

Scottish Stone Liaison Group

NEWSLETTER

Natural Stone Institute

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NSI supports Rock On – Scottish Geology Festival

This year, Scottish Natural Heritage coordinated another Scotland-wide festival of events, aimed at bringing geology to the people of Scotland. The biennial event, formerly called 'Scottish Geology Week', was run between 13-28 September and was a great success among rock lovers of all ages. The NSI was out and about attending some of the fun filled family events that were staged as part of Rock On – Scottish Geology Festival 2003.

National Museums Scotland - DIG Day

The National Museums of Scotland, Delving Into Geology Day, on 20th September, was a fun filled family day that included puzzles, fossil casting, games, model making, microscopes and fossils and minerals to explore.

The NSI was present, with a selection of Scottish Building Stones for children of all ages to explore. We also ran a Building Stones Quiz that had children racing around the galleries of the Royal Museum trying to find the correct answers. We had dozens of corrects entries, so many congratulations to Emily Pick, aged 8 and Josie Baye, aged 7, our intrepid winners.



British Geological Survey Open Day

The BGS Open Day was held at Murchison House, in Edinburgh, on Saturday 27th September. The annual event proved to be as popular as ever, with over 700 visitors of all ages attending.



A family take time out from the exhibitions to complete the NSI Building Stones word search (BGS Open Day, Murchison House)

The Natural Stone Institute was present as part of the Building Stones of Edinburgh exhibit, which featured stone for building and slate for roofing. Once again there was something for the younger visitors, in the form of a Building Stones word search. With over 90 entries the competition was tough, but at the end of the day a winner was drawn and the prize went to Jack Brickell, aged 9.



NSI Education Officer, Sarah Bailey, checking the answers of some enthusiastic rock hounds (National Museums of Scotland, DIG Day)

Outside the front door, in the 'garden' area, the Drystone Walling Association had the toughest job of the day. Despite the gloomy weather, they gave a demonstration of their skills, building a permanent stone feature beneath the trees.

After the success of these events, the NSI is looking forward to taking part in the Scottish Geology Festival 2005!

*Sarah Bailey
Education Officer (NSI)*

Skye stonemason earns place on prestigious training scheme



A Skye stonemason is one of only three people in the UK to be accepted on a prestigious training scheme to learn the specialist skills required to repair some of the country's most historic buildings.

The William Morris Craft Fellowship for outstanding craftsmen was founded by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, and Niall Tonagh from Waternish was accepted on to the Fellowship's six-month training course earlier this year.

Having completed the first four months of the course where he travelled around the UK studying at first hand a wide range of building types, repair methods and materials, he is now ready to complete the final leg in October.

Being self-employed, Mr Tonagh has to close his business while he is away, but Skye and Lochalsh Enterprise (SALE) was able to help him with his course costs with a £1500 workforce development grant.

Mr Tonagh said: "I have visited a wide range of buildings already, from St Pauls Cathedral to the Channel Tunnel, and have picked up a lot of new and useful skills. I've also made many new contacts with other craftsmen whom I can call upon if I ever need their help or advice, so it has been a really useful experience."

Claire Campbell from SALE said: "Many of the businesses here on Skye have only one or two employees, which can make it difficult for them to take time off for training. Our workforce development grants are there to help companies with the costs associated with training, and hopefully help to overcome some of the financial obstacles they face.

Niall is committed to developing his business and realises the long-term benefits that can be gained from taking time out for training at this stage, and we are pleased to have been able to help him."

*Article taken from Skye and Lochalsh Website
www.hie.co.uk/sale*

Scottish building stones on the web

Following the completion of SCRAN-funded projects, images of samples from the building stone collections of the British Geological Survey and Edinburgh World Heritage Trust are now available on the web.

Images can be found on the Resources for Learning in Scotland website www.rls.org.uk



To view full images and text requires registration with SCRAN, but thumbnail images and summary descriptions are freely available.

In all, 850 images of specimens, thin sections and Edinburgh buildings have been captured, along with text descriptions. Hopefully we can view this as a first step towards making such information available in a high quality format to professionals, along with images from other sources.

NSI excursions

The NSI is looking to arrange future excursions. If you would like to suggest a visit to a quarry, a building or place of interest to our members, please contact the NSI at the address on this Newsletter.

NSI visit to Swinton sandstone quarry, Berwickshire

Following a successful excursion to Caithness earlier in the year, the Natural Stone Institute held a one-day visit on 30th August to the Hutton Stone Company in Berwickshire. The visit was arranged jointly with the southeast Scotland branch of the Dry Stone Walling Association, and was hosted by Marcus Paine of Hutton Stone.

Historically, two quarries operated on the site, each producing sandstone under different names; Swinton and Whitsome Newton. The stone was used extensively in the Borders and Edinburgh areas in the 19th century, although quarrying is recorded as far back as 1791. Notable examples of the stone include the Meadows Pillars in Edinburgh (1886) and the National War Memorial at Edinburgh Castle (1927). In common with many building stone quarries in Scotland, operation had largely ceased around the time of the First World War, and the quarry remained closed for most of the 20th century.



Marcus Paine of Hutton Stone explains to the party how the company minimise waste by using a guillotine to produce squared random rubble from unused off cuts of stone.

In the quarry the scale of operation is kept small, and traditional methods are used where possible, the working methods tailored to the specific nature of the stone. When the flooded lower part of the quarry was drained an original set of plug and feathers set was discovered, having different dimensions to those commercially available today. The company have had new ones made specifically to this size and find they are perfectly suited to the specific characteristics of the Swinton sandstone.





Some of the party examining the current working face in Swinton quarry. The gently dipping bedding planes can be clearly seen.

The original Whitsome Newton quarry has recently been reopened by Hutton Stone who are producing sandstone for a range of purposes from high quality masonry to rubble walling, now sold under the name of Swinton stone. The stone is used for both new-build and repair of historic buildings. The return of the stone to the market has been particularly welcomed by local building conservation officers.

The visit began at the Hutton Stone Company yard where the party witnessed a wide range of work in progress, using both Swinton stone and imported stone from the UK and overseas. The company have a new stone yard nearby with an impressive range of equipment, yet pride themselves on combining traditional methods of working with modern techniques.



Traditional plug and feathers, still in use today to split sandstone; a technique which gives a clean break and prevents damage to the stone.

Following the visit, the party retired to the award-winning Wheatsheaf in Swinton for a first rate lunch and welcome refreshments. A few weeks after the visit a truck-load of Swinton rubble stone was delivered to the Scottish headquarters of the British Geological Survey in Edinburgh, where the Dry Stone Walling Association constructed a handsome drystone feature during the BGS Open Day to mark the opening of the new entrance area.

*Dr Ewan Hyslop
British Geological Survey*

Maintenance and repair issues for stone cleaned sandstone and granite facades

Abstract

Widespread stone cleaning of Scottish buildings began in the 1960s. In the earlier years, abrasive cleaning caused significant damage, especially to sandstone buildings, abrading the stone surface and blurring detail. Chemical cleaning systems avoided these problems, but could cause staining or bleaching; inevitable chemical retention within porous stone resulted in the formation of potentially damaging salts. Recent years have seen the development of considerably less damaging cleaning systems, however, the legacy of previous cleaning interventions remains with us. All too often stone cleaning has resulted in increased rates of decay on stone façades, with considerable long-term repair costs.

Reference:

Young ME, Urquhart DCM, Laing RA. Maintenance and repair issues for stone cleaned

NSI AGM

The 2nd Annual General Meeting of the NSI was held at the Royal Overseas League, Edinburgh on Thursday 18th September 2003.

Following reports from the Convener and Secretary/Treasurer, the election of office bearers was addressed. Dr Ewan Hyslop was nominated to Council, in addition to the current council membership. Mr Alan McKinney was elected once more to the position of Secretary and agreed to continue as Treasurer, until a replacement was proposed. The position of Deputy Convener was not filled at the meeting and, with the current Convener now embarking upon his third term, the maximum permitted by the Rules and Bye-Laws, those in attendance agreed that it was essential a Deputy be identified prior to the 2004 AGM.

In addition to the AGM duties, there were presentations from 2 speakers. Ms Sarah Bailey, gave an address on how she is developing the role of Education Officer within the NSI. while Dr

sandstone and granite building façades. *Building and Environment*; 38 (2003); 1125-1131.

Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

Journal of Education, Culture, Heritage and the Arts, Volume 11
Ewan Hyslop (British Geological Survey) spoke on 'The Selection of Replacement Sandstone: Lessons from the Edinburgh World Heritage Site'.

Stonemasons workshop at Culzean Castle looking to appoint eighth apprentice

Culzean Castle and Country Park is the National Trust for Scotland's most visited property and one of the major tourist attractions in Scotland. Robert Adam converted a rather ordinary fortified tower house into this elegant bachelor residence for David Kennedy, 10th Earl of Cassillis, between 1777 and 1792. He also built a 'Roman' viaduct and Ruined Arch to add drama to this Italianate castle in its spectacular cliff top setting. Both the exterior stonework and the interior of the castle have been restored by the Trust.

The stonemasons workshop at Culzean Castle has been operating since 1991. Since it was founded, the aims of the workshop have been:

- To carry out repairs to the fabric of Culzean and other NTS sites using traditional techniques
- To produce lime mortars for use within the National Trust for Scotland
- To train stonemasons within the framework of a traditional craft apprenticeship

Since 1991, 6 apprentices have trained at Culzean. During four years of training, they concentrate on the traditional hand skills that are becoming increasingly rare. On completion of their training the apprentices are free to pursue their careers as journeymen with other organisations, allowing another young person to be employed. The seventh apprentice at Culzean is about to enter their third year of study, so the stonemasons workshop is currently looking to recruit its eighth apprentice.

For more information on the apprenticeship offered at Culzean Castle, or for an application form, contact either Andrew Bradley (Stonemason) or Kinley Ladlaw (Building Surveyor) at the address below.

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Maybole
Ayrshire
KA19 8LE

Contributions for future editions of this Newsletter should be sent to Sarah Bailey at the address below or to sarahbailey@nsiuk.org

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