree Consulting, is organising it. A booklet with a comprehensive selection of activities, events and excursions during the week has been produced. If you haven't got yours yet contact Hazel on 01463 718505 or email haw@rowan-tree-scotland.co.uk

Some NOSAS members participated in the Birnie excavation this Autumn. Fraser Hunter will be giving a lecture entitled "Bribing the Barbarians: Excavations at Birnie and the impact of Rome on the Highlands" on Weds October 20th. Hosted by the Inverness Field Club, this talk will be in the Millburn Academy, Diriebught Road, Inverness at 8.00pm. There is usually a cost of £2.50.

SCAPE Trust Conference - Tues 12th Oct in the St Andrews Hotel, St Andrews. The conference takes the theme "Archaeology at Risk - responding to the threat of coastal erosion". The opening address is given by Magnus Magnusson and the speakers are experts drawn from natural and cultural heritage. The coast has always been a favoured place for settlement and there are thousands of archaeological sites connected with human activity. Many of these are at risk. NOSAS has played its part in recording some of the sites both at Loch Hourn and at Brora recently. In both of these projects we have had the help and encouragement of Tom Dawson of SCAPE and I understand NOSAS will figure in his presentation to the conference. This gathering will be very interesting and entirely appropriate to all those taking an interest in Highland archaeology. Contact MM for a registration form or for more details.

NOSAS Excavation and SAM Walk, Glen Feshie - Sept 2004

Yes - the suspicions were correct. The clearance cairn that we excavated in Glen Feshie was a building! - most probably a shieling, and we can reasonably assume that the second one is too.

10 members attended the excavation, most for the full four days. They tolerated blustery weather, during which the tent was almost lost, but fortunately the bruised and battered shelter was able to be repaired and resurrected. On the whole though, there was plenty of sunshine.

The structure excavated was rectangular with generally well-defined linear edges and corners. The dimensions were 5.6m x 3.5m. The limited time meant that we explored only the north part. It proved to have an entrance, a hearth and three circular stone settings of depth between 15 and 25cms and with bases of small cobbles. All very interesting!

The site was on display as part of the SAM walk on the Sunday. 20 members of the public attended. They were

taken to the upper reaches of the glen, visiting other settlements and sites thought to be connected with Landseer and the Duchess of Bedford. MM

A date for your diary - We are organising a NOSAS "Christmas Dinner and Do" for Friday 10th December. A speaker and various activities of an appropriate nature are planned. Keep this date free - more information later.

Brora Salt Pan survey

Following the work done at Brora in the Summer when Clyne Heritage Society and NOSAS recorded the salt pans on the beach, Jacqui is applying for an HS bid to carry out more work at the site next year. She is hoping that NOSAS members would again be interested in participating. More detailed survey of all the eroding parts of the site which may lead to a small excavation are planned. Representatives of Historic Scotland have been having a good look at the site.

Jacqui is to take a guided tour of "Brora's Early Coal and Salt Industries" as part of HAW on Sat 9th Oct from 11.00am to 2.00pm. The tour will visit bell-pits, limekilns, salt pans and the salt-mans house. Meet Brora Back Beach 11am. Refreshments afterwards at the Heritage Centre. Contact Jacqui Aitken - Tel 01408 621338 or email Nick.Lindsay@highland.gov.uk.

Kinlochourn Update

The next KLH week is to be in the Spring of 2005. In 2004 we would like to do more "consolidation" work. More documentary research is planned and possible visits to Isle Martin and/or Tanera Mor in the Summer Isles where there are fishing stations dating to the 18th Century. We also feel that visits to some of the high corries around Loch Hourn in the summer months might prove fruitful!

STOP Press

I have just had a communication from Lindsey Thomson of the Scotlands Rural Past Project - (Scotlands Rural Past Trust was the outcome of the MOLRS group). Lindsey would like to know whether NOSAS would be interested in being involved in undertaking a local activity on behalf of the project and if so, what support we would need, both professionally and financially. She is hoping that we might give some consideration to undertaking a research and survey project on historic rural settlement during the main phase of the project, which is planned to commence in the latter part of 2005. Lindsey is interested in coming up in the very near future for a discussion, to hear our views and talk about the project "in a workshop setting". This appears to be very much in the planning stage at the moment, we would not be committing ourselves to anything. Please let me know what you think and if you would be interested in joining the workshop - numbers are limited to 20. Alternatively give me a ring if you have any questions or comments.

MM