



National Committee on Carved Stones in Scotland

Annual Report 2018

The Committee met in Edinburgh on 3 March, 26 October and 7 December. We are grateful to Historic Environment Scotland (HES) for hosting these meetings, and for a grant to cover our costs, and for developing strategy (see below). We also thank Chris Purcell of HES for taking our minutes.

Dr Katherine Forsyth, Deputy Chair, resigned from the Committee on 3 March because of competing demands, while John Borland resigned in December in advance of his retirement. The Committee is extremely grateful to both for their long and dynamic service. KF had acted as Casework Officer and sadly it has not yet proved possible to refill this post.

Judith Roebuck of the Church of Scotland joined the Committee in December. This is the first time the Committee has had a Church of Scotland representative and is a very welcome addition.

The Committee recorded its respects for Angus Mitchell, a former member of the Committee, who died in February. He made a real contribution in many areas, notably the study of family history.

Developing strategy

Future Thinking on Carved Stones in Scotland: A Research Framework

The Committee continued its efforts to promote the ScARF/Listen to the Stones resources at talks and in popular and technical magazines. Booklets and postcards were distributed at events in England and Scotland, but also as far as the Association of Cultural Heritage Studies conference in Hangzhou, China.

The Chair and Secretary had meetings with the Church of Scotland (Judith Roebuck and Graham Fender-Allison) and HES (David Mitchell, Ewan Hyslop, Rebecca Bailey, Robin Turner), and Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (Simon Gilmour) to discuss how to progress the objectives of the ScARF.

The Chair, Deputy Chair and Secretary made a lunchtime presentation about Listen to the Stones to a well-attended HES lunchtime seminar audience in March.

The Committee noted that HES Policy, Designations Policy and Scheduled Monument Policy were coming up for review, and that the needs of carved stones would need to be considered in the light of these.

Following a request from the Church of Scotland for advice, the Committee has begun to compile a list of examples of good practices and areas of opportunity in regard to promotion / conservation / access to carved stones within Church of Scotland sites. This will include churches in use, in transition or closing.

Again, following a request from the Church of Scotland, the Committee pooled its knowledge to create a list of churches along existing pilgrim routes where there are carved stones with the potential to be used to promote community engagement and grow awareness of carved stones in Scotland.

Due to the agency of Secretary Dr Susan Buckham, the Committee was able to liaise with David MacColl, Chair of Scottish Benchmarking Group (an umbrella organisation for local authority cemetery managers in Scotland). The aim was to input into *Memorial Inspection Guidance*. The Committee seeks to be more pro-active in raising heritage issues and sharing some of the Scottish Government burial policy documents.

Research developments and outcomes

A notable achievement this year was the publication, co-authored by Committee member Diana King, of the Public Monuments and Sculpture Association's two volumes on *Public Sculpture of Edinburgh (MacKenzie 2018)*.

An exciting project attracting considerable interest is Louisa Campbell's work on pigments on Roman sculpture from Antonine Wall. Dr Campbell spoke



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about her work at the AGM of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

The value and needs of carved stones were considered alongside coastal erosion as part of the Learning From Loss project (Mar-Sep 2018) funded by the Scottish Universities Insight Institute. Led by St Andrews University (per Dr Tom Dawson) and the University of Stirling (per Dr Sally Foster), this networking event brought Scottish academics, heritage practitioners and local communities together with American colleagues from Florida and the National Parks.

<https://www.scottishinsight.ac.uk/Programmes/Scotland2030/LearningFromLoss.aspx>. See popular output: https://issuu.com/joannahambly/docs/learning_from_loss_climate_stories.

Dr George Thompson is continuing to work on major projects on cultural relationships between Scotland and Nova Scotia, focussing on funerary monuments.

Meantime, closer to home, HES is nearing completion of the recording of the St Andrews Cathedral early medieval carved stones and has already completed a measured survey of the early medieval sculpture at Govan.

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Please email further publications to
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Casework (including new discoveries)

The Committee continues to use and encourage others to use its casework template. Sharing



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information about casework and identifying institutional leads to pursue issues and opportunities, remains an important function of the Committee.

New discoveries were made due to forestry, recognised in a wall or as a result of community engagement. These include a number of prehistoric cup-marked and cup-and-ring marked rocks, including at Barmolloch in Argyll, and in Bute.

Sally Foster, University of Stirling
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29 March, re 7 July 2019

Curatorial concerns

The Committee noted a number of cases of curatorial concern. This included damage to a known but unrecorded prehistoric rock-art site by forestry ploughing. Concerns continue to be raised about fragments of carved stones, often *ex situ*, that are 'uncared' for at church sites.

With churches being sold and raising issues for associated carved stones, the Committee was pleased to hear that Stuart Church, Bruar, Perthshire has been purchased by the Clan Donnachaidh Society.

Examples of good practice

The Committee commended a number of examples of curatorial good practice and celebration of carved stones. The Swedish runestone owned by City of Edinburgh Council is now the property of National Museum of Scotland and on loan to the University of Edinburgh, who has plans to display it in George Square. The Society of Antiquaries produced a very attractive leaflet about the stone and this project, as well as a website page:

<https://www.socantscot.org/research-project/runestone-project-2017-18/>.

The Committee also noted ongoing initiatives to, for example, create a new shelter for the collection of 15 early medieval carved stones at Tullich Church in Aberdeenshire, and to house others at Ballater Station. The hogback at Ancrum in Scottish Border has been conserved and replaced *in situ*.