

## Regional meeting report Gullane

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of April The Society held our first regional meeting since the easing of lockdown restrictions. We were delighted that after our first ever regional meeting in Scotland, held in 2019, we were able to utilise the excellent facilities offered by the Village hall in Gullane. There were around 25 attendees all of whom were very enthusiastic.

Following a brief introduction to the agenda for the day by Rob Boyd and Paul Bowman the meeting started with a presentation from Les Stewart on me of the different challenges facing a polisher. As always Les' presentation was extremely beneficial. Not only did it illustrate his own commitment to the subject and his depth of understanding, it also highlighted the complexity and intricacy of the process. I believe Les' presentation also served to persuade any who thought they might "have a go" that polishing is truly best left to those who have devoted so much time and effort to learn their craft.



The range of polishing stones discussed.

After a short break the meeting continued with an extremely informative presentation by Ian Chapman in which he described different forms and patterns on nanako on soft metal fittings and how such differences can be used in kantei. As always Ian's talk was lavishly illustrated with examples from his own collection and participants were given the opportunity to examine these in

hand at close quarters. Ian's brief lecture proved to be a revelation to many (not least the writer) and was greatly enjoyed by all.



Following a lunch break during which participants were able to look at swords brought to the meeting and work displayed on the sales table. The range of items was considerable and there were some very interesting pieces displayed. We are very grateful to those members who brought pieces along to share with us.

The afternoon was devoted to swords and more specifically to swords of the Yamato tradition. We began with a brief lecture by Tim Kaye in which he discussed the burst of innovation and creativity that occurred at the end of the Kamakura period in Sagami (Soshu) province and more particularly where Kaneuji fitted in to this story. We were extremely fortunate that Tim kindly brought a stunning Juyo certified blade attributed to Kaneuji and a Nagamaki Naoshi attributed to Naoe Shizu. Both blades were in excellent polish and of very high quality. After the presentations members were given the opportunity to examine these pieces in hand. To be able to see such highly ranked work in hand is rare and we are extremely grateful to Tim for offering us such an opportunity.



Top : A blade attributed to Kaneuji

Below: A Nagamaki Naoshi attributed to Naoe-Shizu



The final presentation, by Paul Bowman gave an overview of the different Yamato schools. This was followed with a kantei exercise in which all attendees participated. For this kantei we tried a different approach. In a reversal of the normal practice participants were told at the start which school each blade was attributed to. They were then invited to identify the key features in each blade which they believe led to the attribution given. There were five blades illustrating each of the 5 Yamato schools. Everybody took part in this exercise and it appeared to be very enthusiastically received. After everyone had the opportunity to examine the swords Paul Bowman gave a brief overview of each, identifying the key features that he believed led to the attributions given.



The meeting concluded and was followed by a more general discussion and answering questions that arose from the day's activity.

The event was well attended and well received. The quality level of both fittings and swords used throughout the presentations was extremely high and allowed for detailed illustration and understanding of the features seen. We are extremely grateful to those who presented and those that contributed pieces to be part of the presentations. Without their generosity the day would not have been possible.

And finally a very large thank you to Robert Boyd the Society's Scottish co-ordinator and to Colin Thompson for their considerable efforts in arranging and preparing the venue and refreshments which were much appreciated by all.

We look forward to the next event.

