

Design for the Display in the Tarbat Discovery Centre: Final Version (Version 15)

By Martin Carver (Issued May 1999, implemented Sep 1999)

Tarbat Historic Trust commissioned Higgins Gardner to do the design and implementation of the museum display. Higgins Gardner commissioned MOHC to do the text (he also did the concept) and Fran Osborne to do the artwork. THT commissioned Graham Metcalf to do the AV and Anna Ritchie to write the film. THT commissioned FAS to build the archaeology pit. Previous versions were vetted (and returned for revision) by THT. Additional panels were contributed by Ellen Macnamara and Caroline Shepherd Barron.

Commissioners:

Tarbat Historic Trust
Portmahomack
Tain
Easter Ross

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Signing off letters

Dear Fran,

Thanks for yours; herewith revised version of my copy as promised, including

- *Introductory panels revised to take account of their new position
- *New church panel as agreed
- *New panel for alcove on the Tarbat Region
- *Pit panels with explanatory sketches
- *Precentor's box
- *West end.

Not included: Macleod enclosure and Panel at gate. I think these would be more properly done by George/Caroline.

I also enclose material sent to Ellen:

- *A suggested list of common styles for names and dates
- *Copy for an animal panel for the Treasury if we still need one

And to George:

- *An outline Version 15.

I am not sure about the lettering on the wall above the pit. I have 'come and join in' rather than come and enjoy. But I don't think the Trust is actually in a position to issue any invitations regarding the pit.

The biggest problem I still have is the repetition between 2.2.2 and 10.2. I have assumed that we are still looking for two panels on the north wall of the Activity Room; I also assume that there isn't really room for two panels (three including the plaque) on the south wall of the

south pew (ie 2.2.1/2/3). I therefore propose merging old 2.2.2 and old 10.2 . Can you tell me if you think this works?

cc: Caroline

Ellen Macnamara
1, Thistle Grove
London

Dear Ellen,

I enclose a draft 'animal panel' and list of bone exhibits which I hope will fit the bill. Please edit as desired.

In another attempt to sharpen up my act on dating, I offer you a list of definitions (names, places, dates) which we might adopt as common usage. Please let me know if you are not happy with any of these.

Fran has the Church Plan for the west case. Justin is producing the dig plan for the Excavation area (sectors 1 and 2) and will send copies to you and Fran, bringing the original up on 7 June. This is the only piece of artwork we are producing exhibition ready, since it is intended to renew it each year.

Please let me know if I can provide any more information or material.

cc:Caroline

Dear George,

I enclose copies of the new stuff requested from me for the display, with letters to Fran and Ellen. Also the current outline which I have daringly called Version 15 and my contributions to it.

We are planning to bring up the objects for exhibition on 7 June. Justin will finish the pit and lay in the cist burials at that time.

We will require permission from NMS/QLTR to exhibit an additional quern in the pit. We shall also have to buy a coin for the pit. Coin and quern will be glued down. Otherwise we can lay our hands on expendable material for all the other pit finds.

cc: Caroline

NOTE about NAMES and DATES

Firthlands - the lands cut by the Moray, Dornoch and Cromarty Firths

Tarbat Peninsula - Edderton to Tarbat Ness/Cromarty to Dunrobin [70-95 easting; 64-01 northing]. To set it in its context, we should really go as far south as Rosemarkie or as far east as Burghead, and I have done this for the map we are displaying at 6.3 taking account of the shape of the alcove.

Portmahomack - the area of the present settlement

St Colman's Church - this and previous buildings

The Tarbat Excavation - the excavation site inside the church and beyond.

The Glebe Field - the field to the west of the church, containing the car park and Sector 2 of the excavation

The Gordon Field - the field to the south of the Glebe, containing sector 1 of the excavation.

The Discovery Programme or Tarbat Discovery Programme - to mean the whole research project

The Calf Stone - TR 28, 35

The Boar Stone - TR 22

The Monk Stone - TR 20

The Inscribed Stone - TR 13

May we agree to say 'grave-marker' for the smaller cross-slabs such as TR 21, 33 and 'cross-slabs' for the parts of more monumental pieces such as TR 1, TR 20.

I suggest the following compromise **dating** scheme:

The sculpture:

Late 8th to 9th century or Around AD 800" for the highly decorative pieces, TR 1, 20, 22, 28.
7th to 10th century for the possible range of early carving at Portmahomack in general.

The Church:

We suggest just six churches as follows:

Church 1 (Pictish, of the 9th century or earlier. I think we should say it was built by the 9th century; or in the 9th century or before rather than during the 9th century as in the Timeline. We could even risk probably 8th century in view of the sculpture. Which do you prefer? There is no direct dating of course). The putative chapel terraced into the hill at the east end.
Church 2 (Medieval, incorporates pieces of Pictish 8th-9th century sculpture. Probably 12th century). The simple rectangular chapel.

Church 3 (Medieval, 12-13th century). As Church 2 with the chancel added at the east end.

Church 4 (Medieval, late 13th century). Church 3 extended to west and east with a crypt added at the east end.

Church 5 (Reformation, after AD 1560). Addition of the north aisle, belfry and galleries. This church embraces the rebuild of 1756.

Church 6 (After the Disruption of 1843). Essentially the building taken over by the Trust and developed as a display centre.

Historical Periods (applicable to NE Scotland)

Early Pictish or Pagan Pictish: 4th-7th century or AD 300-700

Christian Pictish: 8th-9th century or AD 700-900

Viking applies to raiders: 9th to 10th century or AD 800-1000

Norse applies to settled people of Scandinavian culture: 9th-11th century or AD 800-1100

Early Historic or Early Medieval 4th to 11th century or AD 300-1100

The Dark Ages 5th to 9th century or AD 400-800. Anathema to some (eg Charles Thomas) but I still think it a useful concept (here as in Greece) and the public find it exciting.

In my opinion it is also helpful to use well-tried and infrequently challenged terms like Class I Class II for the sculpture and Kenneth mac Alpin for the Scottish king. But I would prefer Bridei son of Mailchon (since he's a Pict) to Brude mac Maelchu etc.

Do let me know if you would like to modify any of this.

Martin

TARBAT DISCOVERY CENTRE

Version 15, March 1999

OUTLINE

[The initials in square brackets show who is providing copy]

1. ENTRANCE

1.1 On the wall of the entrance passage (west side)

- 1.1.1 Panel: The Tarbat Historic Trust [CSB]
- 1.1.2 Panel: Major Donors [CSB]
- 1.1.3 Panel: In Memoriam [CSB]

1.2 On the wall of the entrance passage (east side)

- 1.2.1 Panel: Funding Bodies [CSB]
- 1.2.2 Panel: Professional Acknowledgments [GM]

1.3 On the wall facing the entrance passage

- 1.3.1 Panel: Welcome [MC]
- 1.3.2 Plaque explaining the brass tram-lines [MC]

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Box Pew (north side)

- 2.1.1 Panel on north wall: Art from under ground: a Pictish sculpture is unearthed [MC]
- 2.1.2 Plaque on north wall: St Colman's Six Churches [MC]

2.2 Box Pew (south side)

- 2.2.1 Panel on south wall: Peoples of Early Scotland [MC]
- 2.2.2 [deleted]
- 2.2.3 Plaque on floor explains exposed foundations [MC]

2.3 Panel long the north edge of the Nave floor: The Timeline [EM]

2.4 Painted on the lintel of the west gallery - Inscription [MC]

2.5 Panel against the railings on the east side of the Nave floor - Orientation [MC]

3. THE EXCAVATION PIT

3.1 Exhibition - The Excavation Pit [MC]

- 3.2 Along the edge of the Pit - Panel explaining the Pit [MC]
- 3.3 On south wall above the pit - Film *History from the Sand* [Murray Grigor with MC]
- 3.4 On south wall - Plaque explains exposed foundations of church [MC]

4. THE TREASURY

- 4.0 Panel: Introduction [EM]
- 4.1 West Display Case- From Prehistory to the Picts [EM]
- 4.2 North Display - The Golden Age of Easter Ross
 - 4.2.1 Panel on west door: Picts of the Firthlands AD 500-700 [EM]
 - 4.2.2 Panel in centre: The Tarbat sculptures in the National Museum [EM]
 - 4.2.3 Panel on east door: Christian Picts of the Firthlands [EM]
- 4.3 East Display Case - From the Picts to the Reformation [EM]
- 4.4 On the east wall by the window: Plaque describes a replica of sculpture TR1 [EM]
- 4.5 In the centre: Plaque explains the burials in the vault [EM]
- 4.6 In the centre: Plaques describe the Display of Sculptured stones [EM]
- [4.7 Office]
- 4.8 Plaque for the Mackenzie Memorial [MC]
- 4.9 Plaque for the Leslye Memorial [MC]
- 4.10 Plaque for the Cuthbert Memorial [MC]

5. THE CRYPT

- 5.1 On the east side of the steps leading to the crypt entrance: Panels
 - 5.1.1 Right hand panel - Introduces the Crypt [MC]
 - 5.1.2 Left hand panel - Records the restoration of the church [MC]
- [5.2 Plinth]
- 5.3 At head of steps leading down to crypt. Plaque warns of perilous descent [MC]
- 5.4 At east end of crypt: Pews [HG]
- 5.5 On east wall of crypt. Plaque records earliest wall [MC]
- 5.6 On east wall of crypt. Plaque describes aumbry containing altar light [MC]
- 5.7 In the south-east corner: plaque shows where the Monk Stone was found [MC]
- 5.8 In the north-east corner: incised stone TR26 re-used in situ as a lintel [MC]
- 5.9 In the north-west corner: 13th century wall reddened by fire in the 15th century [MC]
 - 5.9.1 Plaque labels plunger button which activates light [MC]
 - 5.9.2 Plaque announces the Mackay massacre experience, with headphones [CSB]
- 5.10 On north side of doorway. Plaque indicates Mason=s mark [MC]

6. ARCHAEOLOGY IN ACTION

- 6.1 Panel on the south edge of the crypt steps. Archaeological excavation: how the digging is done [MC]
- 6.2 On the east edge of the excavation pit: plinth with theodolite for spying finds. Plaque explains how to use it [MC]
- 6.3 Over the niche on the south wall illuminated interactive panel. Archaeological Survey: Exploring the Tarbat region.[MC]
- 6.4 On the south wall: plaque explains exposed foundations [MC]
- 6.5 On the south wall: panel shows Excavation in Action [MC]

7. ST COLMAN'S GALLERY

7.1. Title

7.1.1 On the face of the panelling: St Colman's Gallery [MC]

7.1.2 On the lintel: Inscription [MC]

7.2 In north-east corner: The Story of St Colman's Church

7.2.1 On sloping panel: The six churches of St Colman [MC]

7.2.2 The Church today [MC]

7.2.3 North Display case contains pictures of an aquamanile and chafing dish from the church excavations. (Will be replaced eventually by replicas) [MC]

7.2.4 South Display case contains the church plate [MC]

7.2.5 Plaque explains the Precentor's Box. [MC]

7.3 Plaque explains the Forbes Memorial [MC]

7.4 Plaque explains the medieval grave-slab fragments [MC]

7.5 Pulpit with Bible [EM]

[7.6 The Cemetery. Now a booklet. MC]

7.7. Display Cases [EM]

7.8 Panels - People of the Port [EM]

7.9 Over east window - transparent image of grave cover outside east end [MC]

8. THE LINK GALLERY

8.1 Panel at east end - Children of Tarbat [CSB]

8.2 Panel at east end - Introducing the Laird's Loft [CSB]

8.3 Notice Board [HG]

8.4 Hanging on wall at west end of gallery: Travelling Panels [MC]

9. LECTURE ROOM

9.1 Picture show, using three slide projectors and recorded sound [Murray Grigor with Anna Ritchie]

10. THE ACTIVITY ROOM

10.1 Facing the link gallery: Panel introduces the Activity Room [MC]

10.2 On the north wall: Panel- The Tarbat Discovery Programme [MC]

10.3 In centre of room: Oval table with terminals giving access to data-bases [Software by Murray Grigor with MC]

10.4 Along east edge of gallery: work tops with games [Contractor to be appointed]

10.5 On north wall: Panel shows the Pictish Trail [John Wood]

11. THE BELFRY

11.1 Panel describes belfry [MC]

12. THE SHOP

12.1 On the west wall, south side. Plaque describes the architecture of the west end of the church [MC]

12.2 On the floor, centre. Plaque explains the medieval grave cover [MC]

12.3 On the west wall, north side. Plaque labels carved stone TR 14 [MC]

13. OUTSIDE

13.1 Panel announces the Centre [CSB]

13.2 Plaque labels the Macleod enclosure [CSB]

E N D

DETAILED COPY FOR EXHIBITS MARKED MC

1. ENTRANCE

1.3 On the wall facing the entrance passage

1.3.1 Panel: Welcome [MC]

(A) Large photograph of dig and church

Text: "Welcome to the Tarbat Discovery Centre
Ionad Taisgealaidh Thairbeirt
Bienvenue - Willkommen – Benvenuto"

(B) Tickets - Entrance

(C) Colour Logo:

Text: "Lighting up the Dark Ages".

1.3.2 Plaque explaining the brass tram-lines

Text: *The brass tram-lines mark the line of the west wall of the 12th century church of St Colman.*

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Box Pew (north side)

2.1.1 Panel on north wall. Art from under ground: A Pictish sculpture is unearthed.

Graphic: Blow up of N125/5 or N124/2

Text: *Art from under ground. A Pictish sculpture is unearthed during archaeological excavations in the Glebe Field in 1997. This stone, which shows a family of cattle carved in low relief dates to the 8th or 9th century AD, and has become known as the ACalf Stone@. It had been broken up in Viking times to make a drain lining.*

2.1.2 Plaque on north wall: **St Colman's Six Churches** [MC]

Graphic: Multi-coloured plan of Church, including the mini-churches along the bottom.

Text: *The Six Churches of St Colman.*

Our exhibition is housed in a church building that is mainly 18th century in date, but excavations have shown that a church has stood in this place for over a thousand years. Six main buildings have been distinguished: (1) A Pictish chapel of which only a trace remains. (2) A little rectangular church was built in the 12th century when the Parish system was

initiated in Scotland and (3) a chancel was soon added. (4) In the 13th century the church was lengthened and a crypt built. (5) After the Reformation in 1560, the north aisle and the galleries were added; and (6) after the Disruption of 1843, the nave was furnished with panelling and box pews. This was the building that became redundant in 1974 and is now reborn as this Visitor Centre. Panel 7.2 tells the full story.

The lines of the walls of the earlier churches are marked on the floor with brass tram-lines or distinctive paving; and those parts of the earlier buildings that survive and can still be seen are labelled with plaques like this one. The blue arrow shows where you are.

2.2 South Pew - Introduction to the Discovery Programme

2.2.1 THE PEOPLES OF EARLY SCOTLAND.....and their world

Graphic: 3 nested maps, of the North Sea, of Scotland and of the Tarbat Peninsula (attached)

Text: [with Map 1] *During the FIRST MILLENNIUM AD, the countries of modern Europe were being formed from a large number of small kingdoms, both Pagan and Christian.*

[with Map 2] *Six nations competed for the land we now call Scotland.*

PICTS. *Prehistoric peoples living in the north-eastern part of the island of Britain. Nicknamed Picti by the Romans, their own language is still unknown.*

SCOTS *Prehistoric people related to the Irish who were settled in the area of Argyll from at least the 6th century. They spoke a q-celtic language which has survived as Gaelic and used words like mac meaning son of, which has survived as Gaelic.*

BRITONS *Prehistoric people occupying the island of Britain. By the first millennium the term is used to mean the people living in the Borders and Strathclyde. They spoke a p-celtic language, forming words like map meaning son of. The language of the Britons survives as Welsh.*

ROMANS *People from what is now Italy, who by force of arms had created a great empire in Europe and the Mediterranean by 100 AD. They invaded Britain, but never controlled the Picts and the Scots. Their northern frontier was marked by two walls, Hadrian's Wall built AD 122, and the Antonine Wall, built AD 143. The Roman Empire became officially Christian in the 4th century. The Roman province of Britannia was abandoned and had disintegrated by AD 450, but Latin, the language of the Romans remained in widespread use in Britain for another 1000 years.*

ANGLES *People from north Germany and southern Scandinavia who were crossing the North Sea and settling in the east of Britain from about AD 450. They created a kingdom in Northumbria and expanded north and west during the 6th century. They were defeated by the Picts in 685 at the Battle of Nechtansmere which halted further expansion north of the Firth of Forth. The Angles spoke a Germanic language which has survived as English.*

NORSE *People from northern Scandinavia who were crossing the North Sea and raiding as*

Vikings from the 9th century, They settled in Caithness, Sutherland and in the northern and western isles which remained culturally Norse for another 500 years. The settlers spoke a Germanic language related to Norwegian, forming words like Firth (fjord).

[Map 3] *Portmahomack lies on the Tarbat peninsula between the Dornoch and Moray Firths, a region which was once the centre of a kingdom of the Northern Picts. Christian missions came from the Scots and Angles, and the Norse raided and may have settled nearby.*

What do we want to know?

The **TARBAT DISCOVERY PROGRAMME**, centred at Portmahomack, is a research project aimed at exploring the history of the Tarbat Region by means of archaeological excavation and survey. We are looking in particular for the Northern Picts, to know when they made a kingdom, why they converted to Christianity and what became of them. The results of our researches are presented here in the TARBAT DISCOVERY CENTRE. Much has been discovered, but much more has still to be found out.....

Come and join in the hunt with us!

2.2.2 [scrapped]

2.2.3 Plaque on floor explains exposed foundations

Graphic: Church plan with blue spot.

Text: *The south door of the medieval church (Church 2) is indicated by the long stone which formed its threshold.*

2.4 Painted on the lintel of the west gallery - Inscription

Text (in original lettering as per TR13): IN NOMINE IHU XRI.....

2.5 Panel against the railings on the east side of the Nave floor - Orientation

[Left side of panel]

Text: The TARBAT DISCOVERY CENTRE invites you to share the adventure of archaeological discovery.

Our exhibition, housed in the historic church of St Colman, tries to answer your questions - and ours - about early Europe, the Picts, the Tarbat region and the story of Portmahomack.

*What are we trying to find out?.....*INTRODUCTORY PANELS
*What are we looking for?.....*EXCAVATION PIT and FILM
*When did it happen?.....*TIMELINE
*What have we found?.....*THE TREASURY
*How was it found?.....*ARCHAEOLOGY IN ACTION
The story of St Colman=s church..... CRYPT AREA

*The people of Portmahomack.....*St COLMAN=S GALLERY

UPSTAIRS we offer you a *Picture Show.....*LECTURE ROOM

*....and things to do and play with.....*ACTIVITY ROOM

[The following is on a detachable strip/board at the bottom of the panel; removed when dig is closed]

AND OUTSIDE please visit the Archaeological Excavations in progress....

[Right side of panel]

As now, except:

Upper Level: delete Pictish Queen

Main Level: Excavation Pit

3. THE EXCAVATION PIT

3.1 **The pit.** *Plastic skeleton to be added. Finds to be placed on the floor. Section boards to be drawn up and installed [J Garner-Lahire]*

3.2 **Panels** explaining what you see

3.2.1 Central **Panel** on plinth.

Graphic: Shows the overall plan and a mini-map which shows church, graveyard, Glebe Field, Gordon Field and excavation area [attached]. I think this is necessary to explain the terms used in the panel and the images which occur in the film.

Text: "What we are looking for - HISTORY FROM THE SAND.

Press this button for a 3 minute film introducing you to the Discovery Programme.

Excavation inside the church and in the fields beyond is bringing to light the ancient settlements of five main periods. Examples of the different kinds of buildings and finds belonging to each period have been gathered together here and presented like the overlapping pages of a book.

Page 1 (4-7th century): the time of the Pagan Picts is represented by the curved wall of a house with its hearth, like one excavated in the Gordon field [blue]

Page 2 (8-11th century): the time of the Christian Picts and the Norse. We show a rectangular house, like one excavated in the Glebe field. At this time the site may have been a monastery. Christian sculptures like the Calf stone may have been broken up and dumped when Vikings came [green]

Page 3 In the 12th century the first parish church was built on the present site and dedicated to St Colman. Its actual foundations are seen on the far side of the Pit. [brown]

Page 4 (12th to 16th century) Many burials, some in shrouds, some in coffins, were placed inside the church.[red]

Page 5 After the Reformation of 1560, St Colman's Church was rebuilt. A flagstone floor was laid and from now on burial inside the nave was discouraged. The actual flagstone floor can be seen on the edge of the pit to the left [black].

The edges of the pit replicate the layers that the archaeologists have cut through to discover this sequence of events.

These "pages of time" are intended to show what the features so far discovered looked like in the ground.. Their interpretation is provisional and will become better and clearer as excavation reveals more".

3.2.2 Opposite Page 1: **"Page 1": Early Picts 400-700 AD**

Picture: Page 1, with letters and numbers.

A These represent features first encountered in the Gordon Field to the south of the church. @

A: A strong bright yellow concrete screed represents the local sandy subsoil.

B: Ard marks, made by primitive ploughs with stone or wooden tips were seen as grey stripes against the bright yellow subsoil. These could be traces of cultivation from as long ago as 3000 BC.

Illustration: An ard in use

C: Stones of a Building ("House 1"). Such narrow foundations may have supported a wall made mainly of turf; the post-sockets would have held vertical timbers set at intervals. The building was curiously shaped in plan, like a bag.

Illustration: A turf building with a bag-shaped plan.

D: Hearth of burnt clay.

E: Two post-sockets, which would have held upright posts.

F: Rubbish pit

G: Later pit

H: Page 1 is buried by a dirty yellow-buff layer of disturbed sand, on which a buried soil develops

Look out for these things on the surface:

- 1 a stone quern for grinding grain
- 2 sheep bones
- 3 fragments of slag from metal-working

3.2.3 Opposite page 2: **"Page 2": Christian Picts and Pagan Norse 700-1100 AD**

Text: The site at this date may have been a Pictish monastery with a little chapel (perhaps to the east of the present nave) and many grave markers and monumental cross-slabs of a kind you may see in the Treasury. The people were buried in graves lined with stones. Examples of these *cist-graves* have been re-assembled in the Treasury vault (4.5). In the 9th century, all traces of the Picts vanish and the place may have become a Norse settlement. During these centuries the people's houses are thought to have been rectangular, like an example seen in the Glebe Field to the west of the church.

I: A pale grey concrete screed represents the buried prehistoric soil

J: Stone foundations of a building ("House 2"). It is rectangular and encloses a pebble floor.

Illustration: a rectangular stone and turf building, with chapel and cross-slab in the background.

K: A post socket, which would have held an upright post. An example is shown lying next to it.

L: A pebble path

M: Another post-socket

N: Bronze worker's pit, containing pieces of crucible and bronze waste

O: The Calf stone: a carved Pictish stone which was re-used by the Vikings to cap a drain.

Look out for these finds:

4. a spindle whorl for spinning yarn
5. A painted pebble of a type found in Pictish Orkney
6. shells from seafood
7. bones of a horse [or dog]

3.2.4 Opposite page 3: **"Page 3": The building of the Church; 1100-1200 AD**

Illustration: Axonometric of the early Church, with the bit of wall we are looking at highlight.

Text: After the Picts had disappeared, a new church was built, probably in the 12th century. Its foundations incorporated pieces of Pictish Christian grave markers and cross-slabs which had been broken up and re-used as building stone. A part of the actual 12th century foundations are visible running along the far side of the pit. These foundations were used by all subsequent versions of the church up to today.

P: The south wall of the church was founded on large cobbles laid in a trench. On top of these were laid long slabs of stone, some of which were re-used Pictish carvings. Above the slabs, the wall was raised in squared sandstone blocks.

Q: Foundation trench for the wall, filled in with disturbed sandy soil

3.2.5 Opposite page 4: **"Page 4": Burials in the church; 1100-1560 AD**

Illustration: Plan of the 13th century church, with burials, and a coffin burial

Text: The nave of the medieval church was used to bury many individuals, some in wooden coffins. The soil was dug over and over again as more burials were added, becoming more and more dark and mixed.

R: Outlines of coffins, as seen against the churned up fill of the nave.

S: The skeleton of a medieval person lies in a coffin. Men, women and children were found, all aligned with their feet to the east.

Look out for:

8. Medieval green glazed pottery
9. Human bones
10. Coin

3.2.6 Opposite "Page 5": The Post Reformation Church floor: After 1560 AD

Picture: Plan of the 16-17th c church showing position of early church, flagstone floor and outline of archaeology pit.

Text: The post-Reformation church, with its flagstone floor, is essentially the church we still have.

T: Original flagstone floor on its bedding of sand

3.3 Introductory Audio-Visual Presentation on the Big Screen.

The screen is animated by a projector from under the floor on the North side of the archaeology pit. *The form of this AV Presentation has still to be agreed with the AV contractor.*

Video footage has been prepared and is available from J Garner-Lahire.

Provisional Specification is as follows:

The film has two modes:

MODE 1 is the default mode [ie it's there all the time]: It has four images which fade into each other, in the manner of a screen saver. The "Pages of Time" are lit up at this stage.

(1) North Sea imagery, with burial mounds and boats

(2) Aerial Photograph of Portmahomack, with church highlit and scrolled by the words "THE TARBAT DISCOVERY PROGRAMME.....looking for the Northern Picts".

(3) fades after 5 seconds to an Aerial Photograph of the Tarbat area, with church and dig, perhaps wheeling via rostrum camera. "THE TARBAT DISCOVERY PROGRAMME....digging up 4000 years of life on Tarbat Ness". The dig area has people digging, and people being shown round, so the visitor knows to go there.

(4) fades after 5 seconds to a transparent axonometric of the inside of the church. This shows the viewer the nave, the Treasury, the Crypt, St Colman=s Gallery, the Lecture Theatre, the Activity Room, the Shop. Each glows in turn. If possible, vignettes in each destination make it plain what happens there without words. [Return to (1)].

MODE 2: A three-minute film, in full colour with titling, and some (gentle and good quality) music, but without a commentary. The titling/labelling could be laid on using the "ticker-tape" technique, as in the TV Programme *Down to Earth*. In the scenario below, "Title" means sub-title, and is the equivalent of a voice-over commentary. When the button is pressed to start the film, the "Pages of Time" are plunged into darkness.

Specification for the sequence:

0.00 (time in mins/secs) North Sea imagery, with sea, boats and burial mounds. Title: "Dark

Age kingdoms of the Northern Seas". Map of the North sea area showing the new kingdoms of the 7th century in Norway, Sweden, England. We wheel round this map and zoom into:

0.04 The Moray Firth area, with firths labelled and pinpricks of light for the sites of the 6th century. Title: "New light on the Firthlands, home of the Northern Picts". We zoom onto:

0.08 Craig Phadrig; ramparts; vitrified material. Title:"The prehistoric communities used hill-top forts, like Craig Phadrig". melt to Burghead, with sea breaking over it. Title "In about 400 AD, as the Romans left Britain, the Picts occupied a great promontory fort at Burghead". Details of defences and Burghead Bulls. Title "The people of Moray put their symbol on stone.....a bull". Melt to other Class 1 symbols stones (Easterton of Roseisle, Knochnagael, Ardross, Brandsbutt, Dunrobin 2, Strathpeffer). Title: "Great monuments of the peoples of the Firthlands...400-700 AD.....but who are they?"

0.24 Pull back to the map, with title "Tarbat Discovery Programme: lighting up the Dark Ages". Zoom on Tarbat Ness (Labelled "Tarbat Ness") with cliffs, flowers, seabirds, lighthouse. Merge to AP of Portmahomack (labelled "Portmahomack", with church highlit and crossed by the words "History from the sand -the story of a Firthland people". Perhaps the landscape can wheel as tho' we were in a plane. Zoom to Tarbat sector 1, merge to movie showing people digging on Structure 1.

Light falls on page 1.

We zoom in to wall line and melt to reconstructions of Pictish houses and souterrain. Title: "Next to this church a large settlement of the pagan Picts lies buried.....The Tarbat Discovery Programme is revealing details of their everyday life...."

0.55 Title changes to "...And death...". Reconstruction of a cist burial with body; cist burial being dug. Title: "The earliest burials found beneath this church are *cist burials*. The body is enclosed in a chamber made of stone slabs"

Light spreads to page 2

1.25 Pan up from cist burial being dug to excavations in church, incorporating video footage.

Title: *The site at this date may have been a Pictish monastery with a little chapel terraced into the hill which carries the present church.* Insert sketch of chapel. Cut to dig in progress in Sector 2, house foundations. Merge to reconstruction of house in stone and turf. Title: "The people lived in houses of turf and stone next to the chapel". Detail of hearth, bronze working. Title: *Around the chapel many grave markers and some monumental cross-slabs were erected.* Close up of Monk stone and inscription panning out to a tall monument three metres high.

Title: *In the 8th and 9th centuries Easter Ross produced some of the greatest sculpture known to Europe.* As we watch the Monk stone topples and is overlaid by smoke and flames. The impression of a village of rectangular houses going up in smoke.

Title *In the 9th century, the Vikings began to raid northern and eastern Britain, especially targetting monasteries. The Moray Firthlands soon became part of Scotland. The traces of*

the Picts vanish and the Tarbat site may have become a Norse or a Scottish settlement. In 1030 a great battle was fought on Tarbat Ness between the Norse and the Scots.

Light falls on Calf Stone

Video and still footage of Calf Stone being excavated. Title: *Pictish sculpture was broken up and used to line drains.*

1.55 Cut to dig in church, especially featuring wall-lines. Title: "The walls of St Colman's Church". Still and video footage of carved stones being found in the foundations (or we zoom into them).

Light falls on the church foundations (S wall)

Title: *A new church was built in about the 12th century. It re-used many pieces of the Pictish monuments as building blocks*

Plan of Church 2, with reconstructed elevation, labelled 12th century; then church 3, then church 4 with animated elongation and adding of crypt, labelled 13th century. "In the 13th century the church was lengthened at both ends and a crypt built to the east". In Church 4 zoom to:

2.25 Burials being excavated in the church. Title: "The Middle Ages: many human burials were placed in the Church"

Light falls on page 4.

Close-up/reconstructions of a coffin burial. Title "Some were in coffins". Close up of leather shoe/brains/hair. Title *The preservation in these burials was remarkable: leather, personal hair and even pieces of human brains being found.*

2.40 Pan up to interior of church before excavation, into crypt. Title: "After the Reformation, no more burial was allowed in the nave..... burial vaults were constructed underground". Plan of Church 5, growing up into elevation as known. Title: "A new North aisle was built to house the Laird's loft". Zoom onto axonometric of Church 5. Title: *The church was redesigned to suit the new doctrines. The axonometric spins. The whole axis of the church was turned through 90 degrees. The congregation sat in galleries to east, west and north which focussed on the pulpit.*

A flagstone floor was laid.

Light falls on page 5

2.50 Cut to St Colman's Gallery, zooming onto 19th century panelling material. Title *After the Disruption, the congregation shrank and in 1974 St Colman's was declared redundant. Video footage of Trustees. In 1980, a group of local got together and bought the church for £1. Video/still footage of the restoration. Now the Church of St Colman lives again as a Centre for the people of Portmahomack and their many visitors*

Pan around the display. Title: "Tarbat Discovery Centre: archaeology for all" and "Come and discover the Picts with us." Pan into a busy day in the church as fitted out as display centre, and then down to the Archaeology Pit in its mode as a children's excavation experience. Music merges into sounds of happy childlike voices.

Whole pit lit.

3.00 END

3.4 On the early foundations: **Plaque:** "Foundations of the medieval church of St Colman, built in the 12th century".

4. THE TREASURY

4.1 West Display Case.

General plan of the excavations, updatable. Coming from Justin Garner-Lahire, ready for exhibition. This plan will be regenerated and renewed every year.

4.3 East Display Case

Plan of the Church as excavated with find spots. [A Roe. Sent to FO]

4.8 Plaque for the Mackenzie Memorial

Text: Memorial to William Mackenzie, minister to the parish of Tarbat from 1638 until his death in 1642

4.9 Plaque for the Leslye Memorial

Text: Jean Leslye was the wife of James Cuthbert, commemorated on the opposite wall

4.10 Plaque for the Cuthbert Memorial

Text: Memorial to James Cuthbert, one-time Provost of Inverness

5. THE CRYPT

5.1 On the east side of the steps leading to the crypt entrance: Panels

5.1.1 Right hand panel - Introduces the Crypt

Graphic (1) [attached]: A perspective drawing of the crypt showing:

* the date of each wall: east - 9th century?/west - 13th century/vault - 16th century/steps - 16th century

* aumbry

* lights

- * *Monk Stone found here*
- * Pictish stone in situ
- * Signs of burning
- * Mason's Mark

(2) Photographs of the Crypt being cleared by Jill Harden; and under excavation: looking east [N102/11]. Looking west [N152/6]

Text: The steps lead down to a CRYPT with a barrel vault and small openings which let in the light from outside. The east wall is on a different alignment to the rest of the church, and is thought to have belonged to an earlier chapel of the Picts which was terraced into the side of the hill. This wall has a medieval aumbry, or secure cupboard for keeping sacramental vessels, such as the chalice.

The first crypt was built in the late 13th century. It had no vault but was shaped like a rectangular room. This crypt was rebuilt after the Reformation of 1560, when the barrel vault was inserted.

A Pictish cemetery must have been disturbed by the construction of the first crypt. Pictish memorial stones have found their way into the fabric of the walls. The Monk Stone, on display in the Treasury, was extracted from the south east corner; another piece of sculpture is still in situ at the north-east corner.

In the 15th century the medieval crypt was the scene of a notorious episode when a rading party of Sutherland Mackays took refuge within it. Their pursuers, the Rosses, set fire to the building and clan leader Angus Mackay was killed. Traces of a fire can still be seen on the stonework.

On the door jamb of the entrance is a Mason's Mark.

5.1.2 Left hand panel - Records the restoration of the church

Graphic: Photographs of the church before 1994, during excavation in 1997, during restoration, inside and out in 1997 and in 1999.

Text: The Church of St Colman became redundant in 1948, after which the small group of local people who became the Tarbat Historic Trust began a long struggle to save it: *The White Church* with its individual belfry was a cherished landmark as well as being a symbol of Portmahomack's history. In 1980, the Trust bought the church for £1 and set about raising the money to repair it. Archaeological investigations beginning in 1984 and culminating in the launch of the Tarbat Discovery Programme in 1994 greatly increased the historical value of the site and encouraged the participation of major sponsors. The church was restored and opened in its new role as a Visitor Centre in 1999.

Captions:

(1) Before its restoration, the church was being gradually laid open to the elements, with

slates falling off the roof and birds colonising the nave. Rubbish metres deep had accumulated in the north aisle and crypt. The rubbish included several fragments of Pictish sculpture.[Picture from Fred Geddes]

(2) [N116/13 or 114/14] During the restoration programme the building was subjected to a full programme of archaeological and architectural recording.

(3) The roof was renewed and the walls repointed and the exterior protected with fresh harling [Picture from Fred Geddes]

(4) St Colman's Church was re-opened in 1999 [Picture from Fred Geddes].

[5.2 Plinth]

5.3 At head of steps leading down to crypt. Plaque warns of perilous descent

Text: *PLEASE TAKE CARE. This is part of an ancient building, preserved as it was found. The steps are steep and narrow, and it is easy to slip.*

We would like our visitors to see this most ancient part of the Church, but have to advise them that they descend at their own risk.

5.4 At east end. **Two small pews**. An **altar lamp** in the aumbry [*to be obtained*]. NB all plaques in the crypt are very discreet, 150x210mm or smaller.

5.5 East wall **plaque**

Graphic: vignette of colour phase plan, showing where we are.

Text: This is the oldest wall so far found in St Colman's church. It is on a different alignment to the others and so could belong to a Pictish church which stood here from before the 9th century. The Pictish building may have projected westwards, in which case it was removed by the building of the crypt; or eastwards, in which case it still lies buried in the cemetery the other side of this wall.

5.6 East wall Aumbry and cross.

Plaque: An *aumbry*, or secure cupboard, used in the middle ages for the safe-keeping of the sacred vessels used in the Mass or possibly of relics. It would originally have had a lockable door. The exact use of the medieval crypt is unknown, but it may have been a devotional chapel, particularly for remembering the dead.

5.7 **Plaque** in the south-east corner

Graphic: Photograph showing Extraction of the Monk stone

Text: A large piece of Pictish carved stone was discovered in the vault at this spot in 1995. It was extracted and found to be wonderfully carved with animals and a row of saintly persons.

Nicknamed *The Monk Stone* it may be seen on display in the Treasury.

In the hole vacated by the Monk Stone, a *time-capsule* was placed in 1998, containing objects typical of the late second millennium AD assembled by the children of Portmahomack Primary School.

5.8 **Plaque** in the north-east corner

Text: A fragment of a cross-shaft, re-used in the lintel. The stone is 8-9th century in date, and the lintel, originally 13th century, was refashioned after the Reformation when the vault was constructed.

5.9.1 Plaque on west wall (by door, south). The lower part of the wall, reddened by fire, is illuminated.

Graphic: vignette of the colour phase plan of the church, showing where we are.

Text: This is the surviving west wall of the crypt built in the 13th century. The lower part of the wall bears the scars of a fire which affected every part of the church then standing. These may be due to the fire recorded in c1481 when a party of Mackays raiding from Sutherland took refuge in St Colman's church. The church was set on fire by the Rosses who pursued them. Press the button for more.

5.9.2 Plunger button: Activates **2 minute** commentary in earphones

5.10. W wall, door jamb. Mason's Mark.

Plaque: "Mason's Mark. The mark of the medieval mason who prepared or finished the stone."

6. ARCHAEOLOGY IN ACTION

Title: Archaeology in Action

6.1 Along the south side of the crypt steps: **Panel** with strip cartoon showing field procedure

Box and supply of leaflets.

Graphic: Original illustration, in the form of a narrative cartoon, based on sketch [to be produced by Liz Hooper].

Text: Archaeological excavation at Tarbat: a journey of discovery in six stages

Reconnaissance: In the 19th century grave-diggers turned up fragments of Pictish sculpture. In 1984, an ancient ditch encircling Tarbat Old Church was spotted from the air.

Evaluation: Twigs from the ditch gave radiocarbon dates in the 2nd-6th century AD. Part of the field enclosed by the ditch was mapped by geophysical survey and by stripping off the ploughsoil.

Strategy: The area to be excavated was chosen to give the best "window" on the ancient settlement. The Tarbat Region (see 6.3) would form part of an extensive survey which would put the site into context. Once excavated, the church itself would be made into a museum to display the finds.

Excavation: Visitors look on as loose earth is removed with a shovel. Then the surface is cleaned with a trowel, and the "features" appear: the ditches and pits, and the walls of houses, sometimes with a hearth of burnt clay. The *finds* are located, recorded and bagged.

Analysis: Pottery, metalwork fragments, animal bone, human bone, soils and all manner of other finds are examined and classified in this stage. The structures and activities found on site are put into chronological order and dated.

Publication: From the analysis, a story is composed, describing and explaining all the events that have been detected on the site. These are then put in their prehistoric and historic setting and publicised in books, films, lectures - and museum displays like this one.

If you would like to take part in excavation or survey or other kinds of research, please fill in a leaflet and drop it in the box.

6.2 **Theodolite** on plinth points at archaeology pit, which has FINDS scattered on the surface. Plaque invites you to set an angle and see what you will see (a small coin for example). The plaque also tells you how to set the angle.[Plaque to be designed when the theodolite has been bought]

Graphic: Diagram showing how it works and which knobs to twiddle.

Text: "This instrument (a theodolite) is used to pin-point the position of archaeological finds and features. Make the settings as explained in the diagram to spot a special find."

6.3 Over the niche on the south wall illuminated interactive panel: Exploring Tarbat's region

Title: Archaeological survey: exploring Tarbat's region.

Graphic: Map with illuminations in four sets as listed. The button when pressed illuminates a little number so the presser can look up the name and a brief description of the site. Some pictures could be spread about on the control panel.

Control Panel is set landscape with five columns of text:

1: Intro/ 2 (button) Prehistoric Sites/ 3 (button) Pictish Sites/ 4 (button) Medieval/ 5.(button) Visitor Centres/.

Introductory Text: The coastal strip of the Moray Firth has much arable land, accessible grazing and a dry, warm climate. It was farmed in the Neolithic period when great stone monuments were erected including the famous Clava cairns, which are peculiar to the region. During the Bronze Age, settlements spread up the straths, with circular huts and field boundaries that can still be seen. In the early Iron Age, tensions between communities provoked the widespread fortification of hilltops. The Romans sailed past Tarbat Ness after

their victory at *Mons Graupius* (in the Grampians) in AD 83, but did not stay. During the first millennium AD the Picts were building a kingdom, putting up their symbol-stones and creating a number of centres: one was near Golspie, others near Inverness, at Burghead and at Portmahomack which probably kept in touch with each other by water. When the Picts became Christian, a series of magnificent cross-slabs was carved which remain the glory of the region. From the 9th century, the Pictish kingdom was under pressure from the Norse and the Scots, but there are few certain sites of this time. The present settlement pattern developed in the 12th century, when the first towns such as Nairn, Tain, and Inverness were created and the Parish system was established.

In early times and indeed until the building of the railway and the A9 route and its bridges, Portmahomack on the Tarbat peninsula was at the centre of a maritime community whose ships and boats connected settlement and centres across the Firths and fostered political links with Norway, England and France. The northern Pictish kingdom, which stretched to Orkney, was a sea-kingdom.

Our archaeological survey is dedicated to mapping the settlement and economy of prehistoric, Pictish and medieval communities using aerial and topographical reconnaissance and to chronicling the changing environment through the millennia. As a taster, the sites which are lit up here are those which can be visited.

List of Sites to be illuminated [ie only those which can be visited]

Portmahomack is lit up all the time

A: Prehistoric

1. 4th to 2nd millennium BC Embo: This chambered cairn was used for the burial of adults and children in the Neolithic period. During the Bronze Age families were again buried there, first in short stone cists and then as cremations. It seems likely that the site was a central place for a dominant family over many centuries. The monument can be seen in the Car Park of Grannie's Hieland Hame
2. 3rd millennium BC Clava Cairns. These are monuments special to the area, in which the chambered cairns are each surrounded by kerb, low stone platforms, and a ring of standing stones. The site is owned by Historic Scotland. Other examples have been found only in Inverness and Nairn Districts and on the Black Isle. Illustration
3. 1st millennium BC Duchary Rock. A fort surviving as a ring of tumbled stone from a rampart high on a precipitous hill. Numerous hilltops were fortified from the late Bronze Age into the Iron Age.
4. Late 1st millennium BC/early 1st millennium AD Kilphedir: Hut circles and souterrain. Fertile vallies like the Strath of Kildonan were cultivated during the late Iron Age by farmers living in small round stone-built houses, examples of which can be seen at Kilphedir. In the early first millennium AD, underground stores, known as souterrains, were built.
5. Late 1st millennium BC/early 1st millennium AD Carn Liath broch. Brochs were fortified stone-built dwellings with thick walls rising 6 metres or more and resembling cooling towers. They were in use up to the 2nd century AD, but many were re-used and built onto in the Pictish period. On a clear day, the Carn Liath broch would have been visible to a

contemporary community who were digging an enclosure ditch next to the beach at Tarbat.

B: Pictish AD 300-900

6. Burghead. This promontory was probably first fortified in the early Iron Age became one of the largest and most important centres of northern Pictland. It had a stone defensive wall with a timber-frame of massive beams secured with nails 200mm long. Burghead is famous for the Bull symbols which decorated its walls. 14 miles across the water north-west from Burghead lies Tarbat Ness, with its contemporary Pictish settlement. Illustration: Burghead bull.

7. At Dunrobin Castle Museum, a marvellous collection of Pictish carved stones from neighbouring sites along the shore of Sutherland opposite Tarbat.

8. Edderton. A prehistoric standing stone of the 2nd millennium BC 3 metres high, later incised with Pictish symbols - the fish and the double-disk and Z-rod. In the cemetery of the former parish church is a later Pictish cross-slab featuring mounted warriors.

9. Shandwick, Cross slab 2.7m high in an exposed position overlooking the Moray Firth. The stone, known as the Clach a= Charridh, and which is prodigiously covered in ornament, is now housed in a closed glass shelter to protect it from the elements.

10. Nigg. In the charming 17th century church of Nigg is a cross-slab with elaborate decoration and sophisticated scenes carved in relief, featuring Pictish symbols, scenes from the life of David, and the meeting of Paul and Anthony in the desert.

11. Rosemarkie. The Groam House Museum has collected and displayed Christian period Pictish sculpture from Rosemarkie, likely to have been the site of an important church or monastery in the later 8th or 9th century AD.

C: Medieval 900-1560

12. Hilton of Cadboll chapel. The foundations of a chapel may be seen by the sea shore. The famous Hilton of Cadboll cross-slab stood here in the 18th century. It is now in the National Museum, but a replica stands by the chapel. The surrounding earthworks may belong to the deserted medieval settlement of Cadboll Fisher, mentioned in 1478. Illustration: Cadboll

13. Fearn Abbey was founded by Farquhar Macintaggart, First Earl of Ross, in the 1220's to house a Premonstratensian community. Originally sited near Edderton, it was moved to its present site in about 1238. The present building is largely 14th century.

14. Dornoch Cathedral. Founded by Gilbert of Moravia Bishop of Caithness 1223-1246. The building was burnt by the Mackays of Strathnaver in 1570 and restored in the 19th century by William Burn.

15. Fortrose Cathedral. Founded by Robert Bishop of Ross (1214-1249). The south aisle (14th-15th century) and chapter house (13th century) survive and are conserved by Historic Scotland.

16. St Duthlac's Church Tain is a well-preserved 14-15th century church dedicated to a saint thought to have been born in Tain around AD 1000. James IV (1483-1513) made pilgrimages to Tain.

17. Ballone Castle a 16th century tower house on the Tarbat peninsula stands on the cliff overlooking the Moray Firth. It is privately owned.

18. Rait Castle, a 13-14th century hall-house, with preserved hall and round tower, featuring arrow-slits and lancet windows, and traces of outbuildings.

D. Visitor Centres (for lovers of history)

19. Dunrobin Castle: Castle and Gardens of the Dukes of Sutherland, and in the summerhouse a Museum of Pictish sculpture and Sutherland memorabilia.
20. Helmsdale: Display Centre of Highland Life Timespan
21. Groam House: Museum of Pictish Art, featuring the Rosemarkie sculpture
22. Fort George: English military base of 1748-1769 Historic Scotland.
23. Culloden. Display Centre features the Battle of 1746; cottages, dovecote, house
24. Tain: St Duthlac's Church, Tolbooth, Museum, and Display Centre *Tain Through Time*
25. Fowlis Ferry: Clanland. 18th century Rent House and Restaurant

E Named Places on the map

Brora
Forres
Fortrose
Golspie
Helmsdale
Dornoch
Nairn
Tain
Cromarty
Invergordon
Portmahomack
Tarbat Ness

To Elgin
To Inverness

Strath of Kildonan - Helmsdale River
Strath Brora
Fleet
Dornoch Firth
Cromarty Firth
Moray Firth
Nairn River
Findhorn River
Culbin Sands

A9
A96
B9165
[Between Nigg and Cromarty] Car Ferry

6.4 On the south wall: plaque explains exposed foundations.

Graphic: Colour plan of church, showing where we are

Text: The medieval church, preserved at the point where the chancel was added to the nave sometime in the 12th to 13th century. Most of the chancel was destroyed when the crypt was built, but its probable shape, a small square-ended room, is picked out as a pattern in the new paving stones of the Display Centre.

6.5 On the south wall: panel showing Archaeology in Action

6.5.1 Aerial photograph of Portmahomack taken by Barri Jones in 1984. It was on this occasion that an Iron Age enclosure ditch was seen encircling St Colman's Church at the top left of the picture.

6.5.2 Aerial photograph of the site

6.5.3. Strip and Map: evaluation in the Gordon Field in 1996 [N41/2 or 134/12, 152/8]

6.5.4 Excavations inside St Colman's Church in 1997 [N114/14;1116/13; whatever is not used in 5.1]

6.5.5 Excavations in the Glebe Field in 1998.

7. ST COLMAN'S GALLERY

7.1. Title

7.1.1 On the face of the panelling:

Text: St COLMAN'S GALLERY

7.1.2 On the lintel: Inscription (lettering as TR13)

Text: IN COMMEMORATIONE REO...LII..

7.2 In north-east corner: The Story of St Colman's Church

Graphics: (1) Mini-plan: composite of the Church plan, with phases 1-6 labelled. (2) A sequence of SIX 3-D vignettes showing the development of the church from the 9th century to the 19th century. Each phase is clearly labelled as to the position of minister, laird and people. For the specification of each picture, see its text, below.

Title: The Story of St Colman's Church.

Text: A church has stood on this site since the 9th century or before. In every generation, the form and shape of the church, inside and out reveals the form and shape of the society that used it. The community expressed, in their building and its furnishing, their belief in what was the right way to live, and the correct relationship between God and man.

Up to the 9th Century.. Picts, Scots, Angles and Norse Church 1

During the 8th century, and perhaps earlier still, the people of Tarbat began proclaiming their Christianity. Grave-markers and memorials with crosses, Pictish symbols, and images of animals marked graves lined with stones. There was a tiny chapel (just underneath us here) which was terraced into the hill. Graves and chapel were aligned SW-NE. Tarbat was an important Christian centre by the 9th century, perhaps a monastery, perhaps the private church of a local lord, or perhaps a combination of the two.

(2) *The 12th Century*: Roman reform Church 2 and Church3

David I (1121-1153) was a religious reformer, brought Scotland into the fold of the orthodox Roman Church then dominating Europe, instituted a parish system and founded monasteries.

On the hill at Tarbat, the Pictish centre was superseded by a new order. Broken-up Pictish monuments were re-employed in the foundations of a building erected on a new site on an east-west alignment. A small chancel was subsequently added at the east end.

The later 13th Century. Heyday of the Church of Rome Church 4

This was a time of great investment in the Roman Church, in Easter Ross as elsewhere. The Premonstratensian Abbey of Fearn, originally founded near Edderton by the Earl of Ross, with the help of monks from Whithorn, was removed to a new site at Fearn in about 1238. Fearn was in Tarbat parish, and supplied its priest.

Tarbat parish church was extended to both east and west, the east end being provided with a crypt beneath. This may have functioned as a reliquary or a chapel in which the dead were remembered. At ground level, the choristers would have sung in the extended chancel, while the priest intoned the Mass and the incense rose from the thurible. The congregation would have stood in the nave, the ground beneath their feet increasingly cluttered by the burials of generations of medieval people.

The 16-18th century The Reformation and after: the Church of the Landowners Church 5

The ideas which led to the Reformation were affecting Scotland by the 1530's and reached their peak in the 1560's. The emphasis was on the word of God and the sermon of the Minister. The First Book of Discipline (1560) summed up the new liturgical requirements as a bell to bring the people together, a pulpit to preach the word, a basin for baptism and a table for communion. The power of the Catholic church was broken and the responsibility for the upkeep of the church was entrusted to the lords, and after 1690 to the local landowners or *heritors*. There was to be no more singing, and burial was to be no longer in the nave but "lying in the most free air". The wealthy were however encouraged to build their own wings to the church (known here as aisles) with a burial place on the ground floor and gallery above from which to hear the service.

*Accordingly the whole axis of service in the Tarbat church turned through 90 degrees. The pulpit, replacing the altar as the focus, stood against the south wall, and the communion table would have been set along the nave in front of it, where the communicants took their places. A north aisle had been built by 1627 for the MacKenzie family, and by the mid 18th century, when the church was extensively rebuilt, it had acquired an upper story termed *Athe Laird=s Loft* complete with fireplace and private entrance. The minister also now*

had a personal entrance, the south vestry, which led straight to his pulpit. Galleries were built at the east and the west ends, the proceeds from the latter (the Poor Loft) being passed on to the poor of the parish. A tower to carry a bell was probably first erected in the late 16th or early 17th century, but the present distinctive belfry is of the mid 18th century.

The 19th century ...The Disruption and the last century of Tarbat Old Church Church 6

During the 19th century, there was increasing unrest caused by the interference of the landowning and civil authorities and courts in what were seen as church affairs. In 1843 a large group of ministers and their congregations left the Church of Scotland to form the Free Church.

At Tarbat, a new Free Church building was built to the north-west nearer the sea, and in 1853 had a congregation of 1000. "Tarbat Old Church" which in the same year recorded a congregation of 85 adjusted itself to its new role. The laird's north aisle, the minister's vestry and the west end were blocked off with timber panelling and the axis of the services swung back to its medieval alignment. A dias was created at the east end, to provide a vestry for the minister and a pulpit, with (below it) the precentor's box. In 1866, the General Assembly permitted the return of music and Tarbat subsequently acquired an organ.

Time-line

"565 St Columba's mission to the northern Picts may have reached the Dornoch Firth.

710 Nechtan, king of southern Picts, adopts Anglian version Christianity

906 The church of the Scots claims primacy in Pictland at Scone

1238 Abbey of Fearn refounded at Fearn after removal from an earlier site near Edderton

1255 First record of a church at Portmahomack

c1481 A raiding party of Mackays from Sutherland took refuge in the church: the pursuing Rosses are said to have set fire to it, resulting in the death of clan leader Angus Mackay.

1560 The Reformation. The church was assigned as a *mensa* to the Bishop of Ross.

1626 Fearn parish separated from the parish of Tarbat.

1627-34 Sir John Mackenzie is Chief Heritor; he repairs and extends the church and has the right to the north aisle.

1690 The Revolution Settlement. Restoration of Presbyterian Church government. Churches now maintained by the *Heritors* (landowners).

1707 x 1728 A Manse was constructed for the Minister, which included a stable, a barn, a byre and kitchen. A Glebe field was probably created at this time to provide the Minister with a living.

1712 Episcopalians were allowed some freedom of worship; non-jurors (who refuse to swear allegiance to the crown) allowed a maximum congregation of 3 in addition to their minister.

1721 Tarbat Church "in a ruinous condition"

1739 Tarbat Church "in a very ruinous condition"

1756-1762 Church dismantled, except for the west end and rebuilt on the old foundations.

1780 Major repairs and alterations. The nave walls covered in lathe and plaster, the walls of the north aisle were raised and the nave was fitted with seats for the congregation.

1824 Telford commissioned to build 32 new churches in the Highlands and Islands. He also built the pier at Portmahomack.

1829 Roman Catholics again permitted to hold public office.

1843 The Disruption, resulting in the formation of the Free Church. Minister and the bulk of the congregation leave to set up Tarbat Free Church a few hundred yards to the north overlooking the beach.

1866 General Assembly permits the use of music in churches.

1928 Church Manse and Glebe transferred from the Heritors to the Church of Scotland.

1929 Re-unification of the Church of Scotland

1946 St Colman's Church redundant.

1980 St Colman's Church purchased by Tarbat Historic Trust."

7.2.2 Centre **Panel** with Picture of Church

Text: During the last twenty years of the 20th century, the old church of St Colman was saved and restored by Tarbat Historic Trust. This old building, so many times renewed, now lives again with a new use and a new kind of congregation. Its long history has been studied and remembered in our display, witness to the heritage and spirit of the people of Tarbat Parish.

7.2.3 North **Display case** contains piece of aquamanile and chafing dish from the church excavations

Graphic: Reconstruction drawings of (1) Aquamanile and (2) Chafing Dish.

Text: Only 35 sherds of pottery were recovered from the excavations inside the church. Among them were a piece of an aquamanile found amongst the debris of the 12th century

chancel, destroyed when the first crypt was built in the late 13th century; and a piece of a chafing dish, found amongst material burnt when the church was set on fire probably during the encounter between the Mackays and the Rosses in the 15th century.

An aquamanile was a water-container used to wash the fingers at table. It was shaped like an animal, in this case a ram. Our aquamanile, like much medieval pottery found on the east coast, was imported from Yorkshire. In a medieval church it could have been used for the ritual washing of the priest's hands. [19/1208/318]

A chafing-dish was used as a plate warmer, and was a pottery copy of metal chafing dishes used at table by the wealthy. Our chafing dish is made of local earthenware, and its use in a medieval church may have been as a thurible or censer, incense being sprinkled on the glowing charcoal. [17/1147/164]

7.2.4 South **Display case** contains the church plate

Graphic: Communion in progress

Text: Communion was an important occasion in the Reformed church which took place once or twice a year and people travelled from considerable distances to be present. Communicants at the Communion Table passed bread to each other, and wine was drunk from the one large cup, or when crowds were large, two or more cups might be used. Admission to the Communion table was by a token obtained from the Minister.

In 1806, six communion cups, three plates for the bread and a thousand tokens all marked "Tartat 1805" had been bought for the sum of ,5 sterling. Here are some of the remains of that collection.

7.2.5 **Plaque** explains the Precentor's Box.

Text: How happie the dowff an dowie, for they will be confortit!
How happie the douce and cannie, for they will faa the yird
[Lorimer]

From this box in the 19th century, the Precentor would read out extracts of the sacred texts while the congregation awaited the minister's sermon. The sermon, which might continue for an hour or more, was delivered from the pulpit above.

Perhaps with these lengthy perorations in mind, 19th century heritors were obliged to provide seating spaces for their parishioners to the measure of 18x29 inches per posterior.

7.3 At Forbes Memorial **plaque**

Text: *"I'll snap a pair of pistols with you, sir, or let us take two or three rounds of our persons here.....* So Archibald Dudgeon challenged the Rev William Forbes AM, Minister of Tartat 1800-1838, whose exacting standards led him to impute to the wrong Dudgeon brother the pregnancy of their maid Jean Purves. William Forbes was a most respected Minister as the text of his remarkable memorial records. He was described by his brother-in-law as "a profound and scriptural divine...- at one time in a flow of high spirits, laughing

until his eyes ran over at his own anecdotes - at another sunk in the deepest gloom, which his countenance, naturally dark and sallow, was particularly well suited to express"

7.4. In Alcove in South wall: Fragments of a Grave slab set in blocking.

Plaque:

Text: Three fragments of a recumbent slab, featuring a crest with a stag's head, a skull and cross-bones and the letters NDH SPOVS and CAILLI.. The skull and cross bones suggests a 17th century date and the stag is an emblem of the Mackenzie family. The family was acquiring land in the Tarbat area from the early 17th century and Sir George Mackenzie was created Viscount Tarbat in 1684 and Earl of Cromartie in 1703. This fine monument commemorated an ancestor of Sir George who is not yet identified. Names recorded for early 17th century Mackenzies are Colin, Alexander, John, Kenneth and Roderick. Also commemorated was his wife indicated here only by the letters for *and his spouse*.

7.9 Over the east window.

Graphic: [Coming from Trevor Pearson]

Plaque: The pattern is based on a recumbent slab which lies beneath the turf outside the east end of the church. Carved in exceptionally fine relief, it marks the grave of a notable of the 15th-16th century.

LINK GALLERY

8.4 Hanging on wall at west end of gallery: **Travelling Panels** [Not yet commissioned]

A possible scheme:

[1] *The Saving of St Colman's Church*. How the church was saved through the efforts of local people led by the Tarbat Historic Trust. Photographs of the building before during and after its restoration.

[2] *Early Exploration*. The 19th century discoveries. The aerial photograph taken during the Moray survey. Clearance of the crypt by Jill Harden. Excavation of a section through the ditch by Jill Harden.

[3] *The Evaluation of the Site*. Remote mapping and strip-and-map operations in the Gordons' field and the Glebe Field. Test excavations in the church.

[4] *The Strategy*. The areas to be investigated and why.

[5] *The Excavation of the Church, 1997*

[6] *Excavations in the Glebe Field, 1997-*

[7] *Excavations in the Gordons' Field, 1996-*

[8] The date and context of the ancient settlement at Tarbat: *the Firthlands, the North Sea and Europe*

[9] *The Golden Age of Easter Ross*. All about sculpture

[10] *Hunting for the Picts*. All about Pictish settlements and how difficult they are to find.

[11] *Animals and early Scotland*. All about what animal bones can tell us.

[12] *Remote mapping and archaeology*. The new gadgets.

[13] *Digging and diggers*. How archaeologists work and what it's like to be one.

[14] *Computers and archaeology*: GIS and graphics.

[15] *Working for the past*: exploring the Firthlands. Objectives and activities.

[16] *Working for the past*: how to get involved.

10. THE ACTIVITY ROOM

10.1 Facing the link gallery: **Panel** introduces the Activity Room

[This will depend a bit on what is commissioned by the Trust and what we have actually got up and running. A possible scheme might be:]

Text: ACTIVITY ROOM

* Log in to the archive

* Make rubbings

* Play games

* Lucky dig

Parties of children and students are always welcome at the Centre, and there are often opportunities to take part in the research. Please contact the Manager for more information.

Our address is:

George MacQuarrie
Tarbat Discovery Centre
Portmahomack
Ross and Cromarty
IV20 1YB

[These could be enlivened with images, icons or drawings to give people the idea].

10.2 On the north wall: **Panel-** Work in Progress: The Tarbat Discovery Programme

Graphic: (1) Bull 1, Fig 1 with slide images as provided
(2) Bull 3, fig 1. The Tarbat Region
(3) Bull 2, fig 13 The Tarbat Excavation

The Tarbat Discovery Programme - A Dark Age Quest

Why?

The period from the Fifth to the Ninth centuries in northern Europe is traditionally called the Dark Ages because the traces of its people are so hard to find. But from what we have seen so far, it is clear that these were wild and innovative times, full of adventure, political experiment and great art. Communities and individuals were obliged to make important decisions: whether to stay tribal or form kingdoms, whether to stay pagan or convert to Christianity, whether to remain independent or join a new centralised Christian Europe. Political themes and tensions were laid in those years which are still with us, and remain important for us today. The European Dark Ages is a priority theme for international research.

The Tarbat Discovery Programme contributes to this research by searching for the earliest kingdoms in the North East of Scotland - land once occupied by the Picts.

What?

There are four targets for our programme of exploration.....

*[icon=ship] **Kingdoms of the North Sea.** In the 4th AD, central Europe was under the control of the Roman Empire, and the north was occupied by tribal peoples with uncertain frontiers. By the 9th century the peoples bordering the North Sea had organised themselves into lands we can recognise - Norway, Denmark, France, England - and Scotland.


Why did this happen, when and how?

*[icon=Pictish beast] **The Northern Picts** were key players in the formation of the new Europe. They are being rediscovered through their settlements, sculpture and cemeteries

Who were they? How did they live? How far did they travel on the sea? What did their sculpture mean? Where was the kingdom of the northern Picts? When did they become Christian? What became of them?

*[icon=church] The **Tarbat** peninsula in the centre of the territory of the northern Picts is being explored through archaeological survey and excavation

When did people first exploit Tarbat's fertile fields and trade off Portmahomack's beach? When did the Norse come? Did they raid or trade or settle? How did the people fare at the Reformation, the Clearances, the Disruption and up to our own day?

*[] The archaeological site at **Portmahomack** is the largest excavation so far seen in north-east Scotland. It is bringing to light buildings, human burials, fragments of sculpture, and a variety of objects, animal bones and seeds.

What traces of buildings can we find? What artifacts were used and where were they made? What food was eaten? How were the dead buried? Was this the site of a Pictish stronghold, a Pictish monastery, a Viking beachmarket, and a Medieval village?

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE TOPICS LOG IN TO THE WEBSITE HERE

How?

The history of the northern Picts is one crucial piece in the European jigsaw. Their story will help to make sense of the big picture: the development of contacts across the North Sea and the formation of kingdoms on its shores. The Tarbat Discovery Programme uses archaeological excavation, survey and the study of sculpture and other finds to try to provide answers to these questions. The programme includes:

- * The Excavation of St Colman's Church
- * The Excavation of a large area of the adjacent settlement
- * The survey of the Tarbat peninsula
- * The study of the Tarbat sculpture, its geology, connections and meaning
- .
- * The study of comparable sites in its region, the area of the Moray Firthlands and beyond

The first results of the Discovery Programme have been highlighted in this display. The ongoing work is reported annually in the *Bulletin of the Tarbat Discovery Programme*, available from the SHOP.

[Unless this is in the Treasury] PHOTO: The programme for the study of the Tarbat sculpture includes the making of replicas for use in display. Here Barry Grove is seen carving the replica of TR1 seen in the Treasury.

Who?

The Discovery Programme is a project of the Department of Archaeology at the University of York, which specialises in early medieval Europe, and has directed research programmes

in England, Wales, Ireland, France, Italy, Algeria and the Middle East, and is in close contacts with scholars tackling similar questions about the origins of their countries in Scandinavia, Germany and Japan.

The Fieldwork and finds analysis is carried out by Field Archaeology Specialists (York) Ltd working in close collaboration with archaeological companies in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

The University of York gratefully acknowledges the support and sponsorship of Tarbat Historic Trust, Highland Council, Ross and Cromarty Enterprise, Heritage Lottery Fund, James and Douglas Gordon and the people of Portmahomack.

Inquiries are welcome from those who would like to participate in the research programme.

10.3 In centre of room: Oval table with **terminals** , which give access to (a) a tailor-made web-site and (b) CD-ROMs of general interest as purchased by the Trust.

The web-site offers a series of layers of information which can be added to as the project progresses. Initially the top layers only will be available from www (ie from beyond the centre). The terminals have access to the full web-site as it is developed, but not to www. [This needs to be commissioned from a web-site constructor]

Proposed Specification for the Web-site

[Existing web-sites, ie the Tarbat site at the University of York will be hot-linked. For an example see suttonhoo@org.uk]

The touch screen offers a host and shows four menu options with icons [matching those on panel 10.2]:

* The Tarbat Excavation [icon=trowel]; when complete, subfiles will include: all the Bulletins/copies of published papers/index to the excavation archive/ and [eventually] access to the electronic archive itself

* Tarbat, Peninsula and Parish [icon=church logo]; when ready, subfiles will include the history of St Colman's church/index of placenames of the parish and their meaning/the memorials and people buried at Tarbat Old Church/materials for the history of Portmahomack.

* The Picts [icon=pictish beast]; subfiles will include data files as negotiated with scan.

* The North Sea kingdoms [icon=ship]. Literature to be scanned in subject to copyright.

10.4 Along east edge of gallery: work tops with **games** [Contractor needs to be appointed]

[Here are some of the things that could be fairly cheaply devised for the study spaces:

- * draw Pictish patterns
- * do jigsaw puzzles

- * play "archaeology" [like battleships, only you hit finds]
- * play "digging" [like pelmanism, only you turn up pieces of wall etc]
- * paint a Pictish pebble

Some of these might make games to sell as well as to use in the activity room].

10.5 On north wall: **Panel** shows the Pictish Trail [To come, if it comes, from John Wood]

10.6 Along the north side of the stair well: A narrow sloping **shelf** carries Replica stone patterns by B Grove, glued down for visitors to make rubbings on teatowels using natural vegetable dyes (both purchased from shop). [This needs the appointment of a contractor]

10.7 Along the north side of the stair well, or perhaps on part of the computer bench, the **Find-a-find** or "lucky dig". This is a cheaply constructed rectangular box with three compartments. Each compartment is at a different height, corresponding with children of 6, 12 and 16. Inside each compartment is an assortment of finds: bones, pebbles, shells, potsherds etc contained in sand. The compartments are sealed, but there are two arm-holes in the top of each, where a 6, 12 and 16 year old could insert their arms. When a find is pulled out, it is identified with the help of photographs of dozens of possibilities contained in a folder [like an Argos Catalogue] on the lucky-dig itself. [This needs the appointment of a contractor]

11. THE BELFRY

11.1 **Panel** describes belfry

Graphic: Drawing by Fred Geddes

Text: The Belfry, with its attractive "bird-cage" shape and iron bell-frame reached by a winding stair is the work of Alexander Stronach, the dynastic name taken by at least three generations of master masons living in Tarbat, and active between 1634 and 1790. The present belfry was constructed in the mid 18th century, but may have superceded an earlier version. Stronachs were also responsible for the Tolbooth at Tain (1706-8) and the Belfry at Wardlaw (1722).

Church bells were required in every parish by 1642. St Colman's church bell is inscribed: "The Church of Tarbat. John Milne fecit J764", but it had been refounded from an earlier bell, and fragments of clay mould for a medieval bell were found in the excavations in the nave. A later inscription on the present bell reads "Recast 1908".

For admission to the belfry, please apply to the Manager.

12. THE SHOP

12.1 On the west wall, south side. **Plaque** describes the architecture of the west end of the church

Graphic (1) Colour plan of Church showing where we are.

(2) Labelled elevation shows the shape and date of each architectural feature of the west end

Text: AThe west end of the church is the oldest part standing above ground, and has a history of its own.

(1) Late 13th century: The west wall was built when the church was extended.

(2) Late 16th-17th century. After the Reformation, when the church was redeveloped, an arch was built against the west wall, so providing a double thickness at roof level 2.30m wide on which to found a bell-tower.

(3) Late 16th-17th century. A fragment of Pictish carved stone, of the 8th-9th century, was incorporated in the arch.

(4) Mid 18th century. The arch was reinforced by two columns which support a section of walling thrusting directly under the soffit. These columns are made of a fine-grained imported stone They may have been specially commissioned or recycled from another function such as the entrance to a drive. The present Belfry was built at this time, replacing a previous bell-tower.

(5) Mid 18th century. The window was inserted to bring in light after the west gallery (*Poor Loft*) was built.

(6) Late 18th century. The arch was blocked off with a rubble infill, perhaps to improve its stability. This infill has now been removed, and the ensemble stabilised so as to reveal the details of this highly individual ecclesiastical west end

12.2 On the floor, centre. **Plaque** explains the medieval grave cover

Graphic: Drawing of the grave cover by Trevor Pearson.

Text: Recumbent grave-slab with the incised image of a sword and the initials AMRM in relief. The monument dates to the 16th century and probably commemorates a member of the Munro family.

12.3 On the west wall, north side. **Plaque** labels carved stone TR 14

Graphic: Church plan showing where we are.

Text: This stone carries interlace decoration which can be dated 8-9th century. The stone probably formed part of a Pictish memorial which was later broken up and used to construct the arch which carries the belfry.

END OF MC CONTRIBUTION

For The Treasury - if needed

Panel describing animal archaeology

4.1.4 Right hand part of case **Panel 4: ANIMAL BONES**

Graphics: (a) Animal skeletons (including fish) drawn out with flesh stipples (ghosted) over [Source: MC]. (b) Pictish animal frieze [MC]

Text: The USES OF ANIMALS. The Iron Age and early medieval people who lived at the Tarbat site made extensive use of animals and animal products. Each bone that is found is identified to limb and species. The age at death can be determined from the degree to which skull bones have fused and the pattern of tooth eruption and wear.

Then the whole assemblage is examined: the numbers of each species and the presence of young show which animals are being intensively farmed, and which are being hunted wild. The presence of heads and hoofs show that animals are being killed on site. Large numbers of small cuts tends to indicate a supply system. So by examining the animal bones we can tell whether people acquired meat by hunting, farming, husbandry or shopping - a real insight into the community and its economy. Animals were also used to make numerous foodstuffs and useful objects from blood pudding to pins and glue.

So far we have examples of bones from whale, dolphin, fish, bear, red deer, cattle, pig, sheep horse and dog.

List of Exhibited Bone

Very small bones and insect remains in containers 100mm across:

1. Fragments of the shells of beetles from the Crypt [19/1016/126]
2. Fragments of frog bones from the crypt [19/1066/128]
3. Fragments of small rodents from the crypt (mice and voles) [19/1015/116;19/1016/125]

Fish Vertebrae [precise identifications coming]

4. Very small [19/1015/116]
5. Small [24/1280/3791]
6. Medium [14/1002/401]
7. Large [24/1346/766]
8. Bucklers from a female sting-backed ray [24/1427/1709]

9. Large dog-whelk [20/1326/391]

10. Heap of cockles, mussels and limpets]

Dolphin and Whale

11. Vertebra of a dolphin or porpoise [22/1014/3]

12. Rib of a whale [14/1308/1919]

13. Vertebra of a whale with butchery marks [26/1066/88]

Mammals

14 Head of a dog, about the size of a lurcher or greyhound [24/1319/569]

15. Cranium of a deer, with the antlers removed for craft-working [241396/1427]

16. Piece of worked antler [25/1036/76]

17. Fused radius and ulna of a horse. Butchery marks, indicative of skinning or eating the animal can be seen along the radius [24/1396/1431].

18. Heap of food waste bones from pig, sheep and cattle.

List of additional data for artefacts in Treasury

Saddle quern weighs 64kg and measures 186x380x330mm

Rotary quern 14/1645 weighs 12 kg and measures 410x200x40mm

Rotary quern 24/1755 weighs 7.5 kg and measures 230x250x50mm

Rotary quern 24/1451 weighs 20.5 kg and measures 320x240x60mm

*The sherds from the chafing dish and the aquamanile can stay in the Treasury; we will make do with pictures in the Church display at 7.2.

*Human bone is not being exhibited in the display cases