

Meetings of the Society 1996–7

Held in the Lecture Theatre of the Royal Museum of Scotland

Monday 9 December 1996, Professor Michael Lynch, MA, PhD, FRHistS, FRSE, President, in the Chair.

The following communication was read:

‘A Future For The Past: record keeping in Scotland, yesterday, today and tomorrow’

by Patrick Cadell, Keeper of the Records of Scotland.

Monday 13 January 1997, Professor Michael Lynch, MA, PhD, FRHistS, FRSE, President, in the Chair.

The following communication was read:

‘Archaeological Evidence for Medieval Lead Mining From Sillerholes, West Linton: with a report on an important collection of archaeological textiles from the site’

by Geraint Coles, BA, PhD and Thea Gabra-Sanders.

Monday 10 February 1997, Professor Michael Lynch, MA, PhD, FRHistS, FRSE, President, in the Chair.

The following communication was read:

‘The Chambered Cairns of Northwestern Scotland: early architectural traditions’

by J N G Ritchie, MA, PhD, MBA, FSA, FSA Scot.

Monday 10 March 1997, Professor Michael Lynch, MA, PhD, FRHistS, FRSE, President, in the Chair.

The following communication was read;

‘Tolbooths and Townhouses: civic architecture in Scotland to 1833’ by Ian Fisher, MA, FSA, FSA Scot.

Monday 14 April 1997, Miss Naomi Tarrant, BA, AMA, Vice-President, in the Chair.

The following communication was read:

‘“With baleful weeds and precious-juiced flowers”: Grooved Ware, grape-cups and prehistoric pharmacognosy’, by Andrew Sherratt, MA, DPhil, FSA.

Monday 12 May 1997, Professor Michael Lynch, MA, PhD, FRHistS, FRSE, President, in the Chair.

The following communication was read:

‘Scotland’s Early Christian Sculpture: a wasting asset?’, by R Michael Spearman, MA, PhD, FSA Scot.

Monday 19 June 1997, Professor Michael Lynch, MA, PhD, FRHistS, FRSE, President, in the Chair.

This being the Society’s annual Public Lecture, the President welcomed Fellows, their guests, and members of the public to the meeting.

The following communication was then read:

‘Pilgrims to St Ethernan: excavations on the Isle of May 1992–6’, by Peter A Yeoman, BA, MIFA, FSA Scot.

Monday 13 October 1997, Professor Michael Lynch, MA, PhD, FRHistS, FRSE, President, in the Chair.

The President welcomed Fellows to this, the opening meeting of the 1997–8 Session.

He then informed Fellows of Council’s reaction, at the meeting held earlier that day, to the proposal by the Trustees to introduce charges for admission to the National Museums of Scotland.

Council was appreciative of the decision to allow free admission to Fellows but was deeply concerned over the principle of charging the general public for admission to this important national resource. Council considered that the major educational role of the Museum would be severely compromised by the imposition of charges, and although free admission was to be granted to various categories of users such as school

parties and children under five, among others, they consider that, if charges are unavoidable, exemption should be granted to all those in full-time education.

Council is aware that financial constraints imposed on the Trustees lie behind the introduction of charges and, accordingly, will ask that urgent consideration is given to rectifying the situation over Value Added Tax (VAT) whereby the National Museums can claim this back only if charges are imposed.

The Director would be writing to express these views, and other additional and related matters of concern, to the Director and the Board of Trustees of the National Museums, the Secretary of State for Scotland, and other appropriate persons or bodies.

The Director then said that temporary Fellowship cards, to be shown from 5 January 1998 to gain free admission to the Museums, would be prepared for enclosure in the next mailing; Fellows would be kept informed through the Newsletter of the more permanent arrangements once these had been finalized.

The Minutes of the last meeting were then read and approved.

Dr William Lonie expressed his support, as a Fellow, for Council's actions over the proposal to introduce admissions charges; the Fellows present joined with him in applauding the position taken by Council.

Mr Trevor Clarke, speaking as a Fellow, and former Trustee, said that he considered that the decision to impose charges would have been made with the greatest reluctance by the Board of Trustees. The President said that Council intended no criticism of the Trustees; any representations that the Society would be making were intended to lend them support and to attempt to increase grant-in-aid to the National Museums and remedy the current VAT position. The Fellows again applauded.

The following communication was then read:

'Admiral Duncan: a forgotten national hero' by David Stockdale, BA, AMA.

Monday 10 November 1997, Professor Michael Lynch, MA, PhD, FRHistS, FRSE, President, in the Chair.

The Minutes of the last meeting were read and approved.

The President then informed Fellows that the Society had been active in expressing concern over the proposed introduction of admissions charges to the National Museums. Fellows had been notified of this in the recent mailing which had included new Fellowship cards, production of which would allow free admission to the National Museums. Letters of concern had been sent by the Director to the Secretary of State and relevant Ministers and published in the press. A reply had been received from Mr Sam Galbraith, the Minister of Health and the Arts, from whom further information would be forthcoming in due course.

The following communication was then read:

'The Roman fort and supply base at South Shields, and the Severan Campaigns in Scotland', by Paul Bidwell, LLB, MA, FSA.