



## SCPR 2010 Conference Report - Stirling, Scotland *Lang may yer lum reek*

by Susie White

The Society's 2010 meeting took us to Stirling, Scotland on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> September. Conference organiser, Dennis Gallagher, had managed to find us the most splendid of locations for the conference, the Education Room in Stirling Castle.

Day one of the conference was spent listening to a series of very interesting papers on Scottish pipes and pipemakers. **John Harrison**, a freelance historian based in Stirling, kicked off proceedings with an introduction to seventeenth-century Stirling with passing references to its pipemakers. One of the earliest references to the use of tobacco in the town dated back to 1629 with a court order to pay for tobacco. It was a most interesting and informative introduction and provided us with a motto for the conference – can you guess what it might be? Read on!

The morning continued with a paper from **Dennis Gallagher** who presented an overview of pipemaking in seventeenth-century Scotland looking a bit more closely at the makers operating in both Edinburgh and Stirling. Dennis hinted at a possible link between the castle marks seen on pewterers' touchplates and those used by some of the early seventeenth-century pipemakers. **Peter Davey** brought the morning session to a close with a paper looking at Dutch imports to Scotland.

Most of the conference delegates chose to take lunch in the Castle Café and took advantage of a long lunch break to look around the castle itself.

The afternoon session began around 2:00pm with a paper from **Peter Hammond** on the nineteenth-century pipemaker William Richmond of Dunfermline. Peter illustrated his paper with a number of interesting pipes including one commemorating the Order of Free Gardeners, of which William Richmond was a member.

The second paper of the afternoon was given by **Susie White** and related to a small group of pipes from a site in the Outer Hebrides. One of the interesting elements of the pipes recovered from the site was the number of re-used pipes, presumably as fresh supplies were more difficult to come by.

The next two papers were linked in that they related to Glasgow. **Dennis Gallagher** gave his paper first on the dump of pipe material from Gallowgate, Glasgow, which included a number of whitening bricks that were used for decorating doorsteps. This paper was followed by one from **Louise Turner** from Rathmell Archaeology on excavations of Christie's factory site in Glasgow. The excavation theme continued with the final paper of the day, which was given by **Julie Franklin** from Border Archaeology, who presented the result of work being carried out at Rattray's Pipeworks in Leith.

The lecture part of the day concluded with the Society's business meeting and tea. Delegates were then in for a real treat. At the time of the conference Historic Scotland were in the final stages of a huge restoration project to recreate the renaissance interiors of the palace of James VI/I, at an estimated cost of £12.5 million. Through his connections with Historic Scotland, Dennis had managed to arrange for a special viewing of work in progress. Since our visit photographs of some of the reconstructed ceilings, with their impressive painted ceiling bosses have now been released to the public. The palace is due to be re-opened at Easter 2011 and will be well worth a visit. The conference dinner was held at the *Coq au Vin* restaurant in town.

A very cold, and wet Sunday morning dawned but did not deter the hardy souls who had signed up for the walking tour of Stirling led by John Harrison. The conference finally came to an end in a small coffee shop in town for lunch.

Thanks go to Dennis Gallagher and John Harrison for a most enjoyable and very well organised conference in a superb venue.

Oh by the way, have you worked out what the conference motto was? It is given in the title of this report *Lang may yer lum reek* and it means 'Long may your chimney [or pipe] smoke'!