

Exploring Perthshire Past

The 'Exploring Perthshire Past!' project offers to the public an all year-round programme of events promoting regional heritage.

■ Steven TIMONEY (UK)

Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust (PKHT) is a registered Scottish Charity based in Perth, Scotland. The Trust was formed in 1988 as a partnership between Perth and Kinross District Council (now Perth and Kinross Council), the Gannochy Trust and Perth Civic Trust, with the overall objectives to:

- Promote, preserve, maintain and enhance the historical, architectural and archaeological heritage of Perth and Kinross.
- Help maintain ancient monuments and areas of archaeological importance
- Further awareness of the historic environment through education and voluntary involvement in its conservation.

These objectives are achieved in a number of ways. PKHT provides archaeological consultancy for Perth and Kinross Council with relation to planning applications and developments. The Trust manages the Historic Environment Record, a GIS database of all the historic and archaeological sites and monuments in the Perth and Kinross area. PKHT also administers architectural grant schemes, providing financial support towards building work on Listed Buildings which involves the repair, conservation or restoration of architectural features using traditional materials and techniques.

PKHT is also increasingly involved in and focused on public outreach initiatives. 2007 was the tenth anniversary of PKHT organising Doors Open Day (DOD) in Perth and Kinross. DOD is



■ **Fig. 1** volunteers on the Black Spout Homestead excavation

the Scottish celebration of European Heritage Days, and takes place throughout the country on different weekends in September each year. It provides opportunities for members of the public to visit historic and other buildings that are not normally open to the public free of charge.

Since 2003 the Trust has developed its public outreach work with regards to archaeology, with the inauguration of Perthshire Archaeology Week. This event is organised by an informal consortium of local and national organisations including PKHT, Perth Museum and Art Gallery, the Scottish Cranog Centre, Historic Scotland, and local heritage-based societies and groups. The event, which involves guided walks around archaeological and historical sites, talks, displays, exhibitions and workshops, has grown in popularity and developed from a weeklong event to Perthshire Archaeology Month (PAM), which takes place during June each year.

The popularity of the events in PAM and DOD resulted in the Trust seeking external funding for a fulltime public outreach officer post. In September 2006, PKHT's Exploring Perthshire's Past! project, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, started. The project has expanded on the activities of PAM and DOD by delivering

a year-round programme of events, including guided walks around archaeological sites and landscapes throughout the region. There are also opportunities for members of the public to take part in hands-on activities, including archaeological excavation, field walking, geophysical survey, standing building recording and site conservation.

As another way of promoting knowledge and appreciation of the historic environment, PKHT has produced a series of popular full-colour A5 booklets to promote different aspects of the archaeological and architectural heritage of the region. The ethos of the booklets is to provide interesting, affordable sources of information about sites. They are usually written with partner organisations, ranging from local societies and groups to national organisations and Universities. A key element of this process is affordability, with the price maintained at £2-3 per booklet. To date the Trust has produced nine booklets, with themes ranging from the Romans in Perthshire to the Cupmarked Stones of Strathtay. A further three booklets are currently in production.

Alongside the growing booklets series, the Trust continues to produce free leaflets promoting various aspects of the historic environment. These are often done in conjunction with specific projects PKHT has supported which are taking place in the area, as well as promoting the work of the Trust. These are also made available to download from the PKHT website. The Trust continues to provide support for research projects run by other organisations. These have included Strathearn Environs and Royal Forteviot (SERF) project, the Roman Gask Project (RGP), and the Moothill and Abbey Survey Scone (MASS).

The Trust has also been involved in the presentation of sites through the provision of information panels and boards promoting specific sites and buildings. PKHT's strategy is generally to avoid imposing upon sites or buildings with fixed information boards. In special circumstances, where such an approach can be merited, the Trust has undertaken to provide information on the ground to promote the historic environment to visitors.

Future plans for PKHT include promoting a better understanding of the historical, architectural and archaeological heritage of the area through the Trust's website: www.pkht.org.uk This includes continuing to develop the online HER. Ways to increase the amount and types of downloadable content are also being investigated, including providing online guides and resources to sites, monuments, buildings, settlements and landscapes.

Summary

Explorer le passé du Perthshire

La principale mission du "Trust" du patrimoine de Perth et Kinross est de valoriser, préserver et conserver le patrimoine historique et archéologique de la région. Ses actions en direction du public prennent la forme d'un programme annuel de visites guidées et d'ateliers et de nombreuses éditions.

Erforschung der Vergangenheit von Perthshire

Das vorrangige Ziel der Kulturerbestiftung von Perth und Kinross ist es, die historischen und archäologischen Relikte der Region zu fördern, zu schützen und zu erhalten. Im Rahmen ihrer Öffentlichkeitsarbeit bietet die Stiftung ein Ganzjahresprogramm mit geführten Wanderungen und Mitmachaktionen an, sie erstellt eine Serie von populärwissenschaftlichen, vierfarbigen Informationsbroschüren.

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