



REGISTERED CHARITY: SC046307

Annual Report

2018

Chairman's Statement

Looking back at 2017's report, I thought, "How on earth do I match this? We haven't done ANYTHING this year!"

Thankfully, trawling through social media posts (turns out social media can be quite a handy thing sometimes!) it appears that 2018 has been another busy year for CBP. However, in 2017 we did release the Lego Broch, so how do you compare to that!

Essentially, this year, we have set aside quite some time to plan towards some pretty major plans and projects, which we hope to share with you very soon – not least the progress we have made with our 'ultimate aim', which you can read about on (p.4)

After all, we believe we are capable of doing bigger, better and broch-ier things for this county. We've proven to the local community and funders alike that we can organise and oversee sizeable (and successful) archaeological events and programmes, such as the Caithness Broch Festival, which culminated in early 2018 with the dig at Thusater – more on that on in the report.

However, we had to start off 'small'. One of our first projects was the installation of archaeological interpretive panels, a project which did take longer than expected, and was only completed this year. However, we did try and keep costs low as possible – designing, creating, fashioning and installing three 350kg interpretive stone panels on shoestring budget proved to be quite a challenge!

All of our projects and events have involved a fair amount of planning, co-ordination, promotion and time; this is of course a totally voluntary project. However, what we aim to do is quite bold. We not only want to create an incredible 2,000-year-old monument and visitor attraction for Caithness; we really want to enact serious change in the way that Caithness is perceived, and, just as important – how the local Caithness community views its own county. We want to make people see heritage and archaeology as an invaluable part of their culture and economy. We believe now is the time to strive towards these ambitions.

And so we are delighted that so many of you also believe in what we have set out to do – your membership to the broch project has been invaluable, and we really are so thankful that you support us. We hope that we can do you proud.

With all of this in mind, we hope that next year is better...because this year was great.

From everyone at CBP HQ, we wish you all a wonderful festive period, and a very broch-tastic 2019.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kenneth McElroy". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Kenneth McElroy
Chairman
Caithness Broch Project

The Team

As we grow and develop our project, the team has gone through a few changes. We say goodbye to a couple of team members.

Frances Grant and Alexander MacPhail have toddled off to university; Alexander is studying archaeology – good lad! We hope their time spent with Caithness Broch Project has given them at least a little insight into the world of archaeology. Chris Sinclair and Michael Matheson have also left the team. Chris is now busy focusing on working at Nucleus, so I'm sure some of you may see him about. Michael is still glued to computer screens at Naver. We thank both of them for their efforts throughout the time they were with CBP!

Joining the team in late December 2017 were two new recruits:

Robin Herrick:

"For most of the 17 years I have lived in Caithness I knew very little about the archaeology of the far north and nothing at all about brochs. Working with the Caithness Broch Project has put me on a crash course in broch design, resolving the contradictory requirements of designing and building a prehistoric building and a modern visitor attraction. My skills in engineering analysis and design, plus computer modelling and visualisation, have helped to solidify the designs from initial sketches, feeding into the project business plan and helping communicate ideas to the public and experts. Helping the CBP is a good counterpoint to my work through my engineering design company for Dounreay: on the one hand taking apart something new, on the other building something old. The project inspires a lot of interest within and outwith the county, in no small part thanks to the inspiration and dedication of Ken and Iain. We are on track to take that enthusiasm and knowledge and turn it into a complete design for a 21st century Iron-Age tower!"



Alex Groves:



Alex joins the board as a committee member. Already an MSc in Forensic Archaeology, she hopes to continue her studies in archaeology, when family, work and community commitments allow.

Having grown up in an area heavily dependent on tourism, she appreciates the need for its sustainable development and wider education. She believes the CBP will put Caithness on the map as a destination, improving the local economy, and therefore the lives of people lucky enough to live here

Whilst later 2018 we had Jennifer Robinson & Marion O'Brien join the team!

Marion became a CBP volunteer in the late Summer of 2018. Since returning home to Thurso after studying in Edinburgh, she worked for 10 years at Caithness Horizons Museum and Art Gallery watching and supporting CBP's growth from initial start up to the Lego broch exhibition and beyond. Earlier this year, she joined the Caithness Chamber of Commerce team as the Digital Marketing & Communications Officer to continue her professional development but missed the action of the tourism and heritage sector so signed up as a volunteer! Marion helps out, attending events, fundraising and spreading the good word of CBP using her passion for the county at every opportunity. She also volunteers with Thurso Town Improvements Association and Thurso Community Development Trust and sees huge potential for the projects CBP are working on. As our project grows and develops it's important to make sure we have enough volunteers and committee members to aid us in our various projects and so it's great to have a few new friendly faces on board.



Jennifer is a keen-as-a-bean archaeology student from the UHI looking to get involved in as much archaeology as she can!

We're delighted to have introduced her to her first dig in Caithness, which took place at Dunbeath Broch and at Yarrows 'Swartigill'. Here's to many more!

The Broch Project in Numbers:

Total CBP Members: 442

Annual Members: 338

Life Members: 104

Business Sponsors: 14

Facebook Followers: 11,375

Twitter Followers: 3,305

Instagram Followers: 1,545

Talks given: 15 (ish)

Emails sent: Approx 2,500

Outreach events: 4

Entries to the colouring-in competition: 250+

Royals met: 1

Brochtees!

This year we had 24 #brochtee submissions (down from last year largely due to the fact we've been waiting to update stock levels!) with photos sent from all over the world!

And just because we are all about making things fun, we thought we'd spice up this AGM report with a wee countries quiz – can you name the flags of the countries we have received submissions from this year?

















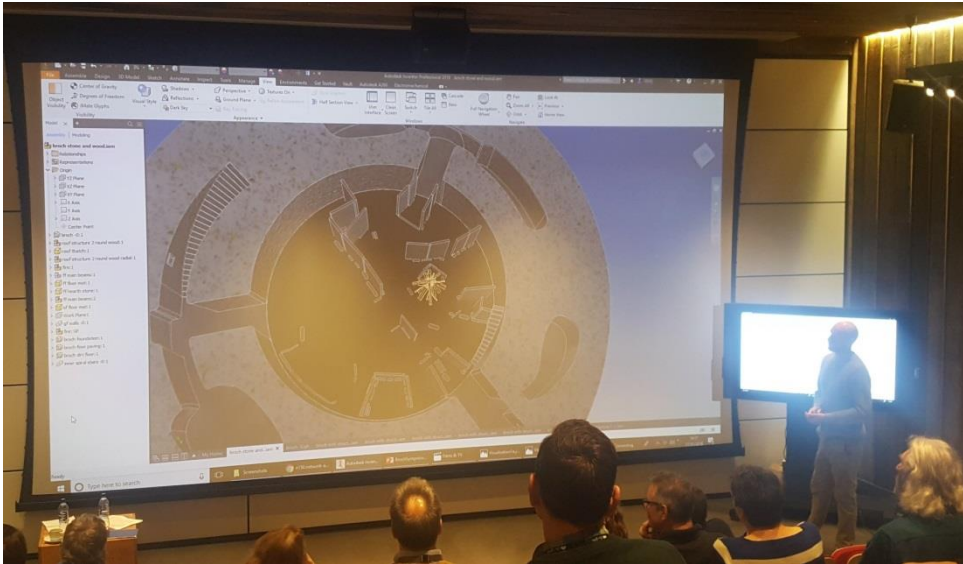




Our Ultimate Aim: Progress Report

By CBP Director and Chief Designer, **Robin Herrick**

The primary aim of the Caithness Broch Project is to build a full-size replica broch. Designs, materials, tools, and processes will be used representative of those available to the Iron Age builders of the original brochs, while making concessions to modern requirements for accessibility, long-lasting structural integrity, cost efficiency, and safety.

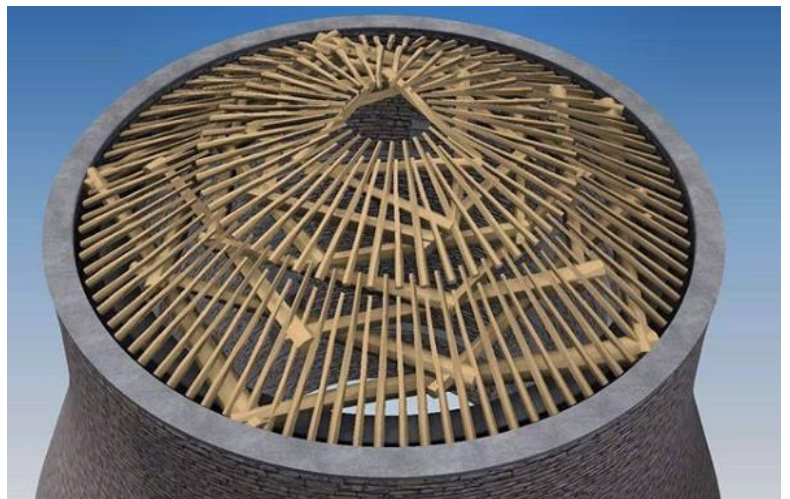


The Project has made progress this year on a few fronts toward making this dream a reality. In January, the Engine Shed in Stirling hosted a conference – bringing together around 30 notable archaeologists, heritage professionals and craftspeople from across the UK - to discuss the design of the new Caithness broch. The three-dimensional CAD

model was projected onto a cinema-size screen for the analysis of experts, including archaeologists and craftsmen. One of the messages to take away from the meeting was that the answers to some of the design and use questions are unknown and probably unknowable; therefore, the Project has a free hand to create something that is a stunning visitor attraction rather than imposing constraints that detract from the visitor experience.

Constraints were the topic of discussion in March when the Project met with the Building Standards Team Leader of the Highland Council in Wick. Existing historic buildings and structures can evade requirements that will be imposed by law on the Caithness broch as a modern building. Navigating the line between modern standards and historical accuracy will require care and skill.

To this end the Project held meetings over the summer with architects to start exploring how architectural and structural engineering services could be employed, and what appetite there was in these communities for such a project. A subsequent tendering process to bring on board an architect firm to



develop the project brief showed that there is a lot of enthusiasm for such an unusual project, and a great deal of fondness for Caithness, the landscape and its history.

And talking of landscape, the Project has reopened the investigation into potential sites for the broch. The site will ideally be on the Caithness tourist trail, and be convenient for locals to visit and work, while being on land that is geographically typical of broch sites, and allow for development of other Iron Age buildings, earthworks, and agricultural projects. The site must also meet the modern project requirements of vehicle access and parking, and a location for the visitor centre and traditional skills training workshop.

Below: John O'Groats, one of the proposed sites for the broch



The visitor centre is conceived as a piece of modern architecture, complementing but not copying the broch form; using contemporary design aesthetics and sustainable materials to create an attraction in its own right. The centre will include a build diary, interpretive exhibits (offering alternative usage theories and broch development and reuse timelines), information about the location of brochs, theories about their development and the culture that produced them, about the building materials, structural engineering, the lifestyles and culture, and information about other similar buildings around the world. It is intended that the centre will have a café for the relaxation of visitors and refreshment of trainees from the traditional skills training workshops. The current plan is that the visitor centre would be built before the broch, providing a focus for the build and early engagement with visitors.

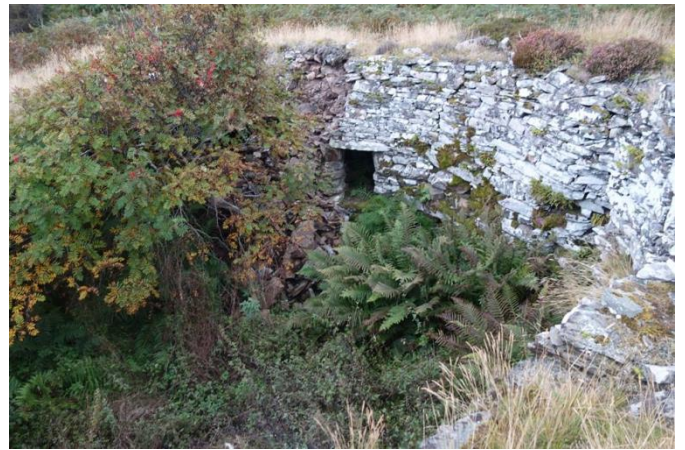
The next year should see the Project plans develop along the above lines. Engaging professionals will require a round of funding applications. It is likely that more than one site will be taken forward for further study. It will be exciting to be part of the process of seeing the project aims start to take form through architectural visualisations, the first step on the road towards realising the 21st century Iron Age broch.

Ousdale Broch Round-Up

*In late 2015, CBP's Iain and Kenny visited Ousdale Broch, arguably one of Caithness' best brochs, only to find it in a ruinous condition – a buttress, most likely built during a Victorian excavation in 1891, had collapsed, shifting much of the stonework, and nearly blocking the entrance. Add to the mix a tree growing out of the broch, and it did not look good for poor old Ousdale Broch. Being one of only perhaps two brochs in the 'Home of the Broch' with walls past the first 'scarcement' ledge, as well as features such as a doorway, guard cell, corbelled cell and even a staircase, we were concerned that a hugely important aspect of Caithness' archaeological landscape was about to be lost forever. **Action needed to be taken!***



Ousdale in 2013



Ousdale in 2015

Immediately, we raised our concerns to Historic Environment Scotland (HES), who sent some of their Heritage Directorate team to inspect the monument. Fortunately, they advised that the broch could be saved.

To this end, we spoke to the landowner, who agreed that the broch should be consolidated and conserved, with access, parking, interpretation and signage improvements made.

From here applied for a small grant (£925) from HES towards an initial inspection from local architect and engineering service, Fairhurst, to carry out an initial structural survey. Once this was submitted to HES, we were then able to tender towards a 'prioritised scheme of works', which would, in far greater detail, plan out how the broch could be consolidated and conserved, and how much this would cost.

Krystyna Pytasz of Addison Architects won the tender, which again, was funded with a grant from HES. In January 2018, Krystyna visited Ousdale Broch to carry out her assessment, and by the end of March 2018, the report had been prepared. We had a plan of action for Ousdale!

Altogether, the conservation works, access trails, signage, parking improvements and interpretation has been costed to just over £170,000. We were quite surprised at this costing – we had feared it would cost much more. This seemed to be an achievable target, however.

We set to work investigating the various funds we could approach to carry out this project, as well as securing letters of support from the local community.

It was, of course, hugely important to secure the landowner's trust in all of this and we thank Anson Macauslan and Welbeck Estates in their understanding and support thus far.

And so, in 2018, we applied to three funders – Historic Environment Scotland, LEADER and SSE – and, after many hours of work and what would amount to a 'Maiden's Pap'-sized amount of paperwork...

We are delighted to announce that we have been offered £170,000, in-principle, by our funders towards the conservation of Ousdale Broch!

(This is subject to one or two more checks, 'scheduled monument consent' from Historic Environment and the OK from Scottish Natural Heritage. But we're super confident that this project is now go!)



Above: Ousdale Broch – Image by Laurence and Jessica of Independent Travel Cats

There is still some work to do, but we are working away to ensure everything runs as smoothly as possible.

Our next step is to tender the works out to an archaeological company, but we are also working to keep costs as low as possible (without being economical on quality, of course), and so we are also looking at securing in-kind support, too.

With all of this in mind, we hope to have tendered the project out by the start of December, with works beginning early 2019, and completed by mid-late 2019.



We're thrilled to have achieved all of this, however, and will continue to work away at Ousdale Broch. We are excited by the prospect of having this beauty of a broch made safe and accessible for everyone; we like to imagine a big brown tourist sign, barely a mile into Caithness, pointing towards this structure: what a welcome to Caithness that would be, and as far as first impressions go, a wonderful introduction to the land of the broch!

2018 Round Up

January

We organised and attended the 'Broch Symposium', inviting archaeologists from across UK to provide input on our replica broch – read more on (p.3)

February:

In February we attended Wick Science Festival in February, introducing children and families to various aspects of broch building; through colouring-in, building blocks and even Minecraft. Good fun, and always a pleasure to develop young people's interest in the past!



May

A Bearded History of Caithness!



We were delighted to work alongside Orkney-based artist Gina Ramsay to produce a wonderful piece of Caithness-inspired art; 'A Bearded History of Caithness'.

In this visualisation we can see the semi-mythical character of 'Cait', the alleged founder of Caithness, and all the history of the county flowing from his beard!

We were delighted with Gina's work, which we adapted as part of a colouring-competition for local schools (and big kids too!), receiving more than 250 entries. We displayed the results in Thurso and Wick, and we think it fairly added a splash of colour to the streets!



COLOURING-IN COMPETITION

A COLOUR-ME-I-HI
NAME: Cathrina
CONTACT

The colours
of the beard
are meant
to be the
colours
of the
mythical
flag.

NAME: ESME Waller
CONTACT

This is
so fun

Project arrives YOU to have a look at colouring-in Car's beard, and the history of
from it. Build up the story, and the history of

Caithness Broch Festival

In May, one of the highlights of our 'Year of the Broch' came to a stunning conclusion. The final dig of our 'Caithness Broch Festival', an investigation of 3 broch / possible broch sites in Caithness, took place at Thusater, less than a mile west of Thurso.



Over 40 people attended the event and experienced 'hands on archaeology' in a series of trial trenches at Thusater Burn near Thurso in the North of Scotland.

In fact, so many people turned up that an additional trench had to be opened. This trench was soon commandeered by the children of the volunteers who under supervision from the ORCA team started to develop their excavation skills at a pace! All three excavated trenches soon revealed archaeological features consistent with that anticipated by a previous geophysical survey conducted by the ORCA team.

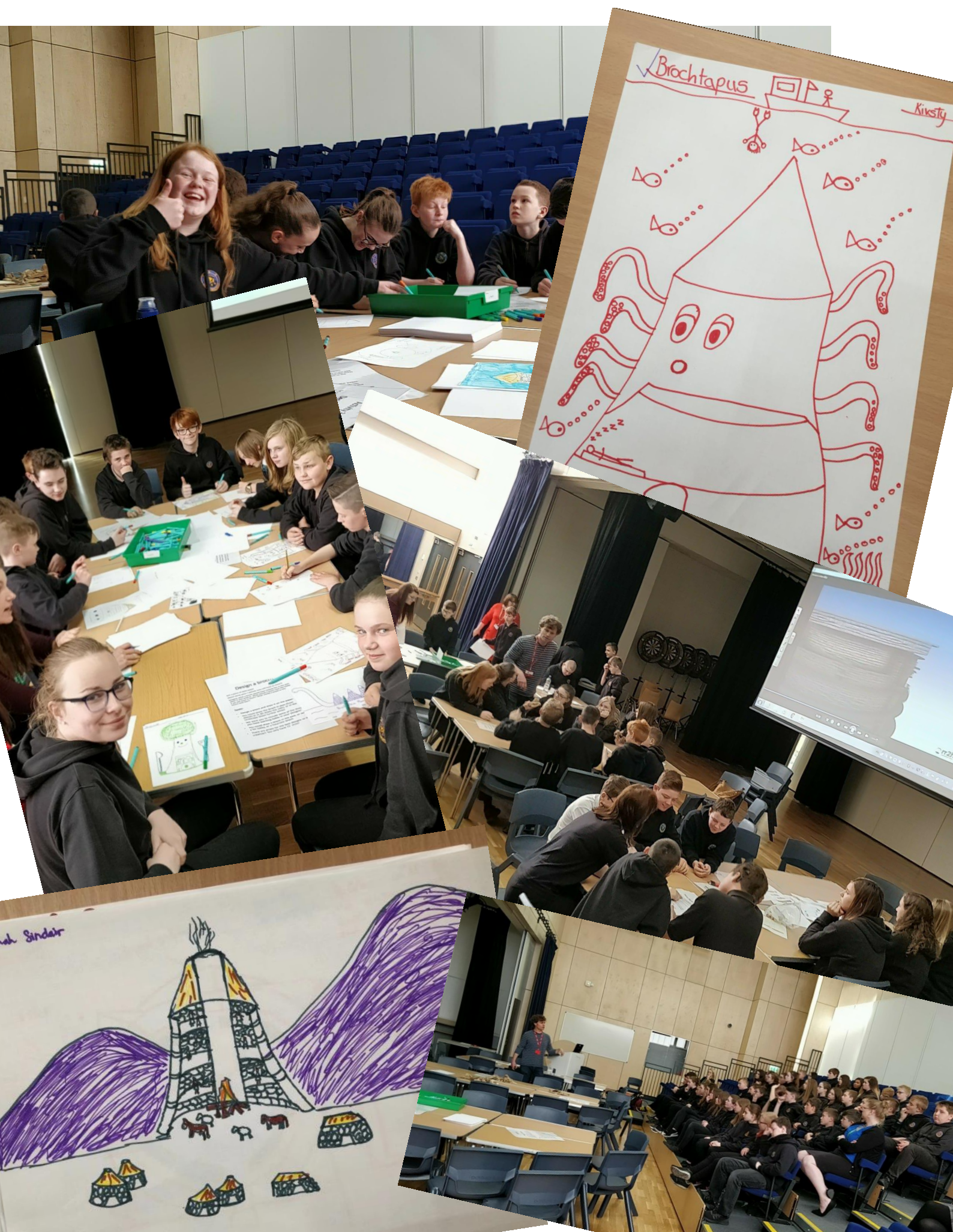
Rubble and stony deposits containing cultural material were encountered, although perhaps the most exciting structural find was a perfectly preserved hearth constructed of orthostats, a base slab and packing stone! Under the blazing sun, the team's hard work was rewarded by finding a hammer stone and possible striking stone used for starting fires and a wonderfully preserved pigs tooth.

Certainly, this is a fascinating site - Martin Carruthers boldly suggested in the concluding talk in Caithness Horizons that the structure may even a broch!

The site has certainly piqued our interest, and we have since entered into the Aviva Community Fund Community Challenge to raise funds to continue excavations at this site – if you're reading this before November 21st 2018 then please do go and vote for us!



In addition to the excavations at Thusater, Dan Lee was able to provide archaeological workshops for over 350 children at Wick High School.



Our digs were one of our most news-worthy items last year, making an appearance in Current Archaeology Magazine, Archaeology Magazine (one of the biggest archaeological news networks in the world!)

ARCHAEOLOGY

A publication of the Archaeological Institute of America

HOME NEWS MAGAZINE VIDEOS PODCASTS READER

Possible Prehistoric Settlement Northern Scotland

Thursday, June 14, 2018



(Orkney Research Centre for Archaeology)

THURSO, SCOTLAND – A prehistoric site, including slabs, a hammer stone, and a hammer stone found in the Scottish Highlands. The building may have been part of a prehistoric settlement, according to Pete Higgins of the Orkney Research Centre for Archaeology. Further excavations will reveal if the structure was a tower-like roundhouse made of stone or a wag—a semi-underground dwelling with a central aisle made of stone slabs and a stone slab roof. A well-preserved structure suggests someone of high status lived there.

To read in-depth about archaeology, go to "[Neolithic Europe's Remote Heart](#)"

Iron Age settlement near Thurso?

A community project adapted to investigate, and subsequent excavation revealed the survey to be correct. Over 40 volunteers (trained by archaeologists from ORCA and the University of the Highlands and Islands) opened three trenches, all of which yielded evidence of rubble and stony deposits. Pete Higgins, Senior Project Manager for ORCA said, "It is incredibly exciting to be involved with the team from the Caithness Broch Project and Caithness Broch Project local people investigating this site, especially as this is the first time that it has been excavated. This is the first stage of a project that aims to investigate the wider prehistoric landscape of this area of northern Scotland." One of the most significant discoveries was a perfectly preserved, stone-lined hearth that showed signs of heating, but did not contain any ash. This suggests that it had been cleaned out, possibly ready for reuse.



ABOVE Community archaeologists uncovered an Iron Age hearth during recent excavations at Thurso Burn. TOP A hammer stone found during the excavations.

Other key finds included a hammer stone and striking stones, as well as a pig's tooth—a surprising development, as pigs are usually only present in low frequencies on Iron Age sites. The ORCA team believes that this combination of evidence makes it likely that the area saw primarily domestic use.

Further finds along the A14

Extensive archaeological work during Highways England's A14 improvement scheme in Cambridgeshire has revealed a wealth of features spanning thousands of years (see CA 339). As the excavations draw towards their close, further finds are continuing to emerge. The Roman period in particular has been well represented during recent work by MOLA Healdland Infrastructure, including



the discovery of a possible temporary military camp by a huge defensive ditch measuring roughly 10m deep, with a possible raised bank beside it. The team has also discovered an apparent or early Saxon burials. Lying in an apparent or early Saxon burials, the lower legs of both bodies of two people had been buried at the other. Curiously, the lower legs of their bodies were repositioned, placed further up their bodies. Given the limbs' level of articulation, most would have been at least partially fleshed out on how – and why – these limbs were cut off either in some sort of punishment. Alternatively, it may have been a form of protection after death, either as a form of protection or some other funerary practice. As with Cambridgeshire County Council, some of the burials were found in run-in graves and stop them from running away (in life) and was this a punishment else not even to think of doing this?

LEFT A pair of unusual late Roman displaced legs have been found

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NEWS / HIGHLANDS

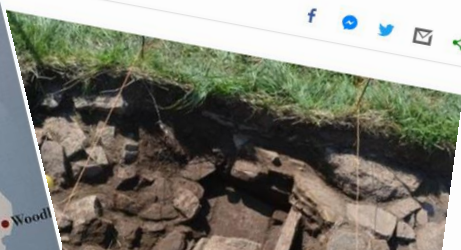
High hopes that previously unknown prehistoric settlement found near Thurso

by Scott MacLennan June 15, 2018, 6:42 am

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Possible discovery of prehistoric settlement near Thurso

14 June 2018



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Remains of possible Iron Age settlement found in Caithness



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June



In June, we erected the third and final interpretation panel for our 'Broch Trail' at Thing's Va. Lugging a 350kg stone across two fields was not an easy task, with Iain's van getting stuck in the process! We were relieved to finally get this project finished. This task had proven to be much more difficult than expected – we had successfully applied for £2070 towards this project at the end of 2015 – we apologise for the time it has taken to complete this project.

However, we are pleased to have three wonderful interpretive panels in place at brochs, where previously there was nothing. We are delighted to say that we are on our 4th print run of 'Caithness Broch Trail' leaflets, too – so we hope we are encouraging lots of people to go out and explore the fantastic archaeological sites of Caithness!

Broch Rose Gin!

June 2017 was the collaboration we'd all been waiting for: when gin met archaeology!

We teamed up with the kind-hearted people of Dunnet Bay Distillery, creators of the highly-commended Rock Rose Gin, to create a one-off special batch of archeologically-inspired gin (with an inspired name) – Broch Rose Gin!

The gin was created with a bit of assistance from archaeologists Johnny Horn and Joanne Howdle, suggesting various prehistoric ingredients, including a number which had been recovered from sites such as Crosskirk and Old Scatness Broch, in Caithness and Shetland respectively:



- Coltsfoot – *Tussilago Farfara* (L.)
- Dandelion – *Taraxacum officinale* F.H. Wigg.
 - Gorse – *Ulex europaeus* (L.)
- Hawthorn – *Crataegus monogyna* Jacq.
 - Heather – *Calluna vulgaris* (L.)
- Meadowsweet – *Filipendula ulmaria* (L.) Maxim.
 - Rose Root – *Rhodiola Rosea* (L.)
 - Rowan – *Sorbus aucuparia* (L.)
 - Scots Pine – *pinus sylvestris* (L.)
- Sea Buckthorn – *hippophae rhamnoides* (L.)

To celebrate the launch of Broch Rose Gin, we held a special 'tasting' night at Dunnet Bay Distillery, inviting local chef / food wizard Andrew Manson to create some outrageously delicious archaeologically-themed canapés:

- Fish – Smoked mackerel served with sea buckthorn
- Meat – smoked sirloin of beef with thyme and garlic flowers
 - Vegetarian – wild herb tart
- Vegetarian – carrot and blue cheese served on a rye bread crust
 - Fruit – rhubarb and coriander seed fruit pastilles



All profits from the sales of Broch Rose Gin go straight to Caithness Broch Project. We cannot thank Martin and Claire of Rock Rose Gin enough for this unbelievably generous act; it means the world to us!



July



In July, we were fortunate enough to be part of Caithness Chamber of Commerce's 'Young Entrepreneur and Young Business' presentation – with a very special guest, HRH Prince Charles! A pleasure to speak with him once again, if even just for a few moments. He seems genuinely interested in our project and we hope to have another chat with him again soon.

August

In August we invited two special people to become patrons of our charity – MP for Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross Jamie Stone and MSP for Caithness, Sutherland and Ross, Gail Ross. We are delighted to have them publically support our project and look forward to working with them to promote and develop Caithness Broch Project.



At the tail end of August we also helped Dunnet Bay Distillery celebrate their 5th birthday, with some fun archaeological activities for families, including pot-making and stone carving; Iain carved out a special design for the Rock Rose Garden, with help from several enthusiastic members of the public. A really enjoyable day – happy birthday Rock Rose!

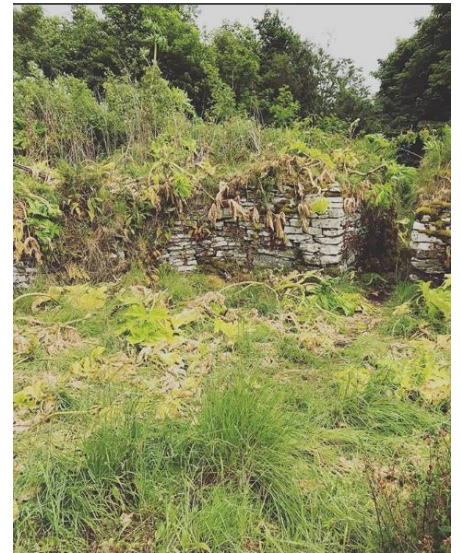
(Images overleaf)



September / October



In September we arranged for the giant hogweed at Achvarasdal to be chemically removed. Unfortunately, this invasive species can cause nasty burns to the skin (although it only reacts with sunlight) and so is quite dangerous, especially to children and animals. The spraying would keep the hogweed down for a good few months at least – see the photo to the left to see the extent of the growth, and to the right, the aftermath!



Also In September, CBP's Kenneth was recognised by Glasgow University as one of 30 'Future World Changers'. Katy McNair Future World Changers project lead said:

"Future World Changers is a way for the University of Glasgow to celebrate and support the ambitions that our current students have to make the world better. This year (2018-19), we are following the stories of 30 students who each have a goal or idea that could improve lives. These students have been selected from a pool of more than 330 applicants from 59 countries and form a community of individuals with diverse and fascinating talents.



Among them is representation from China, Spain, India, Canada, Mexico, the USA, Ghana, Bangladesh and the UK. Their ambitions include everything from improving the scientific literacy of the public and empowering young people to make positive food choices, to pushing forward boundaries in physics and improving animal welfare.

We're delighted to have Kenneth McElroy among our UofG Future World Changer student cohort for 2018-19. His goal - to build an Iron Age 'broch' in Caithness that will promote the county as a heritage tourism destination – has great potential to change the lives of

many, providing a sustainable avenue for economic stability and growth in his home county. His enthusiasm and drive is hugely inspirational. We hope to find many ways to support and encourage him to achieve everything he is capable of achieving. You can follow his journey with the UofG Future World Changer cohort at www.glasgow.ac.uk/study/studentlife/worldchangers/future/kenneth/

October

In **October** we received Scheduled Monument Consent from HES to allow for further works at Achvarasdal broch – the removal of weeds followed by the laying of geotextile and gravel – to inhibit the growth of hogweed at this site, making it safer and more accessible for everyone!

The broch would feature again after we were nominated for a Scottish Heritage Angel Award for 'Best Heritage Recording / Interpretation Project' – which was a wonderful surprise!

The first task was to shoot a short video for the awards night with filmmaker Rob MacDougall. Iain decided to take him to Achvarasdal, and as you can see, it was a just a wee bit wet...



The awards night was held at the rather splendid Glasgow City Council Chambers – which we highly recommend you visit, if you have not done so already, and so had a rather glitzy feel to it.



It was wonderful to see so many fantastic projects and initiatives being recognised in Scotland – from heritage-recording Arbroath High School pupils to a campaign to rejuvenate one of the oldest cinemas in Scotland – it was flattering to be in such wonderful company.

Despite not winning the category (losing out to the rather amazing Trust project – no shame in that whatsoever!), Iain and Kenneth very much enjoyed their awards night, and it allowed them to take stock of what they'd managed to achieve over the past year.

And we have to say, that Rob did an absolutely fantastic job of the film, so please check it out:

<https://vimeo.com/294786562>

NEW MERCH FOR 2018!

We've released a number of official broch merchandise this year – they make lovely gifts for the broch fan in your life. We've got broch brooches, tea towels, calendars and cards – something for everyone. If everyone liked brochs, that is*

Remember, all proceeds go to CBP, so visit www.thebrochproject.co.uk/shop, or pop into:

- Coo's Tail Gallery
 - Eye Candy
- Forse of Nature
- Caithness Horizons

Big thanks to all those who submitted photos for the broch calendar; Gina Ramsay for her 'Bearded History of Caithness' design, and Alastair Sinclair for his fantastic 'Scottish Brochs' designs!



*Which they do

AND FINALLY...

‘Universally Challenged’



Answers to flag question:

(A) Laos (B) Cyprus (C) Thailand (D) Portugal (E) Malta (F) Cuba (G) Cameroon (H) New Zealand (I) Argentina (J) Cambodia

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