



Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee

Petition Number: [PE1523](#)

Main Petitioner: Jess Smith

Subject: Calls on the Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to direct Historic Scotland to investigate what action can be taken to ensure the restoration and preservation of the Heart of Quartz stones positioned in a field next to the A815, opposite the junction of the B839, overlooking Loch Fyne, known as the Gypsy Wedding Place, referred to locally as the Tinkers' Heart.

Background

The [Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments Scotland](#) (RCAHMS) is responsible for surveying and recording the buildings and landscape of Scotland's places.

RCAHMS made a field visit to the site of the Tinker's Heart on 29 June 2012. The following report is taken from their [website](#):

The Tinkers' Heart is a heart-shaped setting of stones embedded in the tarmac of what was formerly a junction of the A815 and B839 roads; the roads have been realigned and moved to the E, leaving the heart within a pasture field. The site, on a broad terrace above the E shore of Loch Fyne, affords a wide prospect, looking NW to Dunderave Castle on the opposite shore, and W towards Inveraray.

The heart measures 1.75m by 1.4m, the top towards the NW; it has been picked out with quartz pebbles, twenty-five of which are visible around the edge, with a twenty-sixth in the centre. A photograph taken in the mid-20th century (National Museums of Scotland, Scottish Life Archive SLAC 13570) suggests there were formerly many more pebbles around the edge, but it is not known whether the missing stones have been removed or have simply become more deeply embedded and hidden in the tarmac. In recent times the heart has been enclosed by a chain fence hung from three metal posts, but the chain has been replaced by a strand of barbed wire.

The origins of this feature are unclear. There is a tradition within the travelling community that it was constructed as a memorial to local tinkers who joined the Jacobite Rising of 1745 (pers. comm. Jess Smith). If this tradition is correct, the site may be unique as the only physical monument to the tinker community in the Highlands. By the

This is a more recent image of the Heart with the petitioner



This is an older photograph of the Heart, date and source unknown:



Local Authority Action

In March 2014, the Clachan Flats (Cairndow) Windfarm Trust [reported](#), to the Bute & Cowal Area Committee of Argyll & Bute Council, that £950 had been awarded to “Here We Are” for funding towards ‘Tinkers Heart’ Restoration. “Here We Are” is a rural community centre based in Clachan, Cairndow, Argyll.

Historic Scotland

Historic Scotland (HS) is an Agency within the Scottish Government and is directly responsible to Scottish Ministers for safeguarding the nation's historic environment.

One of HS’s roles is to provide guidance on the care of the historic environment. For example, its publication [Managing Scotland’s Archaeological Heritage: A guide to the care and management of archaeological sites for owners, occupiers and other land users](#).

Historic Scotland also operates an [Ancient Monuments Grant Scheme](#) which provides financial assistance aimed at preserving and maintaining ancient

monuments, which are usually scheduled. Funds are limited, so priority is given to monuments of particular interest or importance.

A scheduled ancient monument is a monument of national importance that Scottish Ministers have given legal protection under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Examples of such monuments include prehistoric burial mounds, Roman camps, and World War II defensive sites. The statutory definition of a scheduled ancient monument is very broad and includes:

- any building, structure or work located above or below the surface of the land, including caves and excavations
- any site comprising the remains of any such building, structure or work, or any cave or excavation.

Heritage Lottery Fund

The Fund runs a variety of grant schemes which can be used to work with monuments and landscapes. Normally, significant levels of community engagement and benefit are expected, and all projects require some measure of matching funding. Access in all forms is a priority.

Francesca McGrath
Senior Researcher
5 June 2014

SPICe research specialists are not able to discuss the content of petition briefings with petitioners or other members of the public. However if you have any comments on any petition briefing you can email us at spice@scottish.parliament.uk

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in petition briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Published by the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe), The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP www.scottish.parliament.uk