

NOSAS wins CBA Marsh Award

The North of Scotland Archaeology Society has been chosen as joint winners of the very first Council for British Archaeology's Marsh Community Archaeology Award, the results of which were announced during Sky Television's 'Archaeology Live' Event at London's Olympia on Friday 2nd May.

Dr Mike Heyworth MBE, Director of the CBA, explained that the purpose of the Marsh Award is 'to encourage local communities to research the past around them, and to convey a passion for our cultural heritage to future generations. Community archaeology groups are often home-grown, and are very effective in drawing in new people with an interest in their local heritage. Getting involved in such research gives a real boost both to the communities themselves and to the body of archaeological knowledge available.'

Meryl Marshall said, 'We are delighted. It is so encouraging for us to receive this recognition and it demonstrates just how important it is for us to continue our contacts with communities in the Highlands and Islands; supporting each other together to discover, appreciate and understand better our rich archaeological heritage.'

Bob Powell, Highland Council's Principal Museums Officer, was more than pleased to endorse the NOSAS' application for the prestigious award: 'To date Glen Feshie is perhaps the most outstanding work that NOSAS are known for. However, as a member of the Scotland's Rural Past Project Advisory Group, I am also aware of the significant survey and documentation work that they are currently carrying out in Strathconon. This is a great service for the people of the Highlands and it is a great example of a community organisation undertaking work for which we have little capacity within our own established heritage institutions, to a continuing high standard, and for the benefit and interest of local communities and beyond.'



Meryl Marshall receives the Marsh Award on behalf of NOSAS

NOSAS are not the sole winners of the award, the judges decided that each of the finalists presented work of such a high calibre that deciding between them was nigh impossible and so we share the honour of this, the first CBA Marsh Archaeology Award with following:

The Badsey Society's Enclosure Map Project,
(www.badsey.net/enclosure)
The Mellor Archaeological Trust's project on Mellor Church,
(www.mellorarchaeology.org.uk)
The Royton Local History Society for their work on the history of Royton Hall,
(www.rlhs.co.uk)

More information about the Marsh Award and the CBA can be found on the CBA's website:
<http://www.britarch.ac.uk/communityarchaeology/wikka.php?wakka=CBAMarshAward2007Results>

Cait McCullagh

Glen Feshie at Olympia

Jim and I had an excellent 2 days in London when we made the short visit to do the presentation on the Glen Feshie project. We enjoyed the "Archaeology Live Event" at Olympia, it was great to meet the other "contestants" for the Marsh Award and of course we had a great deal to talk about.

All the projects were so very different, both in size, content, period and in resources. One involved over 1000 people, a couple had liaison with local Universities and another had grant funding of £500,000! But all were very interesting and executed to the same high standard. The task of adjudicating was just about impossible and we think that the solution arrived at was very satisfactory. The award was shared between the 4 of us - we were all winners, each receiving a cheque for £500 and the kudos that goes with the award!

By one of those strange quirks of co-incidence we found ourselves staying in the Tavistock Hotel, walking down Woburn Place and taking the underground from Russell Square - all names that have a Bedford association (the Duke and Duchess of Bedford figure prominently in the Glen Feshie story). We negotiated our way round London on the tube (only my 3rd visit to the great metropolis) and managed to take in a few of the sights/sites (on foot anyway) including a visit to the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square before departing from St Pancras Station (another "sight" in itself), for Luton Airport on a train with Bedford as its destination!

Meryl Marshall

Brora Salt Pans Update, April 2008

The Brora Excavation Data Structure Report was completed in April and a geophysical survey of industrial sites was conducted in early May.

More information about the Project is available on the Brora Salt Pans website at www.shorewatch.co.uk/brora and, while on the web, don't forget to visit the Clyne Heritage Society website at www.clyneheritage.com

Funding is now in place for more excavation at Brora in 2008 and Brora salt to be made in 2008 in an experiment on Brora Back Beach.

The Project still needs feedback from volunteers who participated in the 2007 excavation.

Excavation dates for 2008 are not yet finalised and will be sent out as soon as they have been confirmed. Please e-mail jacquieaitken@btinternet.com for further information.

And finally, a huge thanks you to all who participated in the 2007 excavation.

Jacqui Aitkin

North Of Scotland Archaeological Society

Braemore Square, Loch Broom

Around eighteen volunteers under the direction of Cathy Dagg have made good progress, to date, on the planned excavation at Braemore Square.



Braemore Square, May 2008

Trenches have been opened in four areas, three of which cross the walls of a possible circular structure and the fourth on a stone cairn that may or may not be piled up on top of an earlier feature. Walls have been exposed which have obviously been heavily robbed, together with an area of paving with a possible path. As yet no dateable objects have been found.

Steven Carter, of Headland Archaeology and Chair of the Council for Scottish Archaeology, has visited the site to look at its geomorphology and a dozen pupils from Ullapool High School have had a 'taster' day with the dig team.

An Open Day on May 24th drew a large number of visitors and although the dig finishes on Friday May 30th there will be an opportunity to visit the site in the autumn during Highland Archaeology Fortnight and Scottish Archaeology Month.

Anna Welti

NOSAS Library

NOSAS have built up a large library of approximately 400 items, including specialised archaeological books, site reports and sets of periodicals. NOSAS have now been offered shelf space at the new Dingwall library for our collection; this will mean they will be more easily available to NOSAS members to borrow and for public reference.

I am looking for help, as the NOSAS books will all need preparing for the move and cataloguing on to the Highland library computer.

Please contact me on e-mail johnandtrina@onetel.com or telephone me on 01997 423273, if you can offer any help at all, especially if you are an "old" librarian, or have any advice on moving 400 books!

Trina Wombell

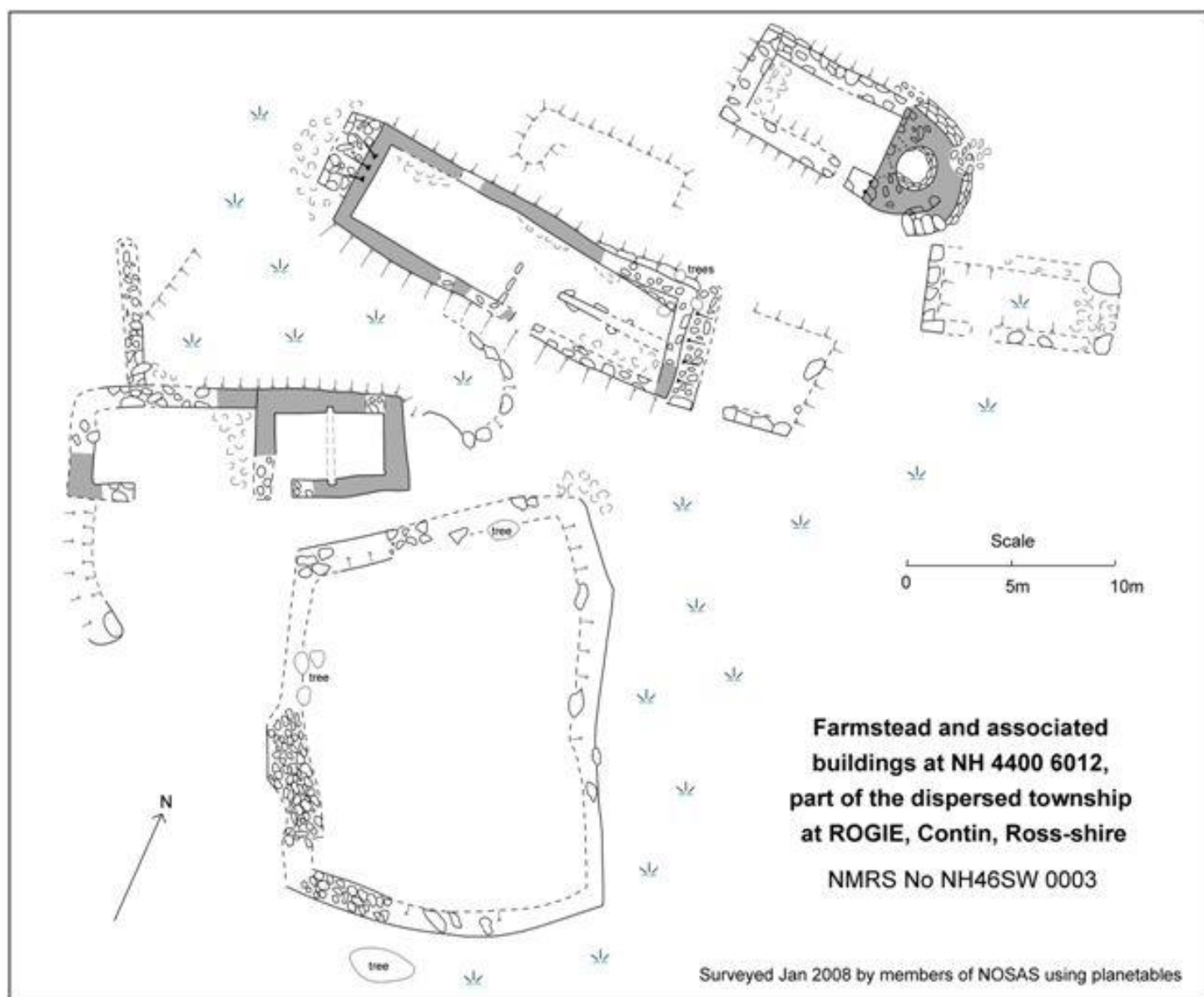


Rogie Project Progress

Several field days have taken place at Rogie. One of the aims of the project is to explore the surrounding landscape so that we can put the two farmsteads in context. Much of the area is severely trashed by forest operations - tree felling, ploughing and replanting, so the going is pretty rough but we have explored the course of the Rogie Burn and Rogie Farm itself. We have located several buildings, enclosures, pits and a kiln. At the farm there is one building and the remains of a corn drying kiln which appear to be the only remains of the original township of Balnain, although there could be a couple of early buildings to the west.

The 6 plane table drawings, which were an outcome of the SRP training course in January, have been slotted together and an overall drawing completed.

More field days are to come and we will be plane tabling the other farmstead shortly. If you are interested in helping please let me know.



In total 27 sites have been recorded. The most exciting of the sites discovered were six cup marked rocks (between 3 and 22 cups on them) and a substantial circular enclosure on top of a knoll which may be a dun.



Cup marked stone, Rogie

Susan Kruse's WEA history group came up with an old photograph of MacQueens Croft and we were able to identify it as the farmstead to the east of the 2 targeted ones. Sadly this site is now very waterlogged and unpleasant.



Work in progress at Rogie



MacQueen's Croft, Rogie

More field days are to come and we will be plane tabling the other farmstead. If you are interested in helping please let me know.

Meryl Marshall

Susan Kruse's WEA Local History Group are meeting, provisionally, on June 18th to discuss the creation of a Rogie Archive to be housed in the new Dingwall Library. Susan can be contacted by email at skruse@weascotland.org.uk

North Of Scotland Archaeological Society



The Strathconon Project

A section of phase 3 of the Strathconon Project, between the Meig Dam and Bridgend, was completed over the winter months. As anticipated, high in the hills, we came across some well built dry stone structures which look suspiciously like illicit stills - this is getting rather routine! One of the most satisfying "finds" this time was that of a horse gang, to the rear of the derelict mill at Achlorachan. The gang had its central turning disc, gearing mechanism and shaft still in position.

Achlorachan was the site of a "murder" in 1835. Apparently four of its inhabitants had been busy brewing up in a bothy in the hills to the north of the township and appear to have been unable to resist the temptation to imbibe. Two had left the bothy in an inebriated state just after midnight on the 26th December intending to make their way home. Before long one of them, a 16 year old lad, seems to have needed assistance from the other, and was eventually left in a second bothy halfway down the hill where he was found dead the next morning by his parents. The case was brought to court and the suspect charged with culpable homicide (there was evidence of a struggle and bruising around the throat of the dead lad) He was sentenced to 4 months in jail.

The next 2 field days are planned for Tuesday 3rd June and Thursday 12th June. We will be exploring the glen to the east of Loch Beanacharain, including Carnoch and Inverchoran. I have made contact with Duncan MacLennan, the tenant farmer at Carnoch, who was born and brought up in the glen. He is extremely interested in our project and has given us free range over his land, he has asked us not to bring dogs though, because he has sheep and lambs. This area has two scheduled sites, a crannog (almost always submerged so we will not be able to visit it) and what has been interpreted as a galleried dun, I'm sure Anne Combes will keep us right on these. The township of Blar na Bee at Inverchoran, cleared in 1850, will also be recorded and a very comprehensive account of this clearance appeared in the Inverness Courier at the time.

Volunteers should meet at 9.30am in the car park at Marybank Village Hall. Bring a picnic and be prepared for all weathers and underfoot conditions. Please let me know if you intend to come.



NOSAS survey team at Achlorachan



Achlorachan horse gang, gearing mechanism and shaft

Meryl Marshall (01349 861824)

Tick Prevention Campaign

With the onset of the better weather field workers, from all disciplines, are being reminded by their employers and professional associations of the dangers presented by ticks. A useful source of information about ticks can be found at the Tick Prevention Week website, <http://www.tickpreventionweek.org/index.php>

Tick Prevention Week is organised by BADA-UK (Borreliosis and Associated Diseases Awareness-UK), a registered charity, which aims to increase awareness; to counter the increase in cases of Borreliosis and other tick-borne diseases (TBDs), and the [increasing risks](#) of being bitten by an infected tick.

The purpose of Tick Prevention Week website is to:

- Help advance the level of awareness regarding TBDs and emphasise the fact that they are not as rare as many people believe.
- Teach simple preventative measures that can be taken to deter ticks.
- Teach correct tick-removal methods that can help to reduce the chances of transmission of infective agents if a tick does attach.

North Of Scotland Archaeological Society



Applecross Broch July 2008

Archaeological excavations, following on from a Time Team Dig in 2005, were undertaken at Applecross Broch, in October 2006 and April and September 2007 by Applecross Archaeology Society, supported by Highland Archaeology Services Ltd and a great number of NOSAS members. The site continues to prove to be very complex and has produced a number of finds of major interest and importance. We will be taking the next steps towards completing the archaeological programme during a 3-week excavation season from 5th - 26th July 2008.

If you would like to join this excavation, for all or part of the season, please contact Mary Peteranna at: ampeteranna@aol.com



Applecross Broch, 2007

The aims of this year's project:

1. To expose the ground plan of the broch's last phase.

We plan to clarify the full layout, in plan, of the uppermost lines of walling that could not be established previously. It is only intended to examine the last phases of activity on the site and determine the nature and extent of the broch and other features identified by earlier fieldwork.

2. To clarify the nature, and survival, of later structures overlying the broch.

We aim to look for evidence of later structures overlying the broch itself – either adapted from the broch, or newly built using the broch as foundation.

The Applecross Archaeology Society is also planning to run a field school for the duration of this season and would be delighted if NOSAS members would publicise this to archaeology students (of all ages). Further information about the field school can be obtained from Mary at ampeteranna@aol.com.

Cait McCullagh

North Of Scotland Archaeological Society

Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

Now AVAILABLE ONLINE! Visit the [Archaeology Data Service](http://www.socantscot.org/content.asp?Page=297&Menu=) website to access back issues of *DES*.

Society of Antiquaries Conference

Scotland in Later Prehistoric Europe
c.1500BC - AD500
Edinburgh from the 19th - 21st September

More information and booking forms at the Society's website <http://www.socantscot.org/content.asp?Page=297&Menu=>

NOSAS Membership

Welcome to:

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NOSAS Committee, 2007-2008

President - Emma Sanderson

Vice President - Anne Coombs

Treasurer - Allan McKenzie

Secretary - Meryl Marshall

Membership secretary - Trina Wombell

Newsletter Editor - Dave Rendell

Committee members

Brian Duff, David Findlay, Brigitte Geddes, George Grant, Janet Hooper, Paul Humphries, Susan Kruse, Cait MacCullagh, John Wombell



Invitation to investigate a possible roadway through Ross-shire

"Ross and Cromarty has been much neglected by archaeologists and historians. As a result, the basic stuff of early human studies - the data upon which to begin a reconstruction of man's way of life - is scrappy at best. Because of lack of research, it is certain that many more sites remain to be discovered."

The Ross and Cromarty Book

Recently the Committee of NOSAS has adopted a project that we are developing; investigating a linear feature that appears to run the considerable length of Easter Ross. We believe that it may be the remains of a road of, perhaps, some antiquity; a route that runs, as far as we can prospect, from Tarradale, on the Black Isle, to Tain.

We would be delighted for other members of NOSAS to join us in a process of investigation that will, we hope, fulfil a number of objectives over the next two years.

We hope to establish proof of the road's date of construction by identifying its characteristics and/or features. The project will enable us to characterise the landscape in the vicinity of this feature by exploring the relationships between the features that are indicative of high status settlement and management of land, resources and people. We are also keen to coordinate the project with the work of the Heritage Pathways Project.

This project entails a variety of approaches, including archaeological survey and reconnaissance, excavation and archival and literature searches. We welcome people with all levels of experience to get involved, to learn alongside each other and to share in the excitement and, we hope, fun, of shaping a project that will develop in response to the discoveries made together.

We are proposing that the project will follow the standard structure outlined below:

- Desk Based Assessment
- Walkover Survey
- Revision of the Desk Based Assessment
- Aerial Photographic Survey
- Place name survey
- Evaluation Excavation

In detail this entails the following:

1. Desk Based Assessment – identifying all recorded archaeological events, including features, find spots and monumentality documented in the Highland Council Historic Environment Record and the National Monuments and Sites Record that occur in the vicinity of the road.
2. Walkover Survey – including measured survey (plane tabling; planned segments, etc) at agreed intervals; GPS plotting of both the main feature and significant associated features; photographic recording.
3. Revision of the Desk Based Assessment - to clarify the Walkover Survey results, to identify previously unrecognised features and to allocate areas of further archival and documentary research, eliciting key themes, patterns and anomalies.
4. Commissioning an Aerial Photographic Survey.
5. Place name survey.
6. Evaluation Excavation – having identified a key roadway area or associated feature that promises maximum potential for diagnostic material.

This summer we are inviting NOSAS members to participate in a few introductory sessions, when we hope that those who are interested will become familiar with the route and be able to consider the research that we have already carried out, underpinning our proposal that this is a feature of some potential significance.

1. We will be walking the southern extent of the route - Tarradale to Tulloch Castle - on Sunday 15th June, from 10am - 4pm.
2. We will be walking the northern extent of the route - Balnagowan Castle - Tain - on Sunday 17th August, from 10am - 4pm.
3. There will be an introductory session on Wednesday 18th June, 7:30pm - 9:00pm, at Allan's house, near Easter Kinkell on the Black Isle, during which we will look a little more in depth at findings to date, place the roadway in a timeline of possible associated events, research themes and the programme of further investigation.

If you would like to come to any or all of the above, please let Allan or Cait know by replying to Ardblair@aol.com or cait.mccullagh@gmail.com or by telephoning Allan at 01349866494. Nearer the time of each of the events we will be in touch with further information and details.

Cait McCullagh and Allan Mackenzie

North Of Scotland Archaeological Society



The Green, Eday, Orkney August 2008

Volunteers wanted first and last weeks of August 2008!
Contact: mickjmiles@yahoo.com

Fieldwalking at this site has produced quantities of worked stone and in 2004 a test pit revealed in situ masonry together with a possible hearth suggesting the presence of a Neolithic building. In 2006 a geophysical survey seemed to confirm this. Work has recently been completed on a trial excavation at this site, a farm on the south coast of the Isle of Eday.

The site was first discovered in 2004 by the landowners Peter Mason and Chris Squires, who dug a test pit at the spot at which they had found an unfinished Neolithic mace head. This revealed the hearth re-exposed during the dig. The Orkney College Geophysics Unit then carried out a survey of the field in 2006, which suggested extensive archaeological remains.

A dig was commissioned by the landowners and was carried out last year between the 19th and 31st August by a team of four archaeologists led by Mick Miles, a freelance archaeologist and tutor in archaeological fieldwork with Birkbeck College, London.

An area some 8 x 4 metres was stripped of ploughsoil to reveal the underlying archaeology. Results from the dig confirm the presence of a Neolithic building in the form of a wall about 1.5 metres thick and some internal structural stonework. These include a probable hearth and upright on-edge stones typical of compartmentalisation within Neolithic buildings in Orkney. There were also indications that a second structure may be present in the form of further walling.

Finds from the ploughsoil included a quantity of worked stone implements including over 80 'Skaill Knives', a type of stone tool first noted at Skara Brae on Mainland. Over 100 potsherds were also recovered which will help refine the dating of the site. (Grooved ware now identified by Ann MacSween).

Plans are currently being made for the team to return for a second more extensive season of work at the site in August 2008 for four weeks. We have just a few places available. Cost £268, full board and lodgings on Eday and includes membership of BEVARs (British Excavation Volunteers & Archaeological Research Society).

Ronnie Scott

North Of Scotland Archaeological Society



The Green, seen from the beach below the site



Work in progress, 2007

NOSAS NEWS

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