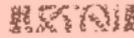




TAYSIDE & FIFE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
COMMITTEE



Newsletter

of the
Tayside and Fife Archaeological
Committee

Issue Three -- March 2008

Third Newsletter

This newsletter, the third, completes the cycle of the first year, and it is accompanied by the minutes and reports that were presented at the AGM in Perth on 6 February 2008.

The Editor of this newsletter is still keen to hear from any reader regarding the content and style of the newsletter and to receive contributions, which can be sent to the address at the bottom of this column.

2008 Conference

The 2008 conference will take place in Dundee on Saturday 1st November. Details will be posted on the website shortly and will also appear in Newsletter 4. Corresponding members and those on the mailing list will receive details by post in early September.

Website: tafac.org.uk

Contact the editor at:
johnsherriff@hotmail.co.uk

Exciting find in the Kirkgate, Perth

The Scottish Urban Archaeological Trust (SUAT) have announced the discovery of twelfth century belt buckle in Perth. It was found when a trench was dug along the Kirkgate to allow Scottish Water to replace pipes. Made from copper alloy or bronze, it may have belonged to a merchant in the medieval burgh.

Derek Hall, Depute Director of SUAT said: "Perth's medieval archaeology is amongst the best preserved in Scotland and there has been little previous opportunity to investigate the area around the Kirkgate, which is one of the earliest streets in the burgh. Aside from the recovery of the buckle we were also able to record a sequence of earlier street levels, which were interleaved with layers of rubbish and midden. This short exercise has provided a useful reminder of just what lies beneath the streets of modern Perth."

Left & below - The buckle from Kirkgate, Perth.
Photos copyright SUAT Ltd.



Results of Kinnettles fieldwalking

This year's fieldwalking season, undertaken by members of the Kinnettles and District Heritage Group, directed by John Sherriff (RCAHMS), started on Mains of Invereighty Farm on Sunday 3rd February. Twenty members of the group, joined by metal detectorists from Dundee, walked an area measuring 17,600m² in extent, which yielded few artifacts – hardly any modern finds, no medieval pottery and only five flints. However, one of the flints was a Mesolithic microlith and another was a scraper (both illustrated below). The microlith is a short narrow blade and is one of a number of similar artifacts found in previous years elsewhere in the parish.

The second and final walk took place in the same field on Sunday, 17th February, expanding the area covered to 41,600m². Again, about 20 people, including some new walkers, spent a cold, but sunny, Sunday morning finding over 30 flints as well as a range of more recent material.

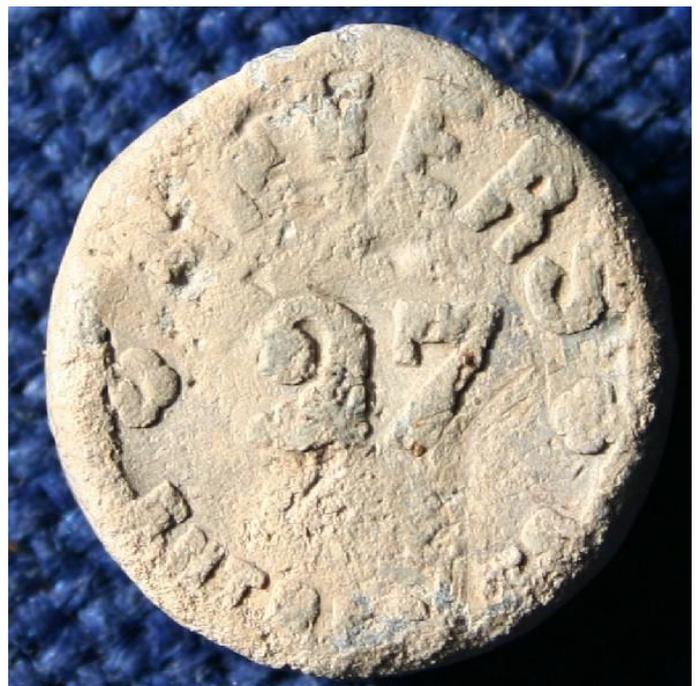


Flint microlith and scraper from Mains of Invereighty, Kinnettles, Angus.

The distribution of the flints suggests concentrated activity on a terrace about a third of the way up the field, next to what appears to be a spring. While further analysis of the flints has still to take place, this location represents the most likely position for a prehistoric settlement site so far found by the fieldwalking group.



Members of the Kinnettles and District Fieldwalking Group examine a field on Mains of Invereighty farm, Kinnettles, Angus. February 2008.



Lead seal from Mains of Invereighty. The provenance of this seal, which measures 20mm in diameter, has not yet been established, but it is possibly Dutch and of 19th century date.

Dundee group adopt stone circle



Charleston children perform a drama event at Balgarthno stone circle, Dundee. Photo copyright Council for Scottish Archaeology

Balgarthno stone circle, which sits at the centre of a playing field in the heart of the Charleston area of Dundee, has been adopted under the Council for Scottish Archaeology Adopt-a-Monument scheme. The early Bronze Age stone circle suffered vandalism for many years and was enclosed by a protective fence in 2006. Since then, members of Charleston's community have decided to come together to raise awareness of the antiquity.

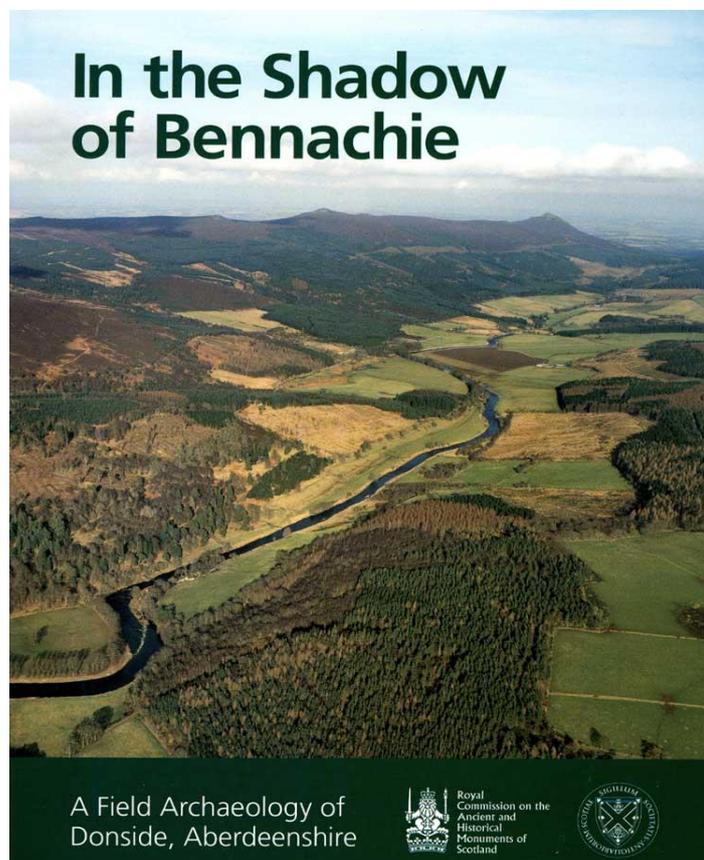
During the summer of 2008 the Friends of Balgarthno Stone Circle will host a series of cultural events at the site, including drama and poetry performances, re-enactment and ancient technology workshops. These will involve local schools and the Charleston children's drama group.

The group are also seeking funding to plant a small meadow of native species of wildflower around the stones. It is hoped that this will provide a new habitat for bumble bees and butterflies as well as softening the impact of the fence and improving the setting of the monument.

For more information about this or any other Adopt-a-Monument Project visit www.scottisharchaeology.org.uk/projects/adopt or contact Helen Bradley, Adopt-a-Monument Officer on h.bradley@scottisharchaeology.org.uk (0131 668 4189).

New RCAHMS book

Readers will be pleased to learn of the publication late in 2007 of *In the Shadow of Bennachie* by the RCAHMS in conjunction with the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. This volume, which explores the archaeology of Strathdon, taking in nearly 2000 square kilometres of Aberdeenshire, is lavishly illustrated. From recumbent stone circles and henge monuments of the late Neolithic, through burnt mounds and hut-circles of later prehistory to medieval, pre-improvement buildings and World War 2 defences, there ample to interest all. The volume has been printed to an exceptional standard and is priced at £30.00. It is available at several outlets, but can be purchased either by calling in at the RCAHMS offices or by post (£30.00 + £6.20 p+p) from RCAHMS, John Sinclair House, Bernard Terrace, Edinburgh, EH8 9NX.



A Field Archaeology of
Donside, Aberdeenshire



Bulla from Meigle

Metal-detectorist Paul Smith got the Perth Museum Finds Tray off to a good start this year when he found a papal bulla in Meigle. The bulla, which is currently pending Treasure Trove allocation, is a type of seal that was attached to papal documents in Rome from the early medieval period onwards. Eventually the name also became applied to the documents themselves.



The obverse has a beaded border within which runs the inscription SPA SPE (the abbreviated forms of St Paul and St Peter) accompanied by the heads of Paul and Peter. Each head is set within a beaded oval and between the two is a long-shafted, slender cross with short flaring arms and a Calvary mound.



The reverse carries the inscription GRE / GORIUS / PP X (Pope Gregory X), who was pope from 1271 to 1276. Copyright Perth Museum. To learn more about the work of the Treasure Trove Unit please see their website at: www.treasuretrovescotland.co.uk.

Roman Conference

Tickets are selling very well for the conference **FIRST CONTACT: ROME AND NORTHERN BRITAIN**, which is being held in Dewars Rinks, Perth, on Saturday 31st May 2008. Readers are urged to purchase tickets for this event as soon as possible. Tickets are £15.00 each and a cheque (payable to TAFAC) should be sent to Mark Hall at Perth Museum, George Street, Perth, PH1 5LB.

Tel: 01738 632488, email mahall@pkc.gov.uk

Quiz

The editor has devised the following quiz on the archaeology of Tayside and Fife for the readers of this newsletter. Entry is open to all and the first and only prize is a pair of tickets for the 2008 Annual Conference in Dundee. Answers to the editor (by post at RCAHMS or by email). All correct entries will be put into a hat and the winner drawn in July.

01. What form of prehistoric pottery was the subject of Dr Margaret Stewart's Ph.D ?
02. Who was the author of 'Angus or Forfarshire'?
03. Who was the director of the 'Marks & Spencer' excavations in Perth High St?
04. Name the nineteenth century geologist who commented on the logboat found at Friarton brickworks.
05. St Margaret's _____ -- Medieval site on the N shore of Forfar Loch.
06. St _____ Kirk – lovely spot on the east side of Dalgety Bay.
07. Alison _____ -- Former keeper of human history at Perth Museum.
08. Maiden _____? –Fort on the Lomond Hills.
09. DB _____? Excavator of Hurly Hawkin.
10. Who was the nineteenth century excavator of the souterrain at West Grange of Conan, Angus?