



PAST

Peebles Archaeological Society Times
November 2010

Recent rock art discovery near Dunsyre

While Austin John Reid, a dyker from Peebles was rebuilding drystone dykes on Easton Farm, near Dunsyre in South Lanarkshire in June of this year, he recognised a stone slab decorated with cup and ring marks.



Austin Reid with his discovery

Mr Reid posted a photo of the stone on a web site, *The Megalithic Portal*, and I was informed of this by one of the Biggar Archaeology Group volunteers. Contact was soon made with the finder and the stone was handed in to me for reporting through the Treasure Trove process.

The stone consists of a broken slab of pink-coloured Old Red Sandstone, measuring 600mm long by 330mm wide by 90mm thick.

The main design consists of a clear but incomplete cup-and-ring motif. A central cup 45mm in diameter by 20mm deep, is surrounded by four rings. There are a further two plain cups to one side.



View of the decorated slab (Tam Ward)

The original condition of the carvings can now only be conjectural but they were probably much better defined than they now are. What is obvious both from the condition of the stone and the organic growth which covered part of it, is that it has been eroded at both ends since its use in a drystone dyke some time in the 19th century.

This implies that the stone was part of a larger slab which may have been broken, intentionally or otherwise, for use in the dyke.

Tam Ward

For fuller report see: http://www.biggararchaeology.org.uk/news20_170810.shtml

Hay Lodge: talking the talk, walking the walk

As our contribution to Scottish Archaeology Month, PAS hosted a guided walk under the billing of *A Walk in the Park ...*

One of the most popular and easy walks around Peebles is the route west from Tweed Bridge along the riverside and on through Hay Lodge Park, crossing at the Fotheringham Bridge to return along the south bank. Our version of this popular walk, originally developed by Bob Knox, attempts to draw out some of the archaeological and historical features of Hay Lodge Park and its immediate surroundings.

As they make their way around the circuit, most walkers and visitors are probably unaware of the hidden history of Hay Lodge Park. In fact, folk have been active along this stretch of the Tweed for some 10,000 years - using the river as a source of food, water power or in more modern times for leisure activities.

And so it was that around 2pm on Sunday 12 September, a party of 16 gathered at the Swimming Pool car park to discover Hay Lodge Park's hidden history. After a brief introduction to the aims of the walk, Joyce explained the significance of the Castle Hill and its immediate surroundings. From the establishment of a royal castle on the summit by David I in the 12th century through a succession of industrial activities - corn mills, textile mills and gasworks - the tip of the promontory formed by the junction of the Eddleston Water (The Cuddy) and the River Tweed has been a busy place over the centuries.

Then after a short stroll along the riverbank to Greenside, Bob revealed one of the walk's hidden secrets - a World War 2 observation post, located amongst trees above the level of the path and well placed to cover the Tweed Bridge and the Caledonian Station opposite.



Greenside WW2 observation post

Moving on a little further to the west, we viewed the rear of Hay Lodge, the fine Georgian house, built in 1771 by Captain Adam Hay of Soonhope and the exterior of the fine ice house which would have serviced the estate.

By now we were being accompanied on our walk by the sounds and occasional sights of the Peebles Highland Games - appropriately enough for according to local tradition the forces of Prince Charles Edward are supposed to have camped just west of Hay Lodge en route to England in 1745.

Our stroll along the north bank took us finally to the mouth of the Neidpath Gorge, to the shady stretch known as The Dookits - a point where the remains of the very distant past and the more recent past coincide.

Around 10,000 years ago, small, mobile groups of Mesolithic hunters and fishers would have exploited the resources of the river (especially its salmon runs) - and we have evidence for their presence at this very spot in the form of numerous worked chert and flint flakes, recovered from this stretch of the footpath by Bob Knox during the 1980s.

But at that same spot we also viewed surviving evidence of much more modern activities connected with the river. These take the form of traces of the diving platforms and revetting of the river bank associated with 'The Dookits' - an *al fresco* swimming pool popular in the earlier 20th century until changes in the river conditions made swimming here unsafe.

Crossing the Tweed by the Fotheringham Bridge, we made our way down the opposite bank, noting in passing the strange easterly diversion of the Edderton Burn, but all was duly explained by Bob once he told us the story behind the construction of the new cauld across the Tweed in the 19th century.

After discussing some relics of the old Caledonian Railway Station, we made our way up onto Tweed Bridge. There among some trees at its S end, Bob pointed out a real piece of hidden local history in the form of the mounting for a WW2 spigot mortar. Together with a road block on the bridge itself, it would have formed part of the Peebles defences.

Finally, Jack took us underneath the Tweed Bridge to explain the fascinating story of this famous Peebles landmark and so bring a very successful 'walk in the park' to its conclusion.

Guides: Bob Knox, Jack Boughey, Joyce Durham & Trevor Cowie



Underneath the arches: the best way to appreciate the history of Tweed Bridge is to look at the structure from below.



Tweed Bridge: the architecture of the oldest part of the bridge is suggestive of late medieval work, attributable to the 15th century, and this would be in keeping with references in the burgh records to bridge building between 1465 and 1470.

Medieval pottery from Peebles Castle Hill

While preparing a field guide for the walk around Hay Lodge Park, I came across a reference to some finds of pottery which had been found in 'an allotment in the vicinity of Peebles Castle' and presented to the national museum in 1961.

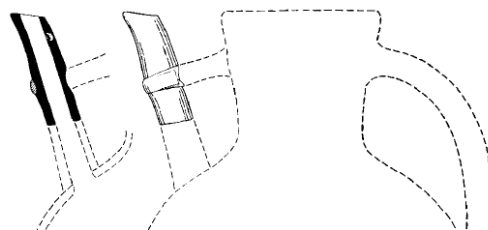
Jackie Moran, a colleague from the NMS Scotland and Europe department, very helpfully tracked down the material and Scottish pottery expert George Haggarty kindly provided some comments on the sherds.

Most of the pottery is relatively modern and of little interest but a few of the sherds hint at the medieval activity on and around Peebles Castle Hill in the 13th and 14th centuries.

The few sherds with diagnostic features include the rim of a cooking pot in the 'White Gritty Ware' that typical of much of the medieval pottery of eastern Scotland; among the sherds there are also fragments of a couple of broad strap handles of the form that would have been attached to jugs. However there is one more unusual sherd among the group - a fragment of an elongated tubular spout which would have been supported by a reinforcing strut (see photo & drawing)



Sherds of 13th/14th century pottery found near the site of Peebles Castle. Tubular spout on left.



Tubular spout from a jug from kiln site at Audlem, Cheshire (Webster & Dunning 1960) - for comparison with the spout fragment from Peebles Castle Hill. Such pots seem to have been pottery copies of more expensive metal vessels.



Sherds of later medieval (16th century) glazed pottery attest to later occupation on Castle Hill; the castle itself seems to have fallen out of use by the 14th century.

Little is known about the findspot of the various sherds but the Sheriff Court used to have a caretaker who had a flat in the basement, and the 'allotment in the vicinity of Peebles Castle' would be a reference to his garden. This occupied what had previously been the exercise yard of the jail and is now the outside area/play area of the present Courthouse (info kindly provided by Bob Knox).

Trevor Cowie

Field Trip 2010 - East Lothian

This year's summer excursion took place on Saturday 5 June, when about QQQ members and guests took to the road to visit sunny East Lothian.

The day began with a visit to the **National Museum of Flight**, based at the historic East Fortune airfield. Under the guidance of PAS member Ian Brown of the National Museum's Aviation section (see following article), the party had an opportunity to enjoy the museum's current displays, including Fantastic Flight, Fortunes of War, Concorde and the newly opened Jet Age exhibition.

After an enjoyable picnic lunch at the airfield in bright sunshine, the afternoon was spent visiting more conventional archaeological and historical sites, including the impressive Iron Age fort at the **Chesters, Drem**, picturesque **Dirleton Castle** and the imposing ruined castle at **Tantallon** (with an ice cream stop at the last).

The group then voted to call it a day - very wisely as it turned out - for very soon after heading for home the skies darkened and the heavens opened!



Not the view from some RSPB bird hide, but Cap'n Bob bringing his airship in to land safely at East Fortune, one of the interactive displays in the recently opened Fantastic Flight exhibition at the National Museum of Flight. The simulator is authentically recreated, with the old fashioned sea-ship style steering wheel and speed control lever letting you fly the 3D airship over the countryside (...or into it!). The airship R.34 flew from East Fortune in July 1919 when it made the first East-West crossing of the Atlantic (however, the captain on that occasion was Major Herbert Scott).

East Fortune and the National Museum of Flight

East Fortune is one of the best preserved airfields in the UK. The National Museum of Flight occupies only a small part of the surviving airfield, being housed in the Technical Site which includes the main hangars and other technical buildings.

The airfield dates back to 1915 when it was opened as a landing ground for the air defence of Edinburgh and the Firth of Forth. The following year it also became an airship station – the airships were used to carry out patrols over the North Sea looking for German submarines.

Most famously, the airship R.34 flew from East Fortune in July 1919 on the first East-West crossing of the Atlantic, and also the first return trip.

The station closed down in 1920 but the current airfield was built in 1940/41 and reopened as a night fighter training station. In 1942 this changed to anti-shiping strike training.

The station closed again in 1946 and was only used for flying again once when, for three months in 1961, it became Edinburgh Airport whilst the runway at Turnhouse was resurfaced.

The museum site largely dates from 1940/41 except for Hangar 4 which was built in 1944 when the station expanded to accommodate de Havilland Mosquito aircraft.

Recent developments at the museum have produced a variety of new exhibitions. In addition to The Concorde Experience, there is Fortunes of War (which tells the history of the site), Fantastic Flight (an interactive gallery about flight), the Parachute Store (restored to its wartime appearance) and The Jet Age (which tells the story of the start of jet travel in the 1950s and 1960s).

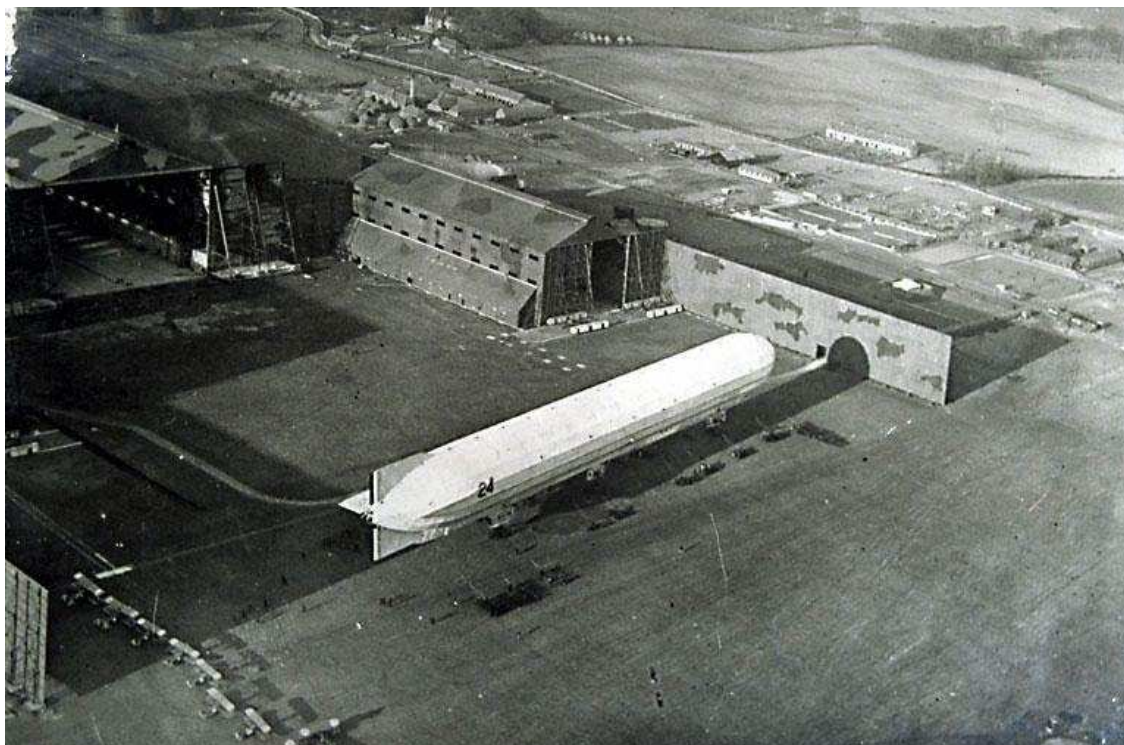
Ian Brown



Above: the Jet Age display
Right: an unusual view of an iconic plane



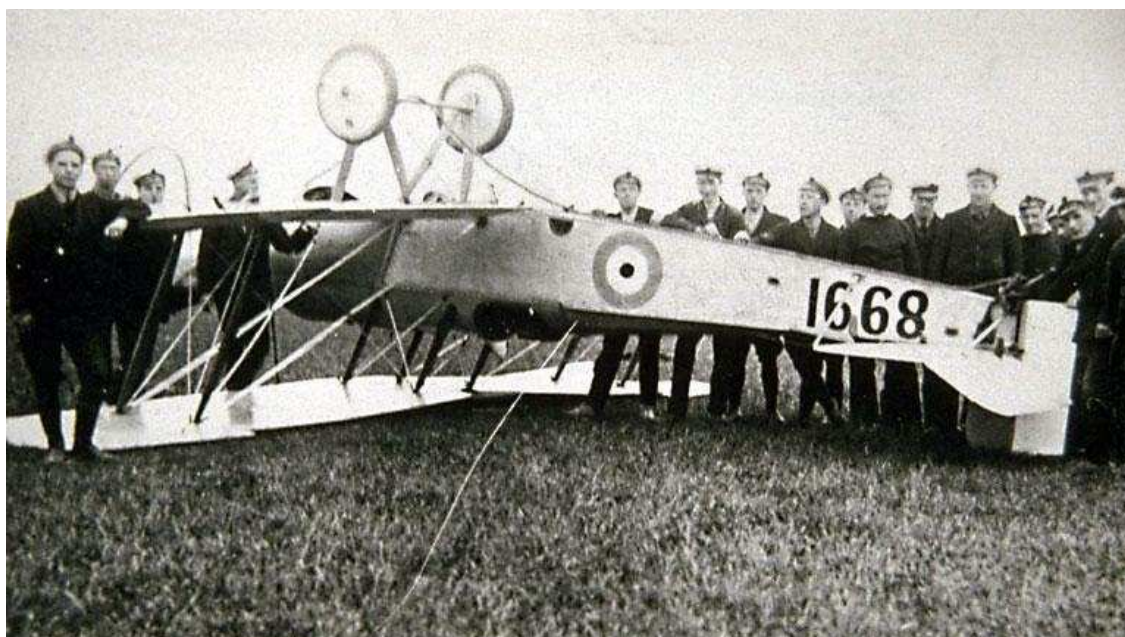
Thanks go to Ian Brown and his colleagues for facilitating a very informative and enjoyable visit to the Museum



East Fortune naval air station in 1918, with airship R24 with a flight of naval aircraft visible in the foreground (probably Sopwith Cuckoo biplanes of number 1 torpedo training squadron formed at East Fortune in July of that year)

Competition

Compose a suitable caption - win a book on Egyptian archaeology!



© NMS

Email or post entries to Bob Knox, PAS, 9 Glen Road, Peebles
by 30 November

The Glenmorangie Research Project on Early Historic Scotland

Our lecture programme for 2010-2011 got off to a great start with an excellent talk by Alice Blackwell, research officer for *The Glenmorangie Research Project on Early Historic Scotland*

Alice explained how an innovative partnership between the Glenmorangie Company and National Museums Scotland is furthering understanding of the Early Historic people of Scotland.

The partnership supports the study and understanding of the period between c300-900AD. An important aspect of the partnership involves working with contemporary craftspeople to make versions of objects from the Early Historic period that provide significant insights into the skills, techniques and sophistication of society at that time.



Alice Blackwell on the reproduction of the Pictish throne. © NMS

Last year, for example, Borders-based master furniture maker Adrian McCurdy was commissioned to create a reproduction of a Pictish throne.

Earlier this year, reproductions of two leather book satchels of the type that would have been used by monks bringing Christianity to Scotland were commissioned through the partnership.



A view of the reproduction book satchels while they were on temporary display in NMS

In late September, only a few days after Alice's visit to Peebles, the success of the project was recognised when it received the prestigious Cultural Branding Award at the Scottish Arts and Business Awards ceremony in Glasgow.

The Glenmorangie Company has a natural association with National Museums Scotland as the museums' collections include the eighth-century Hilton of Cadboll Pictish Stone (just visible behind Alice in the photograph), which was discovered near Glenmorangie House in Ross-shire and is the inspiration for the icon that adorns Glenmorangie's bottles.

Slàinte!

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