



# PAST

Peebles Archaeological Society Times  
Annual Report - April 2010

## Lecture Programme 2009–2010

In September, as our first speaker in our 2009-2010 programme, we were pleased to welcome our member, Dr Chris Bowles, Scottish Borders Council's Archaeology Officer, who gave a talk entitled '*A Light in the Dark - The Early Christian Borders*' in which he explored the complex strands which seem to lie behind the development of Christianity in the region from the mid-first millennium AD.

One particular theme explored by Chris was the possible link between late prehistoric sacred sites and early Christian monastic centres. One site to which Chris drew particular attention was Old Melrose, an inland promontory overlooking the River Tweed, long known as the site of a Northumbrian, and possibly British, monastery. It is famous as having been the first monastic home of St Cuthbert, and a chapel at Old Melrose dedicated to the saint was a site of pilgrimage throughout the medieval period; however, as Chris noted, there are tantalising hints that this may have been a sacred site in pre-Christian times.

In October, our speaker was long-standing PAS member, Ian Brown of the National Museum of Flight (NMoF). Ian gave a fascinating illustrated talk on '*100 Years of Scotland's National Aviation Collections*'. Forming part of the National Museums of Scotland, the NMoF is on, and mostly housed in, what was East Fortune airfield - initially a WW1 aircraft and airship station, and then a WW2 airfield.

In his talk, Ian showed us a selection of the planes, parts of planes and other artefacts that can be seen at the Museum. They include an Avro Vulcan V-bomber used in the Falklands War and a former Dan-Air De Havilland Comet 4c, and a British Airways BAC1-11. However, the star attraction is undoubtedly Concorde Alpha Alpha (registration G-BOAA), presented by British Airways when the Concorde fleet was withdrawn from service. This attracted much publicity when it was brought up from the south of England and now forms the centrepiece of the "Concorde Experience" exhibition which opened in 2005.



**View of Old Melrose with the Eildon Hills in the background (source: Scottish Borders Heritage website)**

In November, our speaker was Frank Harkness who braved terrible weather conditions to give a talk to the Society entitled '*Long Forgotten, Using Scottish Placenames to Identify Early Church Sites*'. Using a variety of case studies, Frank introduced us to some of the ways in which placenames can be used as an adjunct to archaeological and historical research.

As an example, our speaker examined the evidence for *Llan* placename elements in Scotland (eg Lhanbryde). *Llan* or *Lan* is a common place name element in Brythonic languages, originally meaning 'an enclosed piece of land' but later evolving to mean the parish surrounding a church - most placenames beginning with *Llan* have some connection to a saint.

In January, in a lull in the grim weather that ushered in 2010, the Society had as its speaker well-known Borders author, broadcaster, archaeologist and historian, Walter Elliot, who told the Society about the '*The Gods of Trimontium*'. In the 1950s Walter was encouraged to fieldwalk on the site of the Roman fort of Trimontium, near Melrose... and the rest, as they say, is history. As an avid fieldwalker over the next 50 years, Walter became an authority on the fort and its surrounds, and a founder member of the Trimontium Trust.

The Romans had gods for everything - they borrowed from the Greek and native gods and adjusted their characteristics to suit their own ends. The Romans bargained with their gods, for example, seeking their protection in return for the dedication of an altar. A number of altars, with dedications mostly to Jupiter, have been found at Trimontium, in an area where there have been no other finds - a strong pointer, in his view, that this was the site of the parade ground. Indeed Walter suspects further altars may yet await discovery!

Over the years, the most spectacular evidence for Newstead's Roman gods has come in the form of intaglios - tiny gemstones engraved with designs depicting many of the deities, heroes and supernatural beings recognised and venerated by the Romans.

Originally used as seals, most intaglios would have been set in iron finger-rings, which have subsequently corroded away.



**Intaglio from Newstead showing a rather pert *maenad* playing pipes (after Elliot & Henig 1999)**

Despite being only a few millimetres in length, around 40 examples have been found by Walter and others in the course of fieldwalking over the area of the fort and its annexes.

Walter showed a series of slides, beautifully photographed, depicting subjects ranging from gods such as Jupiter and Mercury to depictions of animals - many of them miniature masterpieces of gem-cutting (see Elliot, J W & Henig, M 'Engraved gemstones from the Roman frontier post at Newstead, Roxburghshire', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, 112 (1982), 295-9; Elliot, J W & Henig, M 'Further engraved gemstones from Newstead (Trimontium), Roxburghshire' *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, 129 (1999), 393-398)

In February, on the occasion of our annual Joint Meeting with the Tweeddale Society, David Rudrum of the Borders Family History Society gave a talk entitled '*Births and Burials in the Borders*' succinctly setting out some of the ways in which monumental inscriptions, church records and related sources could be used to inform the social history of the region.



**Intaglio from Newstead depicting Bonus Eventus, the spirit of good luck or success, holding ears of corn and a curved stick with a bunch of grapes (source: SCRAN).**

Our guest speaker for our March meeting was Marilyn Brown of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, on the subject of 'Early Gardens in the Borders: Recent Survey and Research'.

Gardens in the Borders, made their debut with the monastic gardens of Coldingham and Old Melrose. The founding or refounding of the major Border Abbeys in the 12th century led to a resurgence of the garden in a religious setting with the inclusion of Infirmary gardens, a *herbarium*, kitchen gardens and areas which would be a planted as places of peace and contemplation.

Flowers would have been available to celebrate the various religious festivals. Some of the monastic orders met annually and included in their discussions would be themes of garden maintenance and cultivation.

During the post-Reformation period, the advent of 'feu charters' enabled more landholding and a more active interest and market in the land. The 16th century saw changes leading to security of tenure and the advent of gardens for pleasure.

In Scotland, there appeared terraced gardens, water gardens and 'distant views'. Water gardens were a popular feature at this time, with good examples at Craigmillar Castle in Edinburgh and Brunston Castle near Penicuik. The first drawing of a garden in Scotland dates to 1567, forming part of a sketch drawn up of Kirk o' Fields in Edinburgh, for the purpose of showing evidence relating to the murder of Darnley!

During the period being studied by Marilyn, the major gardens in the Borders had their *floruit* in the late 16th and 17th centuries. They were developed to enhance the architecture of the fine towers and houses. Posso in the Manor Valley is a fine example with its five terraces, parterre and fine sycamores. Gala House too had its cherry trees, sycamores, mulberries and fir trees. Other local fine houses were complemented by equally fine gardens - as at Torwoodlee, Whitebank, and Langshaw. At Elibank, there is evidence of rock outcrops being cut away to allow space for the full symmetry of the garden surrounding the castle, with a sweeping approach road taking in the vistas of terraces and knot gardens.

All in all, members were treated to an excellent, well-researched and illustrated talk, highlighting the development of the garden from its practical beginnings to that of property-enhancing status symbol.

**Bob Knox/Jack Boughey**

**Date for your diary**

**Field trip to**

**East Lothian**

**Saturday 5 June**

**Itinerary to include the National Museum of Flight at East Fortune; the Iron Age hillfort at Chesters, Drem; Dirleton Castle and other local archaeological sites**

**Details will be circulated in April**

## Treasurer's report 2009-2010

Expenditure on the Adam & Eve Stone project at Lyne has covered two years and accordingly the small surplus this year must be looked at along side the slightly larger deficit last year. Over the two year period expenditure exceeded income by just under £150. It is encouraging to see a slight increase in subscriptions although this is still below the level of 2008. The substantial fall in interest income reflects both a fall in average bank balances resulting from the expenditure of grant monies and the current poor interest rates. The only other item worth mentioning is purchase of equipment for surveying, which is initially for work at Kilrubie, but will be available for later projects.

Finally I should like to thank Fergus Brown for yet again examining the Books.

**Peter Barclay**

### Analysis of Income & Expenditure 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010

	Income		Expenditure		
	2009	2010	2010	2009	
Bank Interest	£ 74.42	4.73	Insurance	£171.50	£148.13
Subscriptions	485.00	525.00	Speakers' Gratuities	80.00	80.00
Book Sales	14.00	4.00	Hire of Room	72.00	63.00
Visitors	22.00	26.00	Hire of Equipment	5.00	25.00
Donations	1.05	-----	Purchase of Equipment	243.92	54.98
Lottery Grant	7040.00	7228.90	Photocopying/Postage	30.00	12.87
			Subscriptions		20.00
			Agricultural Show	33.00	33.00
			AGM Expenses	32.69	27.22
			Adam & Eve Stone	5487.63	7500.00
			Syllabus	30.80	30.80
			Miscellaneous	21.75	-----
			Grant Refund	1369.40	-----
Excess Expenditure/	<u>358.53</u>		Excess Income/Expenditure	<u>210.94</u>	
Income	<u>£7995.00</u>	<u>7788.63</u>		<u>7788.63</u>	<u>7995.00</u>

#### Balances at 1 April 2009

General Account	£ 1331.53
Cash Account	.28
Soc. of Antiq. of Scotland	75.06
Scottish Borders Council	250.00
Excess Income/Expenditure	<u>210.76</u>
	<u>£ 1867.63</u>

#### Balances at 31 March 2010

General Account	£ 1487.01
Cash Account	55.56
Soc of Antiq. of Scot	75.06
Scottish Borders Council	250.00
	<u>£ 1867.63</u>

The Income & Expenditure Accounts and Abstract of Accounts, all for the year ended 31 March 2010, 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

## Fieldwork notes

### Camp Shiel Burn Project

Joyce Durham

After what has been an interesting two years, the field work of the Camp Shiel project drew to a close last summer. What started as an investigation into illicit whisky distilling, eventually expanded to include transhumance and flax processing when we found evidence of shielings and retting ponds along the side of the burn.

The research into these is still ongoing - not to mention a final site on the burn which is still a bit of a mystery which we may go back and try to solve some time in the future.

### Kilrubie Hill, Eddleston

Jack Boughey

As part of the Eddleston Parish Project we noted some time ago a range of previously unrecorded features on the south-eastern flank of Kilrubie Hill, 1½ miles due west of Eddleston.

These included footings of probable domestic structures, stock and field enclosures, boundaries, land divisions and cultivation traces including rig and furrow and lazy beds.

In November 2009 we submitted a successful Project Design Application to SRP (Scotland's Rural Past). SRP are a project team with the RCAHMS, working with local communities to research, record and promote the vanishing settlements and landscapes of Scotland's rural past.

This meant that SRP would work with us, providing expertise and advice, as well as providing practical training on the ground. Additionally they would be able to provide us with surveying equipment on loan for the duration of our project.

We had two principal objectives: firstly to survey and record the archaeology in the area of Kilrubie Hill and secondly to engage more of the existing membership

of the Society in active fieldwork and/or research and to attract new members to the Society.

We had a preliminary reconnoitre of the site on 12th December, which was very well attended with 13 people coming along. We had some excellent input from Strat Halliday (RCAHMS) on the main features of the site and its relative chronology.

Our next venture on the hill followed the January snow on the 30th of that month. A band of 12 including Danny Dutton (SRP) and Piers Dixon (RCAHMS) headed out for Kilrubie, stopping en route at two "possible" iron age round houses.

At Kilrubie itself, Danny gave us some training in the use of handheld GPS. We then set up the plane-table within one of the main structures and starting to use it to trace the outlines of the building. By then it had become decidedly chillier. A superb day though, thanks to the excellent input from both Danny and Piers, not to mention the maps, aerial photographs and surveying handouts.

The Society has now purchased its own plane table, tripod and alidade to supplement the one we have on loan from SRP. This enables us to have two teams working simultaneously - as was the case on Saturday 27th March when we had another fine day of fieldwork and training, thanks once again to Danny and Piers, and on this occasion also SRP project manager Tertia Barnett.

### SRP Fieldwork Training Day

*SRP are also running a fieldwork day at Threipmuir in the Pentlands on Friday 23rd April which will cover site sketching and other aspects of site recording and identification. The course is free and we can share transport. Please get in touch with Jack Boughey soon if you are interested in attending.*

## **Eddleston Project – Darnhall**

**Bob Knox**

Some time ago the group involved in walkover survey as part of the Eddleston project was on the high ground to the east of the Eddleston Water when they spotted a soil mark forming the outline of a possible rectangular enclosure, in a field on Darnhall Mains Farm on the other side of the valley [soil marks in arable fields can reflect the presence of buried features such as ploughed-out banks and ditches]

Last year Walter Elliot, who had been looking at another mark on Edston farm, had a look with his divining rods and pronounced the Darnhall mark to be a Roman temporary camp. If indeed the case, this would be of great significance, and efforts are in hand to try to corroborate Walter's findings.

Joyce has been in touch with Alan Leslie of GUARD, to see if it were possible for his students to do a geophysical survey of the site, and awaits a reply. A metal detecting survey of part of the site has yielded nothing of importance. Consideration is now being given to putting a trial trench, either by machine or by hand, across the line of the ditch.



**Members of the committee preparing the Sat Nav for the Field Trip to East Lothian on Saturday 5 June**

## **LECTURE PROGRAMME**

**2010 - 2011**

**16 September 2010**

**Alice Blackwell**

**National Museums of Scotland  
*The Glenmorangie Research Project on  
Early Historic Scotland***

**21 October 2010**

**Danny Dutton, RCAHMS  
*Scotland's Rural Past Project***

**9 November 2010**

**Tam Ward, Biggar Archaeology  
*The Earliest People in Scotland*  
Joint meeting with the Tweeddale  
Society**

**21 January 2011**

**To be confirmed**

**17 February 2011**

**Brian Murray, Scottish Mining Museum  
*Coal Mining in Scotland***

**17 March 2011**

**Iain Macleod  
*Ancient Medicine***

**April 2011**

**AGM**

**Followed by Members Night**

**Meetings start at 7.30pm  
and will be held in the  
Community Centre  
Walkershaugh, Peebles**

**except for 9 November 2010  
when the meeting will be held in  
the Eastgate Theatre**

Articles for future newsletters can either be handed to a committee member or e-mailed to [jeaninpeebles@hotmail.com](mailto:jeaninpeebles@hotmail.com)