



PAST

Peebles Archaeological Society Times
April 2012

Annual report 2011-2012

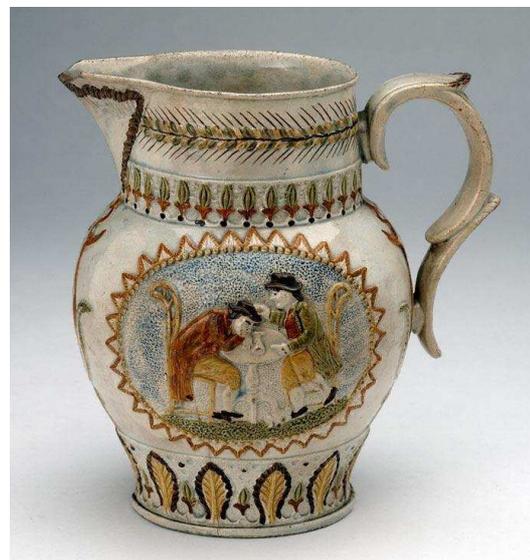
Lecture summaries

On Thursday 15th September, as our first speaker of the 2011-2012 session, we were delighted to welcome **George Haggarty**, who gave an excellent talk entitled *From Acorn to Oak Tree; Scottish Pottery c1750 to 1850*. George is a Research Associate at the National Museums of Scotland, a consultant on Medieval and Later Scottish ceramics, and an internationally recognised expert on Scottish pottery of that date.

Although industrial pottery probably started in Leith in the early 17th century, George's talk focussed on Prestonpans where a number of later potteries were lined along the coast to take advantage of a specific type of local coal; we were introduced to the personalities involved, and the types of wares produced, some of which are now extremely rare and consequently extremely valuable.

George also touched on the importance of Whim House, Lamancha the mansion built by Archibald Campbell, 3rd Duke of Argyll and subsequently owned by Sir James Montgomery of Stanhope, where his archival research has established that there was a laboratory experimenting with porcelain in the middle of the 18th century.

In October, our speaker was **Dr Tertia Barnett** who gave a fascinating talk entitled *'Rock Art in Scotland ...and a few other places!'*



Cream-glazed earthenware jug, possibly made at one of the potteries in Prestonpans in East Lothian. Dating from around 1800, the jug depicts two men drinking at a table. One man has knocked over his glass and is slumped over the table. Source: SCRAN/NMS

From 2006 until its completion last year, Tertia was project manager of the Scotland's Rural Past Project based at the RCAHMS. Prior to that, she had developed a growing interest in rock art, working on various projects both in Libya and in Northern England.

Rock art takes the form of either pictographs, which basically means painted, and petroglyphs which basically means carved, and can be either representational/figurative or abstract.

With the odd exception British rock art is carved and abstract, and is found in two types, passage grave art and cup-and-ring motifs. As well as being found on rock outcrops, cups-and-rings can be found on standing stones, in burial cists, and in the form of portable stones set into dykes or gateposts much in later times. British rock art is found mainly in the north of the country, its distribution probably dependent on the suitability of local rock (hence the dearth in Peeblesshire).

Interest in rock art began in the 1820s, with dedicated individuals and groups all over the country, including RCAHMS, surveying and recording ever since. Although many theories have been put forward, from the believable to the crackpot, as to the meaning of rock art, this has been lost in the mists of time.

Tertia concluded her most interesting talk by looking at our changes to rock art over last 10/15 years. Recording is now more rigorous and consistent, using GPS and photogrammetry, a 3D imaging process. Whereas most rock art was considered to be Bronze Age in date, it is now thought to include some Neolithic and Mesolithic material, and excavations round rock art sites are aiding understanding of the art within its wider landscape setting.

In November, the Society was delighted to welcome back **Dr David Caldwell** (then Keeper of the Scotland & Europe Department and Acting Keeper of the Archaeology Department at the National Museums of Scotland) to speak on '**The Lewis Chessmen**'. David has an international reputation as a scholar of Medieval and Post-Medieval Scotland and led a recent research project that has resulted in new insights into one of the most famous and valuable archaeological treasures recovered from Scotland.

Made of walrus ivory and dated to the late 12th century, the chessmen are of Scandinavian origin and were probably made in Trondheim in Norway. Found in Uig in the west of Lewis, they were taken to Edinburgh and then London in 1831, although probably found some time earlier than this. The majority of the pieces can now be found in the British Museum with a smaller number in the collections of the National Museums of Scotland.

David and associates found that the hoard of 93 pieces included a buckle, probably for the container in which they were held, and 14 tablemen, such as would be used in draughts, and the makings of four chess sets.



Cup-and-ring marks and other carvings on rock slabs at Kilmichael Glassary - one of the many impressive rock art sites in the Kilmartin area of Mid Argyll. Source: SCRAN

With the help of a forensic anthropologist who looked at the facial characteristics of the chessmen, they were able to divide the pieces in five groups, suggesting five different craftsmen, some of whom were more accomplished than others. By looking at dress they established that the pieces are not all of the same age, and two are so different that they must have been replacements.

After looking at the different stories which arose after the finding of the chessmen - and as Lewis was part of the Lordship of the Isles - David concluded that the Chessmen belonged to an important person in or near Lewis, possibly owned by the Bishop of the Isles or the Lord of the Isles, at Finlaggan in Islay.

In January, for our first meeting of the New Year, we were pleased to welcome **Rachel Hosker**, Archive Manager at The Scottish Borders Archive, The Heritage Hub, Hawick who gave an illustrated talk entitled ***Discover the Landscape of your Ancestors – using Archives and Archaeology to discover the Story.*** As an archivist, Rachel's talk was mainly about the resources available at The Hub and elsewhere, and how they are readily available and easy to use.

With documents from The Naesmyth of Posso Papers at the Hub, which date from the 16th century, and with material from the RCAHMS, Rachel took Posso, in Manor as a case study, showing some of the changes over time. She highlighted some of the early characters, such as Gilbert Baird whose family were granted Posso in the 14th Century and who was killed at Flodden, and Michael Naesmyth whose family later occupied Posso, and was involved in national politics, fighting on the side of Mary, Queen of Scots.

Manor Kirk Session records of a later time told some of the stories of ordinary folk of the parish in need of help, such as the man who lost all when his ship was attacked by a French privateer when returning from America, or the man who had been a Turkish slave.

Rachel finished a most interesting talk by looking at documents and stories of the time of the 18th and 19th century improvements.

For details of the Hub's collections, exhibitions, opening times, etc see www.heartofhawick.co.uk/heritagehub/



The Heritage Hub, Hawick - home of Scottish Borders Archive

In February, the Society had for its speaker, **Alastair Hacket** who gave an illustrated talk on '**Metal Detecting**'. Alastair is the Secretary of the National Council for Metal Detecting (NCMD), Scottish Region, and Secretary of the Scottish Detector Club, Scotland's oldest established metal detecting club. The NCMD is a British organisation with Scotland as one of its regions, and provides members with such things as public liability insurance and a code of conduct.

Alastair covered the activities that the Club was involved in such as group, or individual visits to areas, particularly arable farm land, where any finds would be in a disturbed context, helping archaeologist on digs, pre-development surveys, and community archaeology projects. Health and safety reared its ugly head when working on the Edinburgh Tram Project, when there was a requirement to wear hard hats when nowhere near machinery, and boots with steel toecaps! (They wore the hats but not the boots) The Scottish Detector Club also offers a free search and recovery service.

Alastair touched on Treasure Trove law, which differs from England in that the finder or landowner has no right to any find, and although most finds are rubbish, all important finds are recorded using GPS and reported. He also described briefly how a metal detector works, through electrical magnetic induction, which causes finds to assume a magnetic field, which the detector measures.

Alastair stressed that Club members were not treasure hunters, but that it did turn up, and showed pictures of, and described some the major UK hoards, with most turning up in England. There were occasional notable exceptions such as the recent hoard of gold torcs from Stirlingshire, but all were found where archaeologists would not have been working, highlighting the importance of metal detectors to the understanding of our past.

Bob Knox, Secretary

Our annual joint meeting with the Tweeddale Society was held in March when the speaker was **Dr Angus Miller** on '**The in-between land: clues to a lost ocean and the collision of continents**'



Miniature teapot with plaster mould, made by Belfield and Co. of Prestonpans in East Lothian around the 1880s. Belfields were well known for full-size teapots, which were known as 'Broon Coos'. Good supplies of coal and clay and easy transport by sea meant that the south side of the Firth of Forth was an ideal location for potteries to develop. Small-scale works existed there from the 17th century and larger factories developed from around 1750. Source: SCRAN/ NMS

Treasurer's Report

It is disappointing that membership continues to decline and that visitor numbers were down on the previous year. I should point out that the cost of the Peebles Agricultural Show has not risen dramatically but that we have paid for this year's event early. I have also split the entry for book sales to reflect the income we have received from the disposal of some of the books which formed a legacy to the Society from John Hooper. We shall continue to sell further books that we consider surplus to our requirements.

While our financial position is healthy enough at present it is clear from the Accounts that we shall need to take steps to increase our income if we are to remain viable in the future.

Peter Barclay

Analysis of Income & Expenditure | April 2011 – 31 March 2012

	Income		Expenditure	
	2011	2012	2012	2011
	£	£	£	£
Bank Interest	2.14	0.19	Insurance	184.69
Subscriptions	460.00	415.00	Speakers' Gratuities	100.00
Book Sales	50.00	30.00	Hire of room	90.00
Visitors	36.00	18.00	Hire of equipment	30.00
Museums & SBC Grants	500.00		Purchase of equipment	87.99
(re radiocarbon dating)			Photocopying/stationery/postage	161.47
Donations	60.00	15.00	Subscriptions	55.00
Sale of Jock Hooper's			Agricultural Show	72.00
books		315.00	AGM Expenses	36.62
Excess Expenditure /			Donation Uniform appeal	250.00
Income	739.83	24.58	Radiocarbon dating	1022.25
	<u>1847.97</u>	<u>817.77</u>		<u>817.77</u>
				<u>1847.97</u>

Balances at 1 April 2011

General Account	£ 1049.26
Cash Account	78.54

£ 1127.80

Balances at 31 March 2012

General Account	1076.55
Cash Account	26.67
Excess Expenditure/Income	14.58

£ 1127.80

The Income & Expenditure Accounts and Abstract of Accounts, all for the year ended 31 March 2012, are in accordance with the books and vouchers presented to me and appear to give a fair and accurate picture of the financial state of the Society.

Fergus Brown
Accounts Examiner

Field Work Reports

Shootinglees

Practical work on the Shootinglees Project began on the 24th of March with a familiarisation exercise, following the procedure learnt during training courses run by the Scotland's Rural Past Team of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland.

Participants each drew a rough sketch of the features of the site and these were then discussed to see what conclusions could be drawn. It was decided that, whilst some of the features remained enigmatical, there appeared to have been two distinct phases of activity, with a possible third earlier phase – this was thought to be so because the long earth bank, which traverses the length of the site, could be seen to overlay an enclosure.



Hard at it at Shootinglees...

Metal detecting followed in the afternoon. Several ferrous objects of an agricultural nature and a piece of lead were dug up. The most interesting item was a possibly flattened four-pronged fork (see photo). If anyone has any suggestions as to what it could have been used for, please let us know!

Historical evidence, gleaned mainly from Thomas Craig Brown's *The History of Selkirkshire* 1886, reveals that Shootinglees is first mentioned in documents in 1423 when Sir William Middlemass obtains from

the Earl of Wigton 'tua forestar stedis (farms) wythin Schutyinle warde.....' In 1510 an Alexander Watson of Schutingleyis was prosecuted for sheep stealing – something not unusual in those days! In the 16th century there were members of the Stewart family living there but by the early 17th century Shootinglees had passed into the possession of the Earls of Buccleugh.

As yet no archival evidence has been found as to when the last phase house was first occupied but in 1766 Shootinglees is recorded as having 1200 sheep. In 1819 William Anderson of Shootinglees received £8 from the Board of Manufactures as a premium for wool and rams, to encourage woollen manufactures. The house was last occupied in 1848 when Helen Amos left to emigrate to Australia and by 1856 the 1st Edition OS map shows it as a ruin.

The next meet will take place on Saturday 14th April when we will start the detailed survey using plane-tables. Everyone is welcome to come – no experience is necessary. If anyone would like to be added to the Shootinglees mailing list, please let me know

Joyce Durham

bellcott@btinternet.com



The mystery object...answers on a postcard please!

Out and about: fieldwork notes

Carved stone from Biggiesknowe

Bob had been asked by a friend to find out what he could about a carved stone that had been in his daughter's garden in Biggiesknowe. The stone is local greywacke? measuring approx 35cm x 28cm x 10cm, and is weathered with lichens on the carved side and unweathered on the underside.

Although obviously not a classic cup and ring marked stone, it is carved with a central cup, surrounded by a ring with a tail. Experts who have so far seen photographs are unable to positively identify the stone, although the likely explanation is a more modern, perhaps Victorian, attempt to simulate something older.

Details of the stone have been passed to Treasure Trove for a decision on its future.



The enigmatic carved stone from Biggiesknowe

Fieldwalking at Neidpath Cottage

On 3rd March, Joyce, Gillian, Peter and Bob had the opportunity to walk the field to the southwest of Neidpath (Toll) Cottage, and to the west of the road, in the company of Chris Sawyers of Tweeddale Museum.

The south end of this field is immediately uphill of the important site at Manor Bridge, and the dozen or so artefacts found – mainly chert blades, cores and scrapers, with the occasional flint artefact - reflected the multi-period assemblage found there.

Bob Knox



Prehistoric cup-and-ring marked stone from Gallowhill, Perthshire found around 1896. Source: SCRAN/NMS

Next meeting: Members evening 19 April

Do you know what a Colby Camp is? – if not this could be your chance to find out!

The next meeting of the Society will be held on Thursday 19 April in the Community Centre, Walkershaugh commencing at 7.30.

Preceded by a short AGM, the meeting will take the form of a member's evening to include short presentations by **Joyce Durham** on '*The Society's new fieldwork project at Shootinglees, near Traquair*', Joyce also on '**Colby Camps**' and **Bob Knox** on '*The Archaeology of the Peeblesshire Rifle Volunteers*', to be followed by refreshments.

Non-members welcome.



Charles Tod Ker of the 1st Peeblesshire Rifle Volunteers. Photo taken about 1880.

And a date for your diaries...

**Field trip
Rock art in Northumberland
Guide: Dr Tertia Barnett
Sunday 3 June 2012**

A selection of sites will be visited under the expert guidance of Dr Tertia Barnett (University of Edinburgh) provisionally including Weetwood Moor, Dod Law, Roughing Linn and Old Bewick.

Full details will be available at the AGM / Members Evening on 19 April. If interested in attending please contact Trevor Cowie, telephone 01721 730377 or email trevor.cowie@btopenworld.com