**Learning from Loss:** insights from 20 years of collaborative working with communities on Scotland’s coastal heritage at risk

**Abstract**

Deterioration and loss of coastal heritage as a result of erosion is nothing new, and the effects of climate change will accelerate the threat over the coming century. As a do nothing approach becomes increasingly indefensible, there is an imperative for active management and informed decision-making about what to ‘let go’. To achieve this we need to know what is vulnerable, what is significant and to whom, and who gets to make decisions? These are big questions that go right to the heart of the value of heritage to society and how it is managed. Since 2000, the SCAPE Trust, a small team of archaeologists at the University of St Andrews has worked with communities in monitoring, documenting and taking practical action at threatened coastal heritage sites across Scotland. As a result we have learnt an enormous amount about the state of Scotland’s coastal heritage resource, what it means to people, and about attitudes to dealing with heritage loss. In this paper Joanna will draw upon SCAPE’s 20 years of practice to present some of these insights, an understanding of which is of relevance to all heritage at risk.

**Bio**

Joanna Hambly is a Research Fellow at the University of St Andrews and project manager with SCAPE. Archaeology has taken Joanna all around the world, including stints with the government archaeology service in France and with UNESCO in Sri Lanka. She has also worked in the commercial and curatorial heritage management sector before joining SCAPE in 2009 where she is in the happy position of being able to combine archaeology with her passion for involving volunteers and her enjoyment of being by the coast.