



## Scottish Group Newsletter

August 2013

<http://www.archaeologists.net>

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### News

#### Scottish Group Recent Activities

We are pleased to announce that the committee has co-opted Cait McCullagh, Assistant Curator - Engagement, at High Life Highland, Inverness Museum & Art Gallery.

Members of the Scottish Group have attended a number of events in recent months and taken part in consultation exercises including:

- Engaging with the SHEP review, review of Archaeology Strategy, and the RCAHMS/HS merger
- Regular BEFS Historic Environment Working Group meetings.
- Responding to the draft Scottish Historic Environment Data strategy consultation

Part of the Group's work is to assist IfA's main office in Reading in responding to historic environment consultations relevant to Scotland and Scottish members. If there are any consultations, or views on consultations, that you would like IfA to include, then please do get in touch.

#### Scottish Group Committee Meeting

The committee of the IfA Scottish Group last met on 22 August, with a busy agenda. It discussed arrangements for this year's AGM, including advertising vacancies on the committee via this mailing, preliminary plans for an event to accompany the business meeting and arrangements for the IfA Conference in Glasgow from 9-11 April 2014. The committee also reviewed progress on delivering the range of activities and products that have been supported by our grant from Historic Scotland,

including four training courses to be scheduled over the remainder of the financial year, and a special edition of *The Archaeologist* to celebrate 20 years of developer-funded archaeology – a resource that will subsequently be used to encourage planning authorities to continue to have access to specialist archaeological advice and HER data.

IfA has been particularly busy on other aspects of advocacy in recent months, see below for details.

Your committee also reviewed membership numbers. The group has 467 members. Of them, 299 have a home or work address in Scotland, and of these 247 are accredited ('Corporate', i.e. PlfA, AlfA or MlfA). In *Profiling the profession 2012-3* (to be published imminently), Kenneth Aitchison and Doug Rocks-Macqueen estimate that there are 497 archaeologists working in Scotland – so we're almost exactly half way to where we'd like to be. This compares favorably to the all-UK figure of c 45%, but there is more to be done. Recruitment is a high priority for the group: please get in touch if you would like a group or staff member of IfA to visit your workplace to talk about IfA's work, to get feedback from members and potential members, and potentially to persuade non-members of the value of demonstrating their professionalism through an application for membership.

#### Grant funding for IfA from Historic Scotland

IfA has been fortunate to secure grant funding from Historic Scotland over the next three years (2013-16) to augment existing IfA programmes in Scotland, directed particularly towards the promotion of technical and ethical standards in all sectors of Scottish archaeology.

Building on the existing strategic plan to raise the IfA profile in Scotland, we also hope to improve communications between IfA and Scottish members.

Andrea Smith is acting as consultant project manager for the grant programme and working with IfA staff and the Scottish Group committee to deliver a range of outputs including training courses, a possible 'Southport' event for Scotland, articles for *The Archaeologist*, and a series of recruitment events. The Scottish Group's previous success in organising training courses has meant that we have high expectations to meet; currently we are working on a day course in public speaking and presentation, to be held on Tuesday 8 October (see below) and another day on IfA Standards & guidance, likely to be held in November.

We're also looking to Scottish members and organisations to contribute articles to a special edition of *The Archaeologist* will be published shortly before the IfA conference in Glasgow in spring 2014. One of the main feature articles will be on the way in which England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are increasingly going their own way in legislation and planning for the historic environment, and looking at how we as professionals working across borders can keep on top of this. The year 2014 will also see the twentieth anniversary of NPPG5, and a celebration of the most important discoveries made as a result of planning-led archaeology – what would your top five sites of the last twenty years be? Anyone interested in offering articles on this or any other subject for this special TA edition is welcome to contact Andrea via Scottish Group.

Likewise any archaeological employers or further education bodies who are interested in having a recruitment visit or toolbox talk about IfA and the pros and cons of being a member should contact Andrea via the Scottish Group.

The grant funding has also helped support core IfA staff to deal with the higher than usual level of consultations that have been going on in Scotland over the last 6 months. Peter Hinton and Tim Howard in particular have been engaged with the SPP consultation and the HE strategy, plus the HS/RCAHMS merger. The strain on local government archaeology has also not gone unnoticed, and IfA have recently been

involved with correspondence over the Inverclyde situation.

We'll keep you all informed on progress through the newsletter on a regular basis, but watch out for upcoming announcements on training courses and please do offer items for publication.

## Scottish Group AGM

This year's AGM will return to Edinburgh, on Wednesday 23 October 2013. The Treasurer and four Ordinary committee members step down this year and can be re-elected. If you would like to be considered for these posts please complete a nomination form, enclosed, and send it to the IfA offices by 24 September. Look out for further information on the event programme, time and location.

## Scottish Group Training

The group are pleased to announce the next training event:

### **SPEAK : *Compelling Presentations One-Day Master Class*** **A bespoke day for the Institute for Archaeologists**

with Carol Jefferson-Davies BA(Hons)JH PGCE (QTS)

Archaeologists are expected as a matter of course to be able to speak about their work to anyone, and public expectations of open days and lectures are higher than ever. If you're fazed by speaking in the public arena - whether to conference, colleagues or mixed groups and are looking for a hands-on, inspiring course that will really raise your game, this is the one. A respected former BBC producer, Carol uses video to let you see yourself in action and learn from it. From years of professional experience, training presenters for BBC documentary and education programmes, Carol is able to quickly diagnose and doctor root causes of difficulty and brings out abilities from within you, that you may not realise you possess.

In a mix of teaching and individual coaching, Carol enables each person to build on their strengths and provides really practical techniques and tips to overcome weaknesses. She teaches you how to connect meaningfully

## Events

with your audience, continually engage their thoughts and imagination, how to make your message memorable, manage your nerves, and deliver your message with presence and impact.

This course is a real eye-opener and great confidence-builder. Carol creates a happy and relaxed atmosphere where effective learning is achieved often through a great deal of fun and laughter which is instinctively engendered within the group. Her clients speak of coming away empowered, invigorated and enabled by the experience. This course makes a difference.

Come and join a bespoke Workshop-Master Class designed specially for the Institute for Archaeologists (maximum of 15 in the group) :

**Date:** Tuesday 8 October 2013  
**Time:** 9.30am – 4.30/5pm  
**Venue:** 28, Great King Street, Edinburgh EH3 6QH (Premises of the Theosophical Society)  
**Cost:** (including lunch and refreshments through the day): £45 payable at time of booking

To book contact Lianne Birney at IfA office in at [lianne.birney@archaeologists.net](mailto:lianne.birney@archaeologists.net)

### Alarm at Draft Scottish Planning Policy

IfA has expressed grave concerns to Scottish Government about the new draft SPP, which shifts the emphasis firmly towards economic growth, potentially at the expense of sustainability - including archaeology and the historic environment. In addition to answering the consultation questions, Tim Howard has provided detailed recommendations to redress the balance.

### Inverclyde Council withdraw from WoSAS

The Scottish Group was concerned to hear that Inverclyde Council has withdrawn funding from the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS), leaving it without professional historic environment expertise.

IfA has written to the Council expressing our concerns, and asking them how they intend to fulfil their obligations.

### IfA Conference 2014 – Glasgow!

Here at the Scottish Group we're very excited that next year's conference is heading north of the border again - the last time it was here, in Edinburgh in 2006, Scottish hospitality was very much evident and we hope to exceed that in 2014. Let's make it a conference to remember!

The theme is *Research in Practice*, examining the concept of research across current archaeological practice, as well as highlighting how archaeologists contribute new knowledge to a wider understanding of the human past. The conference hopes to question how research practice has developed and to face the challenges often posed to heritage professionals regarding value, quality, dissemination and accessibility.

The call for sessions is now closed but there will be a subsequent call for papers and we are still very interested to hear from potential sponsors, advertisers and exhibitors.

The conference will be hosted at the Marriott Hotel in Glasgow, from 9-11 April 2014. Look out for more information as it becomes available: <http://www.archaeologists.net/conference2014/info>

### Society for Medieval Archaeology Student Colloquium 2013

The first call for papers is now open for the Society of Medieval Archaeology Student Colloquium, to be held at the University of Aberdeen, 7-8 November 2013. The event aims to provide a platform for postgraduates and early career professionals to present and discuss their current research. This year's event will also incorporate a fieldtrip and keynote lectures by Professor Neil Price and Professor Stefan Brink.

Papers from across the medieval period (5th-16th centuries AD) from all geographical areas are welcomed. Papers from subjects other than archaeology but which have a broader medieval significance will also be considered.

Abstracts of no more than 250 words should be sent to

[medieval.archaeology@googlemail.co.uk](mailto:medieval.archaeology@googlemail.co.uk). The deadline for all paper abstracts and poster submissions is Friday 6th September. Visit <http://www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk/index.php/events/conferences/sma-pg-colloquium-leaflet/> for more details.

## Edinburgh, East Lothian and Scottish Borders Conference

This annual conference is once again to be hosted by Queen Margaret University in Musselburgh, East Lothian and will be held on Saturday 16 November 2013. The programme is currently being put together, so look out for more information nearer to the time.

## 3D Scotland: airborne laser scanning data for archaeology and heritage management

2-3 October 2013 at RCAHMS, Edinburgh. A knowledge transfer and networking workshop for archaeologists and cultural heritage professionals.

Airborne laser scanning (ALS), or lidar, is one of the most important recent innovations in data collection and interpretation for archaeology and heritage management. This workshop brings together heritage professionals from Scotland and experts from across Europe to develop knowledge and skills, explore applications and create a network of practitioners. This is especially appropriate as the availability of ALS in Scotland is increasing, including large-area coverage sponsored by the Government.

The workshop comprises a one day seminar on Wednesday 2 October to provide an overview, followed by a smaller training workshop on Thursday 3rd October for potential practitioners to develop basic skills in data processing and manipulation.

Attendance is free, but places are limited and booking is necessary. Please book by emailing [Dave.Cowley@rcahms.gov.uk](mailto:Dave.Cowley@rcahms.gov.uk), specifying Seminar (2 Oct), Workshop (3 Oct), or both. Please advise of any dietary requirements. If booking for the Workshop please confirm your basic GIS competence and note that you will be expected to bring a laptop pre-loaded with

relevant software (details will be provided closer to the date).

## Members' News

### IfA Bursary Holder Meeting

Samuel Fox, IfA Bursary Holder

Historic Scotland recently hosted a meeting for all the current Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) bursary holders. The bursary holders are based in organisations across Scotland and in other parts of the UK.

The HLF provides IfA with the funding to offer bursaries for workplace learning placements in the heritage sector, with up to half of the cost paid by the host organisations. The IfA bursaries aim to address skills gaps in archaeology and heritage management, with the placements lasting between 3 and 12 months.



*Bursary holders. Crown Copyright: Historic Scotland*

Historic Scotland hosted a meeting for current IfA bursary holders north and south of the border at Longmore House on 3 July. This proved to be an invaluable and enjoyable opportunity to meet and get to know each other, and to hear about each other's experiences. The day included presentations from bursary holders hosted by Historic Scotland, RCAHMS, English Heritage, Scottish Canals, Northlight (a commercial archaeological company) and others. These were followed by discussions on the NVQ in Archaeological Practice which is awarded at the end of each placement. The bursary holders also shared their career ambitions and what they hope to do after they have completed their bursaries.

In the afternoon the bursary holders were treated to a fascinating 'Heineken Tour' of Edinburgh Castle, visiting the parts that other tours don't reach, led by Historic Scotland's historian, Peter Yeoman. The group visited the medieval remains of David's Tower and its hidden dungeons.

The IfA Bursary Scheme has proved highly popular with graduates and there has been fierce competition for places. The successful candidates all have the opportunity to develop their skills and expertise within a workplace environment in the heritage sector. The scheme also provides practical training in transferrable skills and networking opportunities.

Historic Scotland's bursary holder, Sam Fox, has now been with the organisation for 6 months, during which he has been involved in a wide range of projects, including the Scheduling Team's Schedule Enhancement Programme in Orkney in May. Sam is also carrying out a special project on the designation of artefact scatters, such as spreads of lithic tools and tool-making debris which are sometimes our only evidence for the earliest people in Scotland.

He said; "Undertaking such a project is undoubtedly a challenge, but it is also one of the opportunities of the bursary scheme and allows me to give something back to my host organisation. Exploring a new type of site for designation is an incredibly exciting thing to be involved with. This bursary has given me a fantastic opportunity to develop my skills within the heritage sector."

## **Bulgarian Cultural Heritage Exchange**

Beverley Ballin Smith (MifA)

Have you ever put on a national costume and learnt the steps of a traditional dance to music that is not familiar? We did this in June when we took part in a cultural heritage exchange programme in Bulgaria. The tangible heritage of this Balkan country was varied and the intangible heritage very much alive. Our experiences were many as we travelled across the Central Bulgarian Mountains and the Stara Planina plain, and included a visit to Southern Bulgaria and the capital city, Sofia. Compared to Scotland, the country has just over seven million people and is relatively poor.

Derelict factories litter towns and countryside from when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1989. Of concern are declining small towns and villages, with significant numbers of abandoned houses and ageing populations as younger people migrate to Sofia and the bigger towns.

There was so much that appealed to our various interests - a midsummer night's theatre in a reconstructed heritage village, crafts of many types including pottery, woodcarving, ikons and ikon painting, national costumes, etc., museums, including the amazing House of Humour in Gavrobo, Thracian tombs, Roman remains, Eastern Orthodox churches and monasteries, war monuments, nineteenth century national revival buildings, song, dance, history, archaeological excavations, preservation, conservation, interpretation, use of modern technology, landscapes, and meeting people.

A number of things stood out, which made me think about how we do things in Scotland. Kazanlak Iskra History Museum is situated in the heart of a rose growing area famed for its petal and rose oil industry, but also within a concentration of Thracian tombs, one of which is a World Heritage Site. I had wondered why only one site and not the whole complex of tombs within the valley was marked out for special significance but did not get an answer. It was interesting talking to one of the curators as to whether the World Heritage Status meant that the museum received more funding and visitors. He said they were more likely to get help from other European organisations, for example for conservation but generally money was tight. This museum was in a large Soviet building, where the lighting in exhibition rooms was turned off when there was no one in them. For me the prehistoric pottery exhibitions on the ground floor were exciting. The exhibition space was large and although rare examples of vessels were placed in cases, others were displayed on plinths and boards at floor level. A different experience was to be had when looking at pots unencumbered of glass, glare and shadows. I could get up close, peer inside and in some cases walk round. Their colours and textures were vibrant.



*Kazanlak Museum © B Ballin Smith*

Although there were a few books and postcards about Thracian tombs and museum objects, it was clear that the economic potential of tourism was not fully considered for the country's heritage. I wondered if more integrated approaches could be offered for the tourist, such as guided walks or a driving tour through the area with an information map or leaflet in several languages. This would add to the overall interpretation, experience and enjoyment of the visitor visiting the tombs. In comparison to our well-stocked museum shops Bulgarian museums did not offer visitors a wide selection of postcards nor the opportunity to buy replica coins or pieces of jewellery.

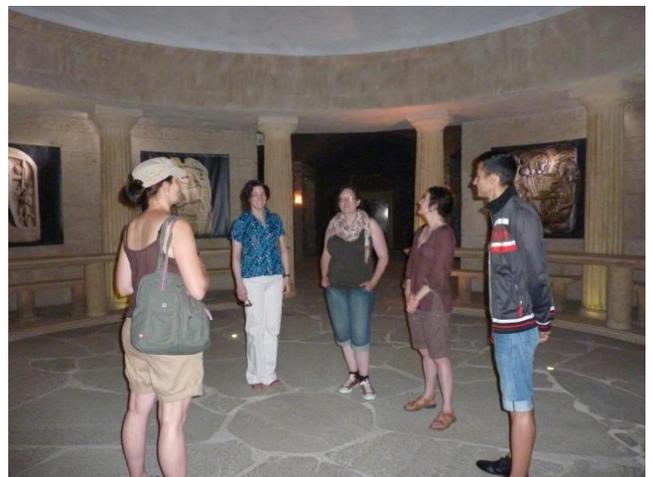
Intangible heritage was ever present and is something all Bulgarian's seemed to be proud of. We experienced the passing on of songs, dance, drama and handicraft skills to the younger generation in several towns and villages. The handing down of costumes and traditions was very important. It kept them alive and made heritage a living thing. The best examples of the intangible heritage we saw, was taught by individuals within communities. Community funding had been severely cut in the last year or two, but individuals persevered with keeping their meeting rooms going, establishing classes in handicrafts, taking part in exhibitions and displays, as well as national and regional competitions. They were innovatory, skilled, determined, welcoming and cheerful. Their approaches gave us much to learn and to think about.



*Cultural heritage. © B Ballin Smith*

There was much, much more to our visit and a full report can be got from the ARCH website <http://www.archnetwork.eu/pages/>.

Our party comprised myself and two other archaeologists, Liz Jones (East Lothian Council) and Kirsty Cameron (Highland Regional Council), with Anna Henderson (Learning assistant, Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow) and Carrie Newman (Community Artist and PhD student). The exchange programme in Bulgaria was funded through the Leonardo da Vinci programme and organised through ARCH, Comrie, Scotland.



*The group. © B Ballin Smith*

## Project News

### SAMPHIRE

John McCarthy, WA Coastal & Marine

The Scottish Atlantic Maritime Past: Heritage, Investigation, Research & Education Project (SAMPHIRE) was established in early 2013 and focuses on western Scotland's coasts and islands, and their adjacent waters. SAMPHIRE is funded by the Crown Estate and run by WA Coastal & Marine's Edinburgh Branch Office. The idea behind the project is to enable local communities to engage with professional underwater archaeologists to support the identification, investigation and appreciation of Scotland's marine and maritime heritage. By working alongside local communities we hope to reinforce a shared sense of stewardship of those underwater archaeological sites. SAMPHIRE has been designed to keep the community at the heart of the archaeological process.

We have now completed Phases 1 and 2. Phase 1, is a review of available information and of similar projects designed to inform our approach and place the project in its wider context. During Phase 2, which was carried out in the early Summer of this year, we conducted an intensive programme of face to face meetings with marine communities and talks all along Scotland's northwest coast. During this phase we spoke to harbour masters, lifeguards, scallop divers, fishermen and local residents in villages and towns between Kinlochbervie and Skye and held dialogues about our shared knowledge of and interest in underwater archaeological sites. We've had over fifty maritime archaeological sites reported to us, including, cannons, historic wooden wrecks, a possible submarine site, and even reports of amphora fragments. We will be diving on a selection of the most promising of these sites over two weeks in late July/early August in order to verify the information that has been shared; we will be bringing the local residents who have worked with us along to gain an understanding of the underwater archaeological process.

For more information and to see our live blog please go to [www.wessexarch.co.uk/alba](http://www.wessexarch.co.uk/alba)



*SAMPHIRE archaeologist Simon Davidson measures a previously unrecorded cannon on Shieldaig main street. This cannon was thought locally to be Spanish in origin but the SAMPHIRE team were able to show that it is more likely to date from the Napoleonic wars.  
Copyright: WA Coastal & Marine*

### Digging for clues on Bannockburn's 699th anniversary

Warren Bailie, GUARD Archaeology Ltd

To mark the 699th anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn (23 and 24 June 2013), the National Trust for Scotland's "Big Dig", supervised by GUARD Archaeology, took place from 17 to 23 June.

Looking to shed new light on one of Scotland's biggest historical mysteries, the exact site of the Battle of Bannockburn, 250 local volunteers and 125 Bannockburn High School students took part in the mass community archaeology project to search for clues as to where elements of the 2-day-long battle took place in 1314.

Five families also lent their back gardens to the project as test pits, allowing a search for objects lost during or after the fighting in 1314 in areas previously unsearched. The homes covered the areas of Braehead, Broomridge, Hillpark and Milton which had been determined by experts to be of the most interest in exploring the battle.

All volunteers were supervised by a team of experienced GUARD Archaeologists led by Warren Bailie and guided in hand excavation, finds discovery and identification, recording of discoveries and dating of artefacts: and their hard work paid off with discoveries of 13th and 14th century pottery and metalwork, which with further specialist analysis may make a

significant new contribution to how the battlefield of Bannockburn is understood.

'That was the most rewarding dig I have ever been involved with,' said Warren Bailie, 'From primary kid to pensioner all left with an even bigger smile than they came with today.'

As Stuart Jack, one of the volunteers, also said, 'Could I thank all the GUARD team for a brilliant weekend at Bannockburn. It was my first time experiencing a dig and I had a great time. If you could add me to your mailing list, I would be more than willing to volunteer again!'

The Big Dig is part of the on-going Battle of Bannockburn Project being undertaken by the National Trust for Scotland in association with Glasgow University's Centre for Battlefield Archaeology, Stirling Council, GUARD Archaeology Ltd and BBC Scotland.

Some elements of the work were filmed as part of a special two-part BBC Scotland series presented by Neil Oliver and Dr Tony Pollard, which will go out in Spring 2014 to coincide with the 700th anniversary of the battle. This is the first time that the duo have been reunited since the BBC series "Two Men in a Trench".

The 699th anniversary marks one year to go until the new state-of-the-art Battle of Bannockburn visitor centre will officially be opened to the public.



*Volunteers in action on the Bannockburn Big Dig. Copyright: GUARD.*

## Iona Across Time

Peter Yeoman MIfA, Principal Researcher, Historic Scotland

Iona Abbey is Scotland's most sacred Christian site, founded by St Columba, a high-born Irish monk, in 563 AD, whose shrine has drawn pilgrims and visitors for centuries. Historic Scotland took the abbey into care in 2000, and following a decade of conservation work on the buildings has now completed a major re-display/re-interpretation project to enhance the visitor experience.

The new facilities include new graphic panels, new permanent displays on Columba and on the Iona Community, and feature a new museum of medieval sacred sculpture and archaeology. The project was completed in June this year, and aims to enable a far better understanding for all of the importance of the monastery at Iona to the development of Ireland and Scotland from the 6th century.

The site museum presents the exceptional early Christian carved stone high crosses and grave markers, the finest collection in western Europe, including the first High Crosses, dating back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century, which have been reconstructed to mark the 1450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St Columba's arrival on the island. This amazing collection is comprehensively re-displayed, including the Viking age carved stones, and the exceptional West Highland grave slabs. The latter underpins the history of the abbey as the spiritual home of the Gaelic Lords of the Isles and of their supporting clans.



*The new site museum now features three re-erected high crosses, with St John's backed by St Oran's to the left and St Matthew's to the right. Crown Copyright: Historic Scotland*

Historic Scotland's in-house skills and expertise have been used extensively in this project, from the conservation of the carved stones and crosses, to intensive research into the island's history and archaeology, newly presented to reveal Iona's unique significance to the development of European Christianity.

The displays present the archaeological evidence for a Columban cultural revolution, a Gaelic golden age lasting into the 800s, the effects of which ripple through society to this day. The displays demonstrate how the translation of the relics of Columba around 750 prompted this Renaissance, bringing resources, wealthy patronage from Pictland and Ireland, and above all the brightest of theological minds, together in an outpouring of creativity and innovation. For the first time, visitors can experience how the Iona monks produced sophisticated artistry in a variety of media, sharing a common set of symbols and designs, all to better glorify God while emphasising the great importance of Iona and the relics of St Columba.

The displays include an assemblage of artefacts from the 600s and 700s, excavated by Charles Thomas in the 1950s and 60s and previously not available for study. These include objects involved in the production of precious metalwork, possibly related to the production of liturgical objects at Iona, especially following the enshrinement of Columba's bones around 750.

The project has been informed throughout by a major research programme led by Historic Scotland, but involving scholars from universities in Ireland and in Scotland.

## **On a SURE footing: the NTS Sites and Monuments Record**

Stefan Sagrott AlfA, NTS Archaeological Data Officer

In January of this year, work began on turning the archaeology department's paper based SMR into an electronic resource. Working in partnership with RCAHMS, archaeological data collected over the last twenty years is being inputted into the CANMORE database through SURE (Specialist User Recording Environment). This arrangement has a number of advantages for the NTS archaeology department: the cost savings of not having to purchase database

software; that our data will be preserved in the RCAHMS systems and that information on all of our archaeological sites and monuments is now publicly available. On top of this, RCAHMS provides annual data downloads to local authority HERs saving us having to provide updates to each area.

Running side by side with the data input, all of the NTS archaeological sites and monuments (of which there are over 11,000) are being polygonised as either known site extents (a polygon showing the extents of a site) or discovery area (an area where a site is known from, but the exact location is not known). As well as utilising existing data, historic mapping and aerial imagery for NTS properties are being examined to make sure that all features are included. The polygonisation work is being carried out following the DSP guidelines produced by RCAHMS, ensuring that they remain consistent with the national dataset produced as part of the DSP project.

As of July 2013, over 4,000 archaeological features across NTS properties have been polygonised and information on these put into CANMORE either through updating existing records or by creating new ones.

It is hoped that at the conclusion of the project, the NTS polygons will be added as a layer to the latest iteration of PASTMAP allowing any interested parties to see the extent of archaeological sites on NTS properties. Internally the polygons can be added to the NTS GIS allowing them to be used in property planning and management.

P.S. 2013 is the twentieth birthday of the NTS Archaeology Department, so Happy Birthday to us (cakes and presents are welcome)!

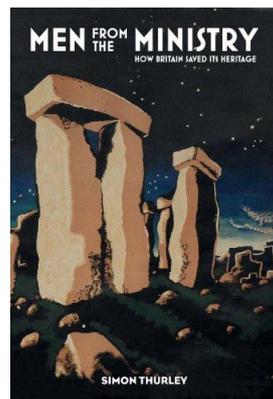
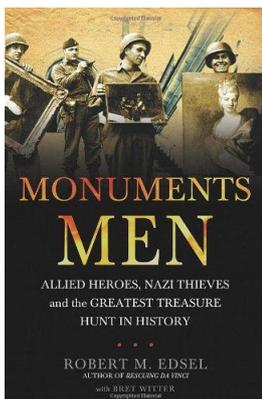
## **Book Reviews**

### **Holiday Reading**

Matt Ritchie MIfA

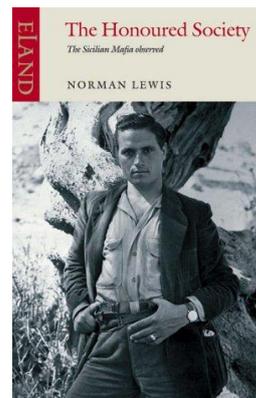
'Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History' (Robert Edsel, 2009) tells the remarkable story of the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives (MFAA) section of the Allied armed forces in Europe during WWII. MFAA officers, known as 'Monuments Men', landed in Normandy with a

mission to protect and conserve significant cultural landmarks. They supported front line commanders and responded to chance discoveries and instances of destruction. The author's easy writing style helps to bring his narrative to life, with the various characters and their challenges vividly portrayed – and the background to the largest (and most reprehensible) art heist in history is expertly laid out. Art was systematically robbed by the Nazis from their victims and looted from European museums and galleries. While the scale of the discoveries subsequently found hoarded in the salt mines of Austria and Germany is astonishing, the very existence of the 'Monuments Men' is almost more so. It is very sad that the example of the MFAA could not be brought to bear during more recent conflicts – preventing the looting of the Iraqi National Museum for example. 'Monuments Men' is an inspirational read.



In a similar vein, 'Men from the Ministry: How Britain Saved its Heritage' (Simon Thurley, 2013) is a comprehensive history of a small and unusual office within a much larger effort: the Ancient Monuments Division of the Office of Works, the precursor to today's English Heritage, Historic Scotland and Cadw. The book describes the development of our national collections of archaeological and historic sites in state guardianship and the various stages of statutory heritage protection. A serious and scholarly study (by the Chief Executive of English Heritage), it is very well written and illustrated throughout, with appropriate images chosen from the English Heritage archives. Although occasionally lacking in 'before and after' detail of monuments saved and restored / rebuilt, the chapter on the aesthetics and philosophy of restoration is especially interesting. However, the book is very much concerned with England and English

monuments and in charting the various lords and mandarins in charge. For this it is unapologetic, with a casual disregard for the other nations or the lower ranks involved. It is also often fairly biased – and always properly deferential to the great and the good – but this only adds to its charm. It is, after all, of the Ministry, by the Ministry. It is essential reading for anyone seeking to understand the social, political and philosophical contexts within which our guardianship sites were collected and opened to public view.



A comparative study, 'The Honoured Society: the Sicilian Mafia Observed' (Norman Lewis, 1964), charts the rise and rise of the Sicilian mafia. The frankly astonishing social context of 20<sup>th</sup> century Sicily forms the backdrop to a fascinating narrative history peppered with pertinent anecdotes and accounts. The lot of the Sicilian peasant was clearly very grim, ground down into what was little more than an exploitative feudal existence by landed aristocrat, criminal Mafioso and corrupt church. Norman Lewis writes with such a flowing languid economy of prose that every page is a pleasure to read. With so many fantastical stories so expertly told, the book could almost be classed as magical realism – were it not all horribly true. In terms of archaeology it offers little – save for a fascinating insight into an alternative cultural framework within which the parasite element (the 'Honoured Society', which by any normal measure should be impossible to sustain), not only perpetuates itself but flourishes without sentimentality for any of the individuals involved.

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Membership of the Scottish Group is free for IfA members, and attracts a small fee for non-IfA members. Please feel free to circulate this newsletter and we would like to ask you to

encourage your friends and colleagues to join the Scottish Group.

For more information on the IfA's Scottish Group please see our website, where you can download copies of meeting minutes and past newsletters, and keep up-to-date with the work of the Group and training course:

<http://www.archaeologists.net/groups/scottish>

Keep in touch with us via the Scottish Group's Facebook page, where information about events and the work of the Group will be publicised. Search for 'Scottish Group of the Institute for Archaeologists' and 'like' us or go to:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Scottish-Group-of-the-Institute-for-Archaeologists/118919181526150>

Please feel free to get in touch if there any items you would like to see included on the agenda at the next committee meeting, members are welcome to attend the meetings, normally held in RCAHMS at 3pm.

Newsletters are published 3-4 times a year and all contributions from Scottish members are welcome (news, events, new discoveries, project roundups, books, talks, staff news etc). To make a contribution to forthcoming editions of the Newsletter please email:

[mel@cfa-archaeology.co.uk](mailto:mel@cfa-archaeology.co.uk)