



**President and Secretary's Report
Committee Reports
AGM, 18 April 2025**

This has been a significant year for Pictish art heritage. On the plus side, our vice president David McGovern has completed carving a replica of the Skinnet stone to be placed outside at Halkirk, with the original safe in the North Coast Visitor Centre in Thurso. The Society contributed funds towards the original planning proposal. On the down side, most members will have heard about the tragic collapse of the Aberlemno Roadside stone, its loose box sleeve perhaps protecting it against the frost but acting as a sail in a gust of wind. It snapped across the base and its head was damaged by crashing against the stone dyke. The stone is a scheduled monument, in care of Historic Environment Scotland. The Society produced a statement in the Scotsman to emphasise the urgency to getting the stone repaired, and relocated in a protective environment at Aberlemno. Meanwhile excavations will take place around its base and socket stone which may reveal more about its story. We are working closely with the local group who are upgrading their display facility at Aberlemno Village Hall in order to shelter, at least, the recently discovered symbol stone from Flemington Farm.

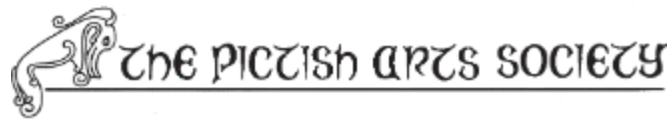
Thanks to our Treasurer Hugh Levey, the Society has tightened up its administration. We have insurance for the fieldtrip. We have acquired a virtual office address: The Pictish Arts Society, Third floor, 3 Hill Street, New Town, Edinburgh, EH2 3JP. This is simply a postal forwarding address but it means that when officers change, particularly the Treasurer, banking and tax details remain the same. info@thepictishartsociety.org.uk remains our preferred means of communication with members. And thanks to his persistence, Hugh has reclaimed our Gift Aid funds. We are in a healthy position to support the aims of the society regarding dissemination and protection of Pictish art. A PAS business card promoting our logo now exists, and we propose to put up posters for the Society in many of the smaller local museums. We are now paying for, rather than sharing, our own website.

In response to the members' survey, our conference provided lectures for newcomers to Pictish art. As a result Groam House has been able to replay the lectures for inducting new guides to their museum.

The lectures, organized by Fiona Campbell-Howes, continue to draw in a wide audience on Zoom and available for replay on YouTube.

We shall also continue to provide open pop-up days in addition to our fieldtrip. In 2024, the fieldtrip was across Fife, and the open visit was to see the new display at Perth Museum.

We continue to produce the Newsletter, edited by Jane Geddes and Christina Smith, with consistently helpful lecture summaries from Sheila Hainey. We depend on contributions from members and outside scholars, and encourage you to contribute copy on relevant Pictish topics to the editor. This includes artwork, photos, and any Pictish-inspired material.



We have also begun a new email series entitled *Pictish Bits & Bobs*, where we pass on interesting things of note in the Pictish world such as lectures, events and publications.

David McGovern has given the website a make-over, to make it clearer and to organise the mighty archive programme. Over the years, Nigel Ruckley, scanned the journals Norman Atkinson and Elspeth Reid scanned the Newsletters (not quite complete) while Elspeth dealt with the indexing. We now have an up-to-date and accessible resource. In response to new members' enquiries, we have produced a recommended list for reading about the Picts, available on the website.

The Society is only as active as its members and its loyal and engaged committee. Two great contributors died this year: Nigel Ruckley and Stewart Mowat and we are grateful for all the expertise they gave to promote the society. We are also grateful to committee members Jenn McKay (former Secretary) and Elspeth Reid (former archivist) who are standing down after years of making a great difference to the Society's output and organisation. Thank you both for years of loyal support.

Treasurer's Report

See separate document

Honorary Officers' reports

a) Membership Secretary, Jenn Wallace

Membership numbers have continued to grow. On the 31st of December 2024 there were 294 membership subscriptions. Some of them are joint memberships so there were 315 individual members. This is up 28 members from the previous year taking into account members who did not renew in that year. 93 subscriptions receive postal newsletters and 201 receive it as a PDF.

255 subscriptions were paid via PayPal with a recurring payment schedule. The rest were paid by either bank transfer, cheque or a one-off PayPal payment.

45 (just over 15%) subscriptions are from outwith the UK: 27 USA, 5 Canada, 3 Australia and 10 from around Europe. This hasn't changed much from the previous year.

b) Newsletter Editors, Jane Geddes, Christina Smith

Three issues of the Newsletter were published this year. In order to streamline production and reduce costs, layout of the publication has been taken in-house, with Christina Smith mastering the layout system of Adobe InDesign.

c) Field trip Organiser, Pam Cranston

- 15-16 June. Field trip to McManus , Perth to see the Pictish collection; Leuchars, Largo and Wemyss Caves.



- 7 September, Perth Museum, to see the new display including Pictish monuments and the Stone of Scone.

d) Lecture Secretary, Fiona Campbell- Howes

The following lectures were delivered on Zoom, with an average attendance of 84 members and additional pick up from YouTube.

- Jane Coll and David McGovern, *'Of Saints and Chariots: Recreating the Skinnet Cross for the Northern Pilgrims' Way'*
- Trevor Wiley, *'The "Wide and Long Arms of the Sea": People and the Landscape on the Early Medieval Firths of Southern Scotland'*
- Dr Murray Cook, *'Pictish Stirlingshire, the Fords of Forth and the Old Kilmadock Stone'*
- Professor David Griffiths, *'The Pictish-Norse transition in Orkney'*
- Dr Alexandra Makin, *'Pictish Textiles: What can we learn from the surviving evidence?'*
- Dr Emma Mackinnon, *'Sound Propositions: Musical evidence and the wider context of Aberlemno III'*

e) Conference Organisers, Fiona Campbell-Howse, Sophie Durbin

The annual conference was held on 5-6 October 2024. In response to membership feedback, the first day's papers were introductory talks for new members, followed by a day of current research:

- Daniel MacLean, *'Problem Solved? An introduction to the Picts'*
- Hugh Levey, *'The Historiography of Pictish Symbols: The Analysis and Interpretation of Pictish Symbols Through Time'*
- Dr Victoria Whitworth, *'How to read a Pictish cross slab'*
- Professor Gordon Noble, *'Latest updates from Northern Picts Project'*
- Allen Fraser, *'Did Fimbulwinter eradicate Shetland's Picts?'*
- Dr Juliette Mitchell, *'The Landscapes of Barrow and Cairn Cemeteries and Symbol Stones in Early Medieval Scotland'*
- Professor Jane Geddes, *'What is David iconography doing in Pictland?'*
- Jordyn Patrick, *'Art: Colouring Pictish sculpture'*

Retirement of Committee members



Elsbeth Reid (archivist, and newsletter contributor) and Jenn McKay (secretary) are standing down. According to the Constitution, the committee may be between 6-12 members. It was decided not to elect any new members to the committee because Lilly has already replaced Jenn as Secretary and the role of archivist can be shared among existing members.

Re-election of the Committee

The following are standing:

- **President:** Jane Geddes
- **Vice-President:** David McGovern
- **Secretary:** Lilly Hurd
- **Treasurer:** Hugh Levey
- **Membership Secy:** Jenn Wallace
- **Editors:** Jane Geddes, Christina Smith
- **Report Writer:** Sheila Hainey
- **Lectures:** Fiona Campbell-Howes
- **Conference:** Sophie Durbin
- **Field Trips:** Pam Cranston