

## Scottish Stone Liaison Group

# NEWSLETTER

## Natural Stone Institute

Issue No. 9 Winter 2004

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### NSI Stages Its Inaugural Annual Stone Lecture



The last few months have been busy for the Natural Stone Institute, with a number of successful events being held. Sir William McAlpine presided over the inaugural NSI Annual Stone Lecture which took place in Edinburgh on Thursday, 11th November. The venue for this event was 28 Queen Street, home to the Scotch Malt Whisky Society.

#### NSI AGM

The NSI held its 4th AGM on Thursday, 16th September 2004 at the Royal Overseas League, Princes Street, Edinburgh. In addition to the formal meeting there was a talk by Murdo MacLeod, Principal Conservation Officer with The City of Edinburgh Council. He spoke on the issue of 'Repairs to Private Property, the City of Edinburgh Approach'. The NSI is very grateful to Mr MacLeod for a very interesting and informative talk, which drew an audience of NSI members and non-members alike.

James Simpson gave a fascinating talk about the project to restore this Georgian townhouse and also No. 8 Queen Street to their former glory. He also talked about the restoration work undertaken on the premises of National Trust for Scotland in Charlotte Square, Edinburgh.

This event provided a wonderful opportunity to view this exceptionally beautiful venue with an expert guide. We look forward to a bigger and better event in 2005.

## BGS Open Day



Following the success of last year's event, the NSI attended the BGS Open Day on Saturday, 25th September. The NSI provided a quiz for the younger visitors, based on the Building Stones of Edinburgh exhibit. At the end of the day, two lucky winners were drawn from the pile of correct entries: Scott Sinclair, aged 7 and Fiona Inglis, aged 9 received their prizes through the post.

This year's dry stone wall feature will be built by members of the Dry Stone Walling Association using red sandstone of the St Bees Sandstone Formation (Triassic, 250 – 205 million years) from Corsehill Quarry, Dumfries and Galloway. Dunhouse Natural Stone kindly donated the stone used in this permanent feature.

## NOVEMBER EVENT

On the 18th November, the NSI took part in a joint seminar with the BRE entitled *Stone In Construction*. The topics covered by the seminar included Sources of Stone, Repair and Maintenance, New Build Issues and Performance.

The speakers for the event came from a variety of organisations including BRE, BGS, Robert Gordon University, ARCA and the City of Edinburgh Council. Delegates were invited to consider the issues that need to be addressed if we are to see regular and better use of stone in construction.



The event was a great success, with many of the delegates staying to continue their discussions at the end of the seminar. The NSI was happy to be part of this event and looks forward to further collaborations with the BRE.

With the launch of its publication *Building With Scottish Stone*, on 17th January, the NSI looks set to continue its run of successful events into 2005.

Sarah Bailey  
Education Officer, NSI

## Caithness Quarries linked by Heritage Project

Two old quarries at Wick's South Head are at the centre of a community-led environmental heritage project which recently received grant funding of £135,000 through the Scottish Executive's Community Environmental Renewal Scheme – a scheme using funds from the Aggregates Levy, set up to address the environmental impact of quarrying.



GeoReports is a new service from the BGS that allows ordering of site-specific geoscience reports online. These reports are available for a number of geoscience disciplines across Britain.

GeoReports will:

- Tell you early about the condition of the ground - its geology, hydrogeology and



These quarries are of historical importance, being the main source of stone used in the construction of Thomas Telford's model town and harbour at Pulteney-town, Wick, and the ill-fated Stevenson's harbour breakwater, in the early part of the 19th century. The ongoing project, which includes the upgrading of an historic access route through the quarries, the formation of a picnic area and pathway overlooking Wick Bay, has already transformed the derelict area around the quarries into an attractive location, now well frequented by both locals and tourists.



Quantities of Caithness flagstone have been generously donated towards the project by two Caithness quarrying businesses, A & D Sutherland and Caithness Stone Industries, from their quarries.

The flagstone donated by the two businesses to the Wick South Head Quarry Project has been used in the formation of the picnic area, and for interpretive artworks depicting the historic significance of the two old quarries.

any related hazards (such as subsidence or radon)

- Let you know what information might already be held for your site in the national geological archive
- Provide cost-effective access to expert advice from BGS scientists who know about your local area

The GeoReports online service can be accessed via the British Geological Survey online shop: [www.bgs.ac.uk/shop](http://www.bgs.ac.uk/shop)

The BGS are making an increasing range of products and services available online. Expect more online initiatives in the coming year, including a commercial picture library and historic maps.

## Scots Stone Used To Remember 9/11

### A New York-based sculptor is using Scottish stone to build a memorial to Britons killed in the September 11 terrorist attacks

Simon Verity is working on his creation in a cottage in John O'Groats where he is cutting and engraving stone slabs. The paving stones will form the pathway at the British Memorial Garden in New York's Hanover Square, in tribute to the 67 Britons who died in 2001. Mr Verity is using Caithness flagstones and Moray sandstone in his work. The sandstone will be engraved with the names of UK counties and then laid out in the shape of the British coastline.

Mr Verity said: "*The Caithness flagstones are making up the blocks of the paving of the park, then there are ribbons of pale Moray stone and it is engraved. There will be Moray stone county lettering in between the pieces of Caithness sandstone. The engraving varies in style so that each county will have a style that is independent.*"

Mr Verity is one of the UK's most celebrated artists. Much of his work has been garden sculpture such as the seated nude for the National Trust at Kiftsgate, Warwickshire, and the Fountain at Barnsley House.

Story from BBC NEWS: Published: 2004/11/09  
07:39:52 GM  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/>

## Slate Islands Weekend; NSI visit to the historic Easdale slate quarries

In August, 2004, the NSI held a very successful weekend visit to the quarries on the 'Slate Islands', which lie on the west coast of Scotland about 10 miles south of Oban. Of these, Easdale is the best known and it was here that the Scottish slate industry first began. Easdale slate was used to roof Glasgow Cathedral in the 12th century and the quarries continued to produce more slate than all the other Scottish quarries until surpassed by Ballachulish in the 1860s. As demand for slate grew in the 19th century, new quarries were opened on the adjacent islands of Seil, Luing and Belnahua, but Easdale continued to be the best known. Slates from the islands were transported by sea around the north of Scotland to all the major east coast towns and through the Crinan Canal to Glasgow and other centres on the west coast.



On a beautiful, sunny, summer day, the NSI party visited Easdale Island to view the old workings. Slate was produced from two seams running NNE-SSW on either side of the island and the quarries were worked to a depth of over 60m, with only a small wall left to protect the workings and workers from the sea. The remains of the sea wall are still visible but in many places it has now been breached and several of the quarries are open to the sea. Throughout the island, evidence of its history is to be seen, from the quarriers' cottages to the remains of the tramways used to transport the slate to the harbour. There is also a good museum, which provides a vivid record of the lives of the quarrymen and their families.

On the following day the party followed the slate seam down the west coast of the neighbouring island of Luing, starting with a small working in the north close to Cuan Sound, passing through



A short visit was made to Toberonochy on the east side of Luing and the party was entertained to tea by Tina Avery and her husband Brice, who were able to give a graphic account of the problems of restoring one of the former quarriers' cottages. The evening concluded with an enjoyable meal at the famous Seafood and Oyster Bar at Ellenabeich Harbour, overlooking the quarry which was permanently flooded after the sea wall was breached in a spectacular storm in 1881.



On the return journey, the party took the opportunity to visit Khartoum Quarry, one of the Ballachulish quarries, and the site of a recent

the north coast to Ewan Sound, passing through Port Mary, now a ghost village, and continuing to the very large working at Cullipool. This quarry was the last survivor of the once buoyant industry. In common with most of the slate quarries in Scotland, production on all the Slate Islands ceased during the First World War. Cullipool was one of the quarries chosen to be re-opened in an attempt to revive the industry after the war. Commercial production ceased finally in 1966, although several of the workers continued to produce slate into the 1970s.

ballachulish quarries and the site of a recent exercise in testing slate.

Dr Joan Walsh  
Paisley University

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## NSI Excursions 2005

We are also keen to hear ideas for excursions in 2005, particularly outside Scotland. If you have any suggestions, please contact Ewan Hyslop ([e.hyslop@bgs.ac.uk](mailto:e.hyslop@bgs.ac.uk) or 0131 667 1000).

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## Letter from Marcus Paine, Hutton Stone Co.

Just writing to confirm my whole-hearted backing for your NSI upcoming publication, *Building with Scottish Stone*. I am really pleased to see that there will now be a single reference point for all aspects of the design and construction industry to have at hand when considering those issues concerning Scottish natural stone and its best use within the trade.

I do believe that clear information regarding stone types available within Scotland and the stark geological differences between these available stones are the key to good selection within all restoration work. It follows of course that if a stone is suitable as a best geological match within a restoration then observation of the built heritage and the performance of the stone used originally therein can supply much guidance as to the dressing characteristics and suitability of the new stone within any proposed new build.

As quarriers of Swinton sandstone here in the Scottish Borders, we feel that it can only benefit ourselves, our fellow quarriers within Scotland, and the industry as a whole to support anything that seeks to give guidance to those charged with making educated choices where stone selection is concerned. Ours is a difficult industry which regularly asks us to achieve the near impossible with an unforgiving natural material.

For those of us within the Scottish stone industry who wish only to put out quality

## Building with Scottish Stone Publication Launch



17th January 2005  
10:30am-3:00pm  
The Conference Room  
The Scottish Executive  
Victoria Quay  
Edinburgh.

To mark the launch of its important new publication, *Building with Scottish Stone*, the Natural Stone Institute is holding a Continuing Professional Development seminar for architects, planners, specifiers and others interested in making greater use of Scotland's principal traditional building material in contemporary design.

*Building With Scottish Stone* is intended as a readable introduction to this important subject and as a valuable desktop reference guide for practitioners. Chapter Headings include *What is Stone, Land of Stone, A History of Scotland's Masonry Construction, Building With Scottish Stone, Quarrying and Masonry, Best Practice, Cladding Issues* and *Case Studies* together with useful glossaries, references and reviews of other recent publications covering the use of stone in building.

The half-day event will cover many of the topics addressed in the new publication, including the geological and constructional characteristics of the various stones available, issues of best practice and the increasing impact of European legislation on

product, and I am happy to say there are many, I would urge that we all unite to support this publication in its endeavours to promote what it is that we spend our lives doing. Working stone is a challenge, good selection makes it just that little bit easier!

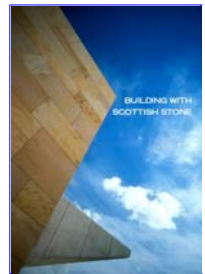
*Best regards,  
Marcus Paine  
Managing Director,  
Hutton Stone Co Ltd.*

the increasing impact of European legislation on specification decisions.

For designers working in the urban or rural environment, *Building With Scottish Stone* offers a reappraisal and fuller understanding of the often complex issues involved in procuring and using a material whose qualities have stood the test of time.

Delegates to the seminar will receive a copy of the publication as well as a Continuing Professional Development certificate recording their attendance at the event. Tickets for the seminar cost £35. If you wish to attend the event, or require further information, please contact Sarah Bailey at the address below.

A PDF flyer for this event  
is available.  
Click on image (860KB):



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**Contributions for future editions of this Newsletter should be sent  
to Sarah Bailey at the address below  
or to [sarahbailey@nsiuk.org](mailto:sarahbailey@nsiuk.org)**

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