



# PAST

Peeblesshire Archaeological Society Times  
Winter issue / February 2021

## Recent Talks and Reports

### Looking back...and looking forward

*A dark and chilly winter perhaps illuminated by the novelty of some enlivening PAS meetings on Zoom and the possibility of attending other enlightening talks from the comfort of your own sofa! This newsletter provides a recap of our winter programme of talks and a regional conference, as well as a reminder of local finds and an update on fieldwork activities by members.*

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### Finds News

#### The 'Peebles' Late Bronze Age Hoard: New light on Borders 'high society' c. 1000 BC

One Monday last August, local folk would have woken up to the unusual news of a significant new archaeological find in the Peebles area.

In June, **Mariusz Stepien** and two friends were metal detecting in a field not far from Peebles when he discovered some unusual bronze rings. Recognising they might be of interest, Mariusz resisted the temptation



*Some of the bronze rings in the newly discovered hoard: the horse gear includes decorated straps, rings and ornaments - some of types not previously found in Scotland (Photo: Treasure Trove Unit/Crown Copyright)*

to explore further and immediately contacted the Scottish Treasure Trove Unit based in the National Museum of Scotland. For further information on Treasure Trove in Scotland see:

<https://treasuretrovescotland.co.uk/>

The unusual nature of the rings was confirmed and despite the difficulties posed by the Covid19 pandemic, a team from the museum immediately undertook a small excavation with assistance from the finder and the kind permission of the landowner. Over the following days, painstaking excavation gradually revealed the outline of a pit containing what proved to be a hoard of Bronze Age artefacts dating from around 1000-800 BC.



**Finder Mariusz Stepien beside the hoard after it had been lifted as a block of soil and packed for transfer to the NMS laboratory (Photo: Dariusz Gucwa, courtesy of Treasure Trove Unit)**

The hoard consists of a sword which would have been placed in a pit along with what seems to be a complete set of horse harness including buckles, rings and strap ornaments, some of them of types not previously known from Scotland. The find also includes what may be fittings from a wheeled vehicle such as a cart or wagon. To the delight of the archaeologists, painstaking excavation revealed vestiges of leather and wood preserved in the soil fill of the pit, actually allowing them to trace the straps that once connected the rings and buckles.

*To get an impression of what was revealed in the ground see the striking 3D model produced for the Treasure Trove Unit by Hugo Anderson-Whymark of the NMS team see: <https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/late-bronze-age-hoard-from-nr-peebls-scotland-ed73de963c194d4eb76ad0fd43559df7>*



**The new discovery adds to the scatter of Bronze Age finds already known from Tweeddale. Among the most important of these old finds is this hoard of horse harness rings and cart or wagon fittings found at Horsehope Craig in the Manor Valley during the 1860s. Some of the objects are remarkably similar to items in the new hoard (Photo: T Cowie, courtesy of Tweeddale Museum)**

The discovery was widely reported. See for example <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-south-scotland-53714864> or <https://www.peebleshirenews.com/news/national-news/18639355.metal-detectorist-unearths-nationally-significant-bronze-age-hoard/>

In the associated press and TV coverage, **Emily Freeman**, head of the Crown Office's Treasure Trove Unit, described the hoard as 'a nationally significant find': in very large part, this is due to the fact that Mariusz reported his initial finds straightaway, providing the archaeological team with an all-too-rare opportunity to investigate the hoard still undisturbed and in its original context in the ground.

Owing to the complexity of the find, the decision was taken to lift the pit in a block of soil for 'micro-excavation' in the NMS Laboratories. A great deal of conservation and research work remains to be done but

already it is clear that this amazing local discovery will provide unparalleled insights into how Bronze Age horse harnesses were assembled. All in all, this new discovery will provide a spectacular new window into Borders 'high society' around 3000 years ago and we look forward to hearing a great deal more about the hoard in due course!

**Trevor Cowie**

## **A dip into some recent Borders finds**

Every year produces a crop of new finds made by metal detectorists. Not all are as archaeologically significant or as newsworthy as the Late Bronze Age hoard found near Peebles last year, but each in its own way adds a little piece to the jigsaw that makes up the overall record of human activity across in the region. In this short article, I have taken the opportunity to mention just some of the other recent archaeological finds that have been made in the Borders, as reported in the most recent (2019) volume of *Discovery and Excavation Scotland – Archaeology Scotland's* excellent round-up of recent work carried out across the length and breadth of the country.

Prehistoric artefacts include fragments of a Late Bronze Age spearhead from Ayton, Berwickshire, probably broken and dispersed by ploughing. In fact, part of what may be the same spearhead had been found some years before in the same field. It is a reminder of the vulnerability of archaeological deposits: the opportunity to investigate the Peebles hoard undisturbed and in its original context in the ground (and now in the lab) is just all-too-rare.

Interestingly, horse gear – but of Iron Age rather than Bronze Age date - figures several times among the recent crop of finds, and at least some of these artefacts were probably also originally deliberate offerings rather than simply discarded in the past. For example, they include a fine copper alloy *terret* (or rein-ring) discovered at Bowden, while part of another *terret* was found in

Southdean, also in Roxburghshire. Other harness fittings include what would have originally have been a fine enamelled strap mount from Chirside and a fragment of another ornate strap fitting from Lauder, also in Berwickshire.



*Iron Age cruciform strap mount from Chirside, Berwickshire, with remains of red and blue enamel decoration. One arm of the cross is broken (Photo: Treasure Trove Unit/Crown Copyright)*

Personal rather than equine ornaments include several finds of Romano-British brooches, including one from Maxton, Roxburghshire, now heavily worn but also originally embellished with enamel. Iron Age and Romano-British craft workers and their customers really did like their bling! Enamel ornament set in a spiral design is also a feature of an unusual Iron Age copper alloy tankard handle found near Earlston - a reminder that late prehistoric warriors were also partial to a bevy!



*Medieval harness hanger from Denholm, Roxburghshire, with very worn fleur-de-lis design and traces of red and blue enamel. The heraldic arms may be French (Photo: Treasure Trove Unit/Crown Copyright)*

Among the range of finds of later periods, mention may be made of a medieval shield-shaped harness hanger found at Denholm in Roxburghshire. The heraldic pendant that would once have been suspended from this has long gone – both items perhaps dislodged as the knightly rider and his steed brushed past some obstacle in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century.

As we look back through time at horse trappings like these, they are a useful reminder of how closely the history of horsemanship has been bound up with personal status – and this is an aspect of the Peebles hoard and Late Bronze Age society that will be revisited in a future article.

### Trevor Cowie

#### **Acknowledgements**

Thanks to **Ella Paul** of the *Scottish Treasure Trove Unit* for supplying the photos. For further information about Treasure Trove in Scotland see <https://treasuretrovescotland.co.uk/>

*Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* is published annually by *Archaeology Scotland*. For further details see <https://archaeologyscotland.org.uk/>

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### PAS Talks

#### **Dr Rebecca Jones: ‘The Antonine Wall in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century’, 18 November 2020**

Rebecca is Head of Archaeology and World Heritage at **Historic Environment Scotland** and a Visiting Professor at **Heriot Watt University**. She holds degrees from the Universities of Glasgow and Newcastle and specialises in Roman campaigns and occupations in Scotland. She was a member of the team that successfully ‘inscribed’ the Antonine Wall on UNESCO's World Heritage list and is currently Chair of the Antonine Wall Steering Group as well as a member of the international groups that run the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World

Heritage property. She is also Co-Chair of the International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies.

Rebecca began with a brief introduction to Roman frontiers in general, then the Antonine Wall specifically, followed by recent research highlights and comments about World Heritage status. We tend to think of Hadrian's Wall as the archetypal Roman frontier but in fact the nature of frontiers varied across the Empire: in continental Europe. The Germanic frontier took the form of an earthen bank and ditch with a wooden palisade and watchtowers at intervals while in other provinces the frontier was delimited by natural barriers like rivers, mountains and deserts.

For a single generation, the Antonine Wall was the north-western frontier of the Roman Empire. Constructed as a turf barrier on a stone base (to facilitate drainage) and fronted by a large ditch, and garrisoned from a series of forts, it was begun in 142AD and occupied to about 160AD. Running between the firths of Forth and Clyde, it was about half the length of Hadrian's Wall, and it is now accepted that it was intended as a permanent boundary.



**Aerial View of the Antonine Wall at Rough Castle, near Falkirk (Photo: Historic Environment Scotland)**

Despite the brief period of occupation, it is an immensely rich resource for information about Rome's Frontiers notably in the form of the results of excavations on a number of the forts and their annexes – as at Rough Castle, for example or the bathhouse complex at Bearsden (where deposits associated with

the latrines shed light on diet (and parasitic infections!).

In particular, carefully sculpted and originally painted inscribed distance slabs, inscribed altars and gravestones all give significant clues as to who built and manned the wall. The Numidian Berber Roman governor of Britain, Quintus Lollius Urbicus, seems to have been responsible for the overall construction project; North African style cookware, and evidence of Syrian archers hint at the very varied backgrounds of the frontier garrison. Merchants, tradesmen and others also accompanied the soldiery, and it is now realised that the population associated with the forts included more women and children than previously understood.

In 1987, Hadrian's Wall was selected as one of the first World Heritage sites. The Antonine wall was nominated in 2006/7 and 'inscribed' in 2008. UNESCO have about 1120 sites worldwide and since the early 2000s, a project with multiple partners has been on-going to create a series of transnational World Heritage sites to cover all the Frontiers of the Roman Empire, which run from Scotland across Europe and into the Near East and North Africa.

Since 2018, thanks to funding from the National Heritage Lottery Fund and other sources, HES have been running a £2m project to utilise the Roman heritage along the Antonine Wall for a series of capital and community projects aimed at increasing awareness of this internationally important monument and using it for societal and economic benefit for the local communities in the 21st century.

Local Authorities have responded with ideas like the Falkirk 21<sup>st</sup> Century distance slab, recalling the format of the original slab and commemorating the volunteers working on the projects today. Sculptures and themed playparks, one for each local authority the wall runs through, are also being constructed. Taken together with a blog, website, Twitterfeed and other ideas like EMOTIVE, an imaginative Hunterian Museum storytelling project, the various Scottish initiatives have

been recognised as exemplars.



**New Roman-themed playpark at Callendar Park in Falkirk! (Photo: Historic Environment Scotland).**

**Jeff Carter**

**Dr Piers Dixon: 'Dormont Hope (Hownam) deer trap, hunting and hunting forests in medieval Scotland', 10 December 2020**

Formerly of the **Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland** and latterly **Historic Environment Scotland**, Piers is currently affiliated to **Stirling University** as an Honorary Lecturer. He specialises in the Medieval period, rural settlement and landscape in particular, publishing *Puir Labourers and Busy Husbandmen* in 2002 on this subject and *A History of Scotland's Landscapes* in 2018, co-authored with Fiona Watson. Other books include *Archaeological Excavations at Jedburgh Friary* in 2000 and *But the Walls Remained* in 2001 which focused on deserted sites depicted on the first edition OS map. In the 1980s he directed the **Borders Burghs Archaeology Project** which excavated the medieval tollbooth by the Cuddy Bridge in Peebles and created the *Sites and Monuments Record* for **Borders Regional Council**, now administered by **Scottish Borders Council**.

It might be thought that the hunting of deer

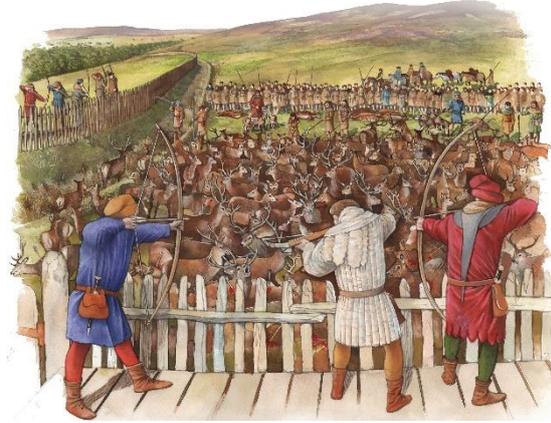
offers little for the archaeologist. Well, apart from the bones which turn up at castle sites, there are also structural remains. In 1979 when John Gilbert wrote his book on *Hunting and hunting reserves in medieval Scotland* the little that was known about these activities archaeologically related to documented deer parks, but over the last 40 years this has changed radically. Piers, working with John, has with others like Hall and Malloy begun to identify and record stone dykes and earthworks designed to aid the entrapment of deer. They have been located from the Hebrides to the English border.



**Dormount Hope, Roxburghshire: this stretch of ditch and bank forms part of an extensive system of earthworks interpreted as of a medieval deer trap. (Photo: Historic Environment Scotland)**

The Dormount Hope earthwork or trap which is situated right on the English border lies in an Anglian part of Scotland suggesting this is a particular type of structure known as a *haga* in Old English). In the 12<sup>th</sup> century King David introduced control of large tracts of land by foresters. This cut across the old Roman law allowing anyone to kill deer. It controlled the intake of land; pig, cattle and sheep grazing; and wood and peat cutting on the designated land with the aim of protecting the landscape needed to raise and

hunt deer. Enclosures of hundreds of hectares by deer dykes and ditches were formed called *parks*, sometimes near castles but sometimes around natural features like steep sided valleys which could be used to trap deer. The rights to use these areas were often granted to the barons or clerics.



**Artist's reconstruction of a medieval deer hunt at Hermitage Castle. (Reproduced by kind permission of David Simon.)**

The deer were hunted in various ways. Some were driven by large groups of working people, the *tinchel*, into natural traps, *elricks*, where the nobles lay in wait with dogs, bows and arrows or early firearms. Feasting in halls, lodges or other buildings, sometimes temporary in nature, seems to have been followed with the *tinchel* being rewarded with the offcuts. Sometimes a stag would be identified then run down by dogs and mounted hunters. Sometimes deer were *coursed*: driven into small areas created by specially erected fences. Bone caches have revealed that the native red and roe deer were hunted. William the Lion introduced fallow deer into the Stirling Castle park, though no remains of them have yet been excavated.

Piers gave examples of other sites, and cited evidence that hunting parks had a variety of game including pigs/boar, foxes, fish and bird ponds, cattle, horses and rabbit warrens. Wilder deer traps have been found on Rum and Jura and perhaps existed on other islands. He finished with a detailed look at the Dormount Hope site on the Hownam estate where rights had been granted by charter to Melrose Abbey in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century. A variety of stone revetted banks

and ditches run round the tops of a steep valley. Looking at how these interact with old recorded tracks and cross ridge dykes suggests the trap predates the grant to the Abbey.

**Jeff Carter**

**Dr Hugo Anderson-Whymark:  
'Rethinking Scotland's Carved Stone  
Balls', 19 January 2021**

Hugo joined the Scottish History and Archaeology Department at **National Museums Scotland** in 2018, where he is now a Senior Curator of Prehistory with responsibility for the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic collections.

After completing his PhD at the University of Reading, Hugo Anderson-Whymark worked as a freelance artefact specialist for numerous commercial companies across Britain, as a Post-Doctoral Researcher on various projects ranging from Argyll to Orkney, and as a lecturer for the University of the Highlands and Islands in Kirkwall and at Bournemouth University. He has a strong background in field archaeology and has worked on numerous high-profile commercial and research projects, including the Ness of Brodgar, Orkney and the Stonehenge Riverside Project, Wiltshire.



*Described by one Victorian archaeologist as resembling 'enormous petrified mulberries', carved stone balls have for long fascinated and intrigued museum visitors! Over 500 examples are known, the vast majority being from Scotland. These examples were found in the Neolithic settlement of Skara Brae on Orkney, and date from c 2900 - 2600 BC (Photo: National Museums Scotland)*

Roughly palm-sized, at about 65 to 75mm in diameter, and with a distinctive knobbed form, carved stone balls are one of Scotland's most talked about types of prehistoric artefact. Over 500 of these objects have been found, with a marked concentration in the North-east: in fact, only a bare handful is known from outside the country making them a distinctively Scottish artefact type. Hugo traced the history of their research, from the early consideration by Sir Daniel Wilson in his *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland* (1851) through to more detailed work of description and cataloguing by Fred Coles in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and on to the work of classification by Dorothy Marshall, published in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* in the 1970s. For more than 150 years, these elaborately shaped stone spheres have captured the imagination and inspired passionate debate over their date, function and significance to past societies.

On joining NMS, Hugo embarked on a programme to collate and digitise related old archives and produce new imagery of these artefacts by using photogrammetry to create 3D models. The resulting models have allowed him to explore the patterns of stoneworking in unparalleled detail, revealing that many of the balls have complex biographies, with distinct episodes of reworking changing the artefacts form or decoration. This in turn has implications for how we understand and classify these artefacts.

These new insights have provided an opportunity to revisit the protracted and convoluted debate over the date and function of carved stone balls, and to reconsider the available archaeological evidence. As a result of the discovery of a carved stone ball in one of the structures at the well-known site of Ness of Brodgar in Orkney in a context securely dated to c 2900 BC, there is now clear evidence that that these distinctive artefacts can be firmly dated to the Late Neolithic; carved stone balls also occur at Skara Brae but in somewhat later 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium contexts. Whether or not they continued to be manufactured in the Early Bronze Age is uncertain.



***A small number of carved stone balls, such as the amazing 'Towie Ball' were elaborately ornamented. They represent some of the finest examples of Neolithic art in Europe (Photo: National Museums Scotland).***

Hugo showed how the shapes could be interpreted as steps in a process; in fact some examples have features to suggest different hands worked them over what might have been a protracted time, a process that might have involved re-shaping and the addition of new features such as decoration. He also alluded to the many suggestions that have been made for the possible uses of carved stone balls ranging from weapons, symbols of power, weights, games, fish stunners, toys, art and many more. His own feeling is that there were probably different uses, and such uses may have varied over time – but explanation in terms of a practical function seems unlikely as there are few damaged or fragmentary finds. In sum, they are a distinctively Scottish artefact, showing some standardisation of production technique but varying markedly in their level of precision. The majority of examples are just chance finds: our hope must be that more will be found in their archaeological context so that our knowledge and understanding of these fascinating objects can be expanded.

**Jeff Carter**

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## **Edinburgh, Lothians & Borders Archaeology Conference 2020**

Each November, **ELBAC** – the annual conference organised by the archaeology officers of City of Edinburgh Council, East Lothian Council and Scottish Borders Council - provides a valuable opportunity to hear and discuss first-hand accounts of recent archaeological fieldwork and research undertaken in Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian and the Scottish Borders.

Held at the Queen Margaret University (QMU) campus, it is normally a packed and sociable event – offering an opportunity to catch up with colleagues at the breaks or over lunch and to browse the variety of display stands promoting the work of central and local government bodies, archaeological units and local societies. Forced to go online by the Coronavirus pandemic, ELBAC 20 was inevitably going to be a much quieter affair than usual!

After a brief welcome, the chairman for the morning session, **Andrew Robertson (East Lothian Council Archaeology Service)** handed the virtual stage over to **Charlotte Douglas (AOC Archaeology Group) & Rob MacTaggart (CMC Associates)** for their presentation on:

### ***'Whiteadder: Archaeology and Creative Arts in the Historic Heart of the Lammermuirs'***

Charlotte outlined some of the results of the survey and excavation work undertaken in the course of the project emphasising the strong community element. As a result of analysing 62sq km of LIDAR data from the Whiteadder valley, 200 new sites were added to the local records. A selection of these were then investigated further, including a Bronze Age cairn beside Whiteadder Reservoir, a strange elongated structure in the Bothwell Water valley interpreted as a building for housing sheep (possibly 13<sup>th</sup> century AD) and finally the site of Morham Castle, where excavation revealed heavily robbed foundations dated to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Rob then went on to describe some of the creative and evocative projects

undertaken under the auspices of the project in various media ranging from art and poetry to music and soundscapes.

Citizen science has also been a major feature of the **Scottish Rock Art Project (ScRAP)**, the ongoing national project being carried out to enhance understanding and knowledge of our rock art. In her excellent presentation:

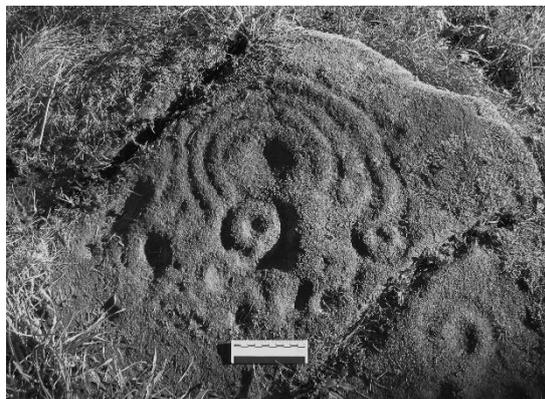
**'Re-viewing prehistoric rock art in Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders',**

**Tertia Barnett** (ScRAP, Historic Environment Scotland) focussed on the results emerging from reassessment of the inventory of rock art known from SE Scotland, where much of the recording is being undertaken by the members of the Edinburgh, Lothian & Fife community team.



***View from Tormain Hill, Ratho, Edinburgh: the decorated rock outcrop visible in the foreground is one of a number on the summit ridge of the hill (Photo: T Cowie)***

Compared with classic areas such as Argyll, Galloway & Tayside, the region is one with relatively little art still in situ and sadly too, a number of significant examples have been destroyed and are now known only from antiquarian records.



***Detail of cup-and-ring marked rock at Tormain Hill (Photo: T Cowie)***

However new discoveries do still crop up, as illustrated by two remarkable recent finds from Lymphoy, Balerno, Edinburgh, where a cup-and-ring marked boulder was found directly on the line of a footpath and Whitelaw Hill, Garvald, E Lothian, where a large profusely decorated boulder was lying almost in plain sight beside a farm track.

Jumping forward in time from prehistory, **Bob Will (GUARD Archaeology) & John Lawson (City of Edinburgh Council)** presented an overview of the results of the latest work carried out by GUARD in advance of the development of the Edinburgh Tram network. Their talk :

***'A line extended: current and future work on the Edinburgh to Newhaven Tram',***

took us on a virtual tour of discoveries along the route - from the remains of sea walls and dockyard buildings associated with the development of Newhaven and Leith docks from the 17th to the 19th centuries to enigmatic structures and part of a medieval road surface under the present-day streetscape of Leith Walk. In doing so, we were given a real insight into the complex and challenging nature of urban excavations associated with large engineering projects. Excavations along Constitution Street revealed further burials associated with the cemetery of South Leith Parish Church (originally the 15<sup>th</sup> century Chapel of St Mary); analysis of these will add to the fascinating picture of life in Leith from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries revealed by study of some 400 burials found during previous excavations of this large and important cemetery (see J Franklin *Past Lives of Leith*:

*Archaeological Work for Edinburgh Trams*  
Edinburgh Museums and Galleries 2019).

In the final presentation of the morning:  
**'Burgeoning Appetites: Feeding the people of Medieval Edinburgh'**,

**Orsolya Czere (University of Aberdeen)** described some of the provisional results of her current doctoral research into medieval diet in Scotland using stable isotope analysis, a technique used for exploring diet and mobility in past populations. By analysing different ratios of carbon and nitrogen isotopes in human bones, it is possible to infer the type of diet individuals consumed: for example, a marine diet should be reflected in a high signature for nitrogen and carbon. In this way, it is hoped that it will be possible to distinguish the differing proportions of plant-, meat- and fish-based foodstuffs in the local diet of the medieval populations of Aberdeen, Perth and Edinburgh. However clear patterning was hard to discern among the Edinburgh samples: the good folk of the burgh seem to have eaten anything. If there was a medieval Harry Ramsden's it wasn't immediately apparent!

Appropriately enough after a talk on dietary patterns, there was a break for lunch. In a normal year the morning session ends with a scramble for the buffet tables: on this occasion, any attendee who found themselves in a queue for their lunch only had their own family members to blame!

After the break, the focus shifted to the Borders to hear a further chapter in the fascinating story of Stobs Camp, near Hawick which became a major internment and POW camp in the First World War. Taking over the Chairman's duties for the afternoon session, John Lawson introduced **Andrew Jepson (Archaeology Scotland)**, who gave an excellent presentation entitled:  
**'Stobs Camp – Art & Creativity in a Barbed-Wire World'**.

Skilfully blending a whole range of sources from archives to artefacts, Andrew brought

the enclosed and confined world of Stobs' internees and POWs vividly to life.



**Stobs: Photograph showing the First World War POW Camp (Photo: Stobs Camp Project)**

At our request, Andrew has kindly agreed to give this talk at our **AGM/Members' Evening** in April.



**PAS field trip 2018: guided visit to Stobs Camp with Andrew Jepson long before social distancing became part of everyday life! (Photo: T Cowie)**

In **'Stories from Garleton, a Castle's tale'**, **David Connolly & Hana Kdolska (Connolly Heritage Consultancy)** described the results of their building surveys and excavations at 16<sup>th</sup> century Garleton Castle near Athelstaneford, East Lothian. The focus of the presentation was their work on the two storey SW Lodge, originally dating from the 16th century but occupied until the mid-20th century. One unexpected and intriguing discovery in the course of this work was the remains of a still in one of the two vaulted chambers at ground level.

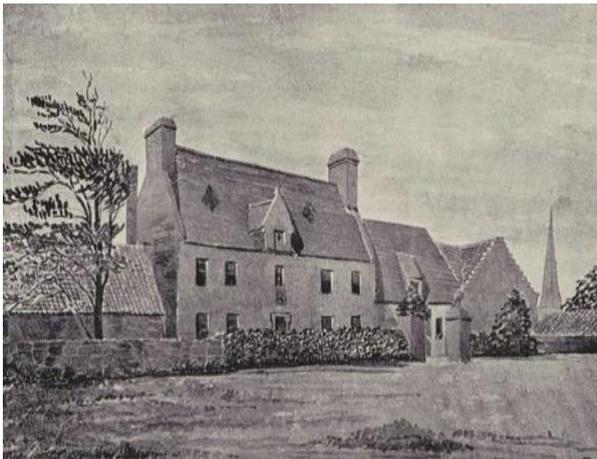
A combination of detailed building recording, documentary research and excavation

enabled **Phil Karsgaard (Addyman Archaeology)** to disentangle the story of a succession of structures on a site being redeveloped as a distillery and visitor centre in Bonnington, Edinburgh. The title of Phil's presentation:

**'From Villa to Vehicle Shop: Bonnington Old House and Industrialisation at 21 Graham Street, Edinburgh'**

gave an early hint of the site's complex history. By the 16<sup>th</sup> century, a manorial building stood on lands originally granted by David I to Holyrood Abbey in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The manor house (probably built by a Crawford) is shown on the 'Petworth Map' of 1559 amidst earthworks connected with the Siege of Leith.

Although no features were excavated which could be directly associated with these, cultivated soils, ditches (one of them containing a near-complete 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> century pot) and a substantial wall indicate activity in the area prior to the construction of Bonnington Old House in the early/mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. Little remained of the house itself apart from remnants of wall foundations and associated features such as an area of timber flooring. Following demolition of the house in 1891, the site was occupied by light industrial premises including a zinc-galvanising works and a sawmill.



**Bonnington Old House, after 19<sup>th</sup> century water-colour sketch by Thomas Ross, LLD**  
(Source: Russell, J, 'Bonnington its Lands and Mansions', *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, 19 (1933), 142-188). The house was demolished in 1891

In the final talk of the day, we were taken back into prehistory and brought closer to home again by **Emily Freeman (Treasure Trove, NMS)**. In her talk:

**'Only swords and horses: A new Bronze Age hoard from Peebles'**,

Emily gave a preliminary account of this exciting local find which was discovered last summer. Dating from the Late Bronze Age (c 1000-800 BC), it comprises a sword and what appears to be a complete set of horse harness including buckles, rings and strap ornaments, some of them of types not previously known from Scotland. (*See also separate article in this issue of PAST*).

As part of **PAST 2021-2022 lecture programme**, we shall certainly be inviting Emily to speak to the Society and bring us up to date with news of this remarkable local find.

Under the current challenging circumstances, the organisers – Andrew Robertson, John Lawson & Keith Elliott and their colleagues - deserve warm congratulations for organising the delivery of this popular annual event and as usual, for bringing together a varied cast of speakers and topics. Thanks to excellent technical support the presentations were delivered with scarcely a hitch despite being relayed from a variety of desks, worktops and dining tables across the region! However, we all hope that by the time of **ELBAC 21** we will be back at Queen Margaret University for the usual much more sociable event – even if we do have to join the scramble for our lunchtime *sarnies*!

**Trevor Cowie & Neil Crawford**

**NOTE: ELBAC 20**

*If you would like to hear any of the talks summarised above, the Conference was recorded and the presentations and Q&A sessions are available to watch at:*

<https://www.johngraycentre.org/about/archaeology/archaeology-events/archaeology-conference-2020/>

## FIELDWORK

### Shootinglee Forest Stead Project 2020

Excavation took place during July to November 2020 on the site of a building platform previously recorded in 2012 as part of the survey of Shootinglee that is situated on a wide terrace 25m NW of the peel house. It was proposed that this might be the site of a medieval building.

A 10m x 6m trench was opened over the W half of the building to reveal the footings of the building with 0.8m thick clay-bonded walls. Internally there is a well-built drain running E-W down the centre of the floor space, i.e. along the length of the building. The drain terminates at the outer edge of the wall where it is blocked by a large boulder. To the S of the drain the floor is paved and a depressed area in the centre infilled with cobbles. To the N the flooring is a rough mix of earth and stones with some paving. Unusually the entrance appears to be in the middle of the N wall where there is an area of rough paving. The W end of the N wall may have been vulnerable to subsidence due to water seepage and to counteract this it has been built on courses of supporting stones with a short section of drain parallel to it below.



**Revealing the cobbled floor of the 17th century byre in September. (Photo: Piers Dixon)**

Outside the S wall there is a spread of tumbled stone in a dark brown silty soil with patches of orange silty clay. Adjacent to the wall there is a discrete area of small shattered stones measuring 0.75m x 0.75m beside a paving slab on top of the dark soil.

A 1.0m wide wall extends from the SW corner of the building which is interpreted as a wall enclosing a yard. A 1.5m trench was dug into the dark soil to reveal a layer of reddish-brown clay that appears to run under both the building wall and the yard wall. Removal of the tumble of the W wall revealed that it had been built on top of a thick layer of reddish-brown clay with flecks of charcoal like that found to the S of the building which extends as far as a revetment of stone forming the edge of the terrace thought to be from a previous structure.

Finds from the overburden have been mostly from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards and consist of clay pipe, pottery, glass and metal including a small billion coin and a abraded sherd of medieval pottery. A piece of broken glass found in between the cobbles of the byre floor suggest a 17<sup>th</sup> century date for its final phase.



**Late medieval Red Ware (15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries), possibly from the eastern Borders. (Photo: Joyce Durham)**

Post-excavation was begun during the lockdown on the finds from the previous excavations. Derek Hall was commissioned by the PAS to examine the pottery from the site and confirmed that the types of pottery extend in date from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, he concluded that so few sherds were Scottish White Gritty Ware that it represented evidence for occupation from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century which coincides neatly with the documented occupation of the site. There are a number of Red Ware sherds of late medieval date similar finds from Dryburgh Abbey and a sherd of what may be early stoneware, perhaps from

Germany. Some of the sherds have been selected for chemical analysis to pin down their origin. Clay pipe was analysed by Denis Gallagher who identified three bowls made by William Banks of Edinburgh (1622-59) marked by a three-tower symbol. Patrick Crawford, also of Edinburgh, used a castle and his initials PC dating to c1670-80. These help place the burning of the peel house to between 1640 and 1680. Together these begin to show the contacts the inhabitants had with the wider world. Analysis of the charcoal residues from wet sieve samples have revealed that heather was present in the burnt layer from the peel house and charred oat and barley grains. The heather may have been used on the roof.

### Piers Dixon

#### Matters of grave concern: a look back at the Eddleston Churchyard Survey

*Once life returns to some sort of normality, we look forward to resuming fieldwork. One potential project, stymied for now by the Coronavirus pandemic, is a proposal by Stephen Scott to undertake a survey of the old Innerleithen Kirkyard. This prospect brought back memories of the Society's first graveyard survey...*

If you had peeped into the graveyard at Eddleston Parish Church one Saturday in October 2001, you might have wondered what was going on. You would have seen about a dozen hardy souls scattered around the gravestones - some clutching clip-boards and peering intently at the memorials trying to decipher lichen-covered lettering, others bent over 30-metre tapes trying to read measurements in the blustery wind. What on earth were these folk up to?

In fact, what the group had started on that windy Saturday was a survey of the historic graveyard, by kind permission of Reverend Calum MacDougall and Scottish Borders Council. The survey of the Church was just one part of the overall Eddleston project, the aim of which was to undertake an archaeological survey of the whole parish. It is fresh in my

mind, as I am at last in the process of pulling together all the results of the Eddleston Parish Project for publication.

As it happens, 2001 was also a year affected by an epidemic! As some readers may remember, that was the year when normal life in the countryside was brought to an abrupt stop by a major Foot and Mouth outbreak. As fieldwalking was brought to a halt by the restrictions, we decided to make the most of this interruption by carrying out a survey of the graveyard at the Parish Church.

To start us off on our survey, we were lucky to be able to enlist the help of Geoff Bailey who was then a curator with Falkirk Museums Service. Although Geoff is primarily interested in Roman archaeology, he has several other strings to his bow - among them an interest in the detailed recording of historic graveyards.



**Illustration 1: Symbols of mortality on 18<sup>th</sup> century memorial, Eddleston Church (Photo: PAS archive)**

Drawing on his own experience of recording graveyards at Airth, Carriden and elsewhere in the Falkirk District, Geoff was able to introduce our group to various aspects of recording of the monuments – ranging from basic terminology to assessment of their condition or from deciphering inscriptions to

the recognition of carved symbols of mortality such as hourglasses, skulls and 'winged souls' (see illustrations 1-2).



**Illustration 2: Pedestal of table tomb, Eddleston Church (Photo: PAS archive)**

The upshot was that while one group of us then made a start on the recording of the individual monuments, Geoff took another work party off to make a start on the survey of the graveyard as a whole, armed with those 30-metre tape measures flapping in the wind.

Although everyone was initially on a very steep and unfamiliar learning curve, it was agreed that by the end of what had been a very interesting day, we had made a fair start on the survey. The north-east corner of the graveyard was beginning to take shape on our master plan, and a basic record had been made of around 30 of the grave monuments. Over the following weeks, the whole kirkyard was steadily recorded, resulting in a measured survey showing the location of every gravestone accompanied by two bulging Lever Arch files with the record sheets for each memorial.

At the local level, what made the Parish Church project fascinating - and poignant -

were the links that emerged between the kirkyard and the farms in the parish that we had begun to get to know through our walkover survey. Through the graveyard survey we could put names to some of the 18th and early 19th century occupants of local farms such as Darnhall and Shiplaw, Milkieston and Harehope and others (see illustration 3).



**Illustration 3: Memorial to Thomas Purdie, tenant of Milkieston, who died in 1815 aged 95 years (Photo: PAS archive)**

Among the earlier (pre-1855) memorials there were occasional insights into people's occupations: not surprisingly, the picture was dominated by the farmers and tenant farmers, but amongst others, the list also includes a tailor, a candlemaker and a shoemaker. Few of us would ever have been aware that the churchyard contains a memorial to the Reverend John Dickson, who was a missionary for 24 years to the 'Mahometans in Southern Russia' and translator of the Bible into Tartar Turkish. Even Google admits defeat on that one!



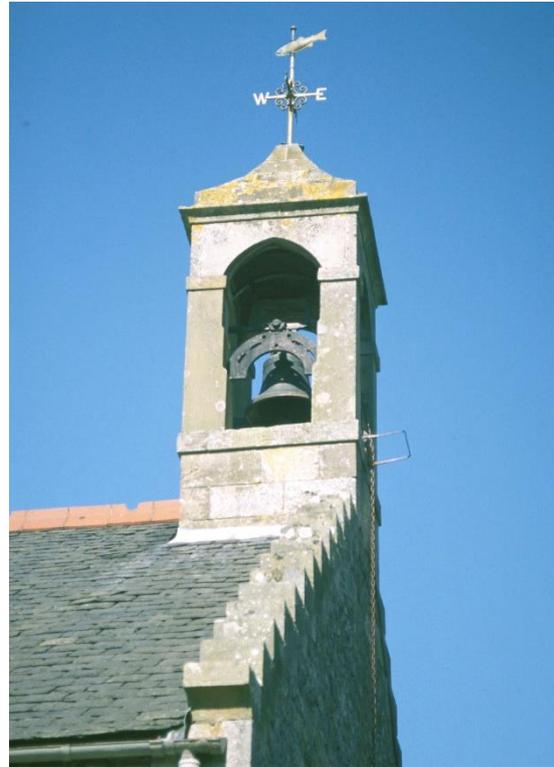
**Illustration 4: Eddleston church (Photo: PAS archive)**

Although the earliest surviving monuments only date from the late 17th century, there has been a church in Eddleston since the early 12th century. According to records of the time, the church building that existed in 1796 was said to be around 200 years old, but no obvious traces survive of that or any of the earlier buildings on the site. That church was seemingly extensively rebuilt in 1829 and then further restoration took place in 1897 after a fire. As a result, no part of the existing fabric of the church appears to be older than the 19th century (see illustration 4). However, built into the SW angle of the church is an 18th century sundial, while several interesting 17th and 18th century armorial panels and funerary monuments have also been incorporated into the 19th century structure.

Of very considerable interest too, is the very fine bell which hangs in the belfry on the east gable (see illustration 5). The bell bears the inscription: *IC BEN GHEGOTEN INT JAER ONS HEEREN MCCCCCVII* which translates as 'I was cast in the year of Our Lord 1507'. One snippet of information that we were unaware of in 2001 is that the Eddleston bell is thought to have been cast in the same Low Countries foundry as the ship's bell found on the wreck of the *Mary Rose* – Henry VIII's famous warship.

*All in all, we hope we won't have to wait too long for access to the Old Innerleithen Kirkyard and to seeing what fascinating stories it has to offer!*

**Trevor Cowie**



**Illustration 5: View of the belfry. The ship's bell found on the shipwreck of the *Mary Rose* is believed to have been cast in the same foundry as the Eddleston church bell! (Photo: PAS archive)**

## **DATES FOR DIARY 2021**

**PAS Zoom Meetings** – see website for details:

Thursday 18 February

Wednesday 17 March

Thursday 8 April

**AGM and Members' Evening:**

Thursday 22 April





