

EDINBURGH ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SOCIETY

News

Issue 175 – September 2009



Headlines in this issue:

- Carriden Report
- Wall located at Old Pentland
- Sunderland Cottages return visit
- Free beer at Society lecture!

Carriden Roman Fort

Various members of the Society helped with Geoff Bailey's dig south of Carriden Roman fort from 1 to 16 August. The location of the trenches at the lower end of a sloping field meant that the archaeology lay beneath a thicker layer of topsoil than had been anticipated, resulting in some heavy muckshifting!



Participating members will by now have received Geoff's report which indicates that the principal outcomes of the dig are:-

- Confirmation that there is a south annexe to the Roman fort surrounded by a ditch and rampart stone-based rampart, and encompassing the bath-house.
- The defensive ditch was later filled in and replaced by an open water leat or aqueduct into the fort
- Location of the main road to the south gate of the fort.
- Location of an eastern entrance to the south annexe.
- Evidence of contemporary occupation beyond the annexe – perhaps the vicus commemorated on the altar found in 1956.
- The contours of the NW corner of the fort can be made out on the ground, giving the fort unobstructed observation to the Forth to the north and west inland along Carriden Glen.

Geoff sends his thanks to all who helped in the dig during two weeks of very variable weather.

History of the placename "Carriden" (from William Oxenham)

Carriden appears in 1000 as Cair Eden, in 1140 as Karreden and in 1336 as Kaaredene. It has been interpreted as *caer eiddyn* (fortlet or fortress of Eiddyn). Watson, the recognised 'First Authority' on the Celtic placenames of Scotland, quotes a reference connected with the 6th century monk and historian Gildas:

"Kair Eden, a very ancient city, about two miles from the monastery of Abercurnig, now Abercorn".

The name is usually equated with the *Caer Eiddyn* of Old Welsh literature meaning "fort of Eiddyn", but there is now neither trace nor tradition of a town or village bearing this name. It is probable that Eiddyn is either the name of a region or else a personal name. It is not necessarily connected with the element "Edin" as in Edinburgh.

Clyddno Eiddyn appears as a personal name in the Scottish historian W. F. Skene's genealogy of the Kings of the Race of Coel Hen and Clinog Eiddyn in his genealogy of Kings of the Race of Macsen Guledig.

Coel Hen ('Coel the Old') was an early leader of the Strathclyde Britons and is thought to be the model for Old King Cole of nursery rhyme fame.



Old King Cole

Johnston, an enthusiastic amateur of late Victorian times (and not always dependable) prefers Old Welsh *caer eiddyn* (fort on the slope or hillside). The element *caer* seems to have appeared in Roman times indicating a Roman encampment, fortlet or fortification of some sort. Before that the element *din* referred to an Iron Age fort or hillfort. "The fort on the slope" is very apt for Carriden Roman Fort's position on the Forth shore escarpment where it is split by Carriden Glen.

OTHER RECENT ACTIVITIES

Sunderland Farm Cottages, Selkirk - 18 August (from Dave Jones)

The ground resistance survey over the southern part of the garden of David and Val Beaver's cottage was made on 18 August. We surveyed six 20m by 20m squares, with the three adjacent to the east garden wall much curtailed. It was necessary in places to work around, or in, trenches dug by David which have exposed walls, and although the printout showed these as high resistance, the rest of the site did not show the sort of linear high response which would be expected from this size of wall. It seems unlikely that the wall depths are such as to be below detection level, and equally unlikely that the clay bonding of the walls was so wet as to make the walls appear low resistance. We expected the printout to give similar linear high resistance wall lines to those detected at Acrehead Farm and Old Pentland, but it did not. We are going back on 17 October – see below.

Old Pentland Chapel - 12 September (from Dave Jones)

Based on the printout of the ground resistance survey we made on 28 February, showing a probable rectangular building aligned east-west on the north side of the site, on 12 September David Connolly started an excavation while we made a further survey to the south of the previous square. The square surveyed in February was laid out again to give David the co-ordinates for his two trenches, and to give us the base line for our additional 20m by 10m survey area. Ian Hawkins has now neatly edge-matched the printout of our second survey to that of our first, and it appears to show another east-west aligned building lying some 10m south of the one found in February.



Templar shield

It is thought by some that the old chapel which we are looking for at Pentland had a Templar connection, because two Templar gravestones now at Rosslyn Chapel are understood to have been moved there from Old Pentland. David's first trench, placed in what was hoped to be the middle of the chancel, produced mainly stone, which looked like demolition debris. The second trench found what appeared to be the north wall of a substantial stone building. Further excavation is likely, but we hope that before that we can arrange for Peter Morris to make some resistive linear array surveys, which should add considerably to our knowledge of what to expect under ground.

Cousland, Windmill Hill – 19 September (from Dave Jones)

Three separate 20m by 10m areas were ground resistance surveyed in conjunction with the preliminary dig, by David Connolly, on this site. The historical record is of burial cists being found in the 1850s and again in 1957. The site is an almost perfect circle reminiscent of early Anglian cemeteries, and the thought was that a church could have existed at its centre. Placing a windmill on the site could have demolished previous buildings, and the first resistance survey and dig did not produce evidence of an ecclesiastical centre. Round Anglian sites were often surrounded by a ditch, and the second and third surveys were on the periphery of the circle to see whether low resistance might indicate such a feature, but no clear indication was found. Another site where we will go back and try again!

POST-EXCAVATION

Castle Hill, Penicuik (from Dave Jones)

With the excavation now backfilled, the collection of all the information for the production of the report has started. Four Occasional Papers (Nos. 6, 9, 13 and 18) have been written since the start of the Castle Hill project, covering work in 2003, 2004, 2005 and geophysics in the adjacent field in 2008. Some of this information will be abstracted, updated and incorporated, but there are many trench plans which have never been published, there is work to do on finds (specialist reports) and we have to ensure that context descriptions and numbers used in different years and by different people are consistent.

Do you have photographs of the Castle Hill excavations?

Many photographs have been taken by many people over the seven years of this project, and if you have any that you think are particularly good, whatever the subject, and you are willing to allow them to be used in the report, please let Dave Jones know.

FUTURE PLANS

Sunderland Farm Cottages, Selkirk

On Sunday 17 October 2009, Dave Jones is looking for as many members as possible to assist with further geophysics at this site. The plan is to complete the survey of the cottage garden by doing an additional square to the north of the area surveyed in August, behind the cottage. We will then turn our attention to the field across the road, where Chris Bowles, the Borders Council archaeologist, has secured permission from Sunderland Estate to survey some interesting looking features which may be the foundations of old buildings. The site lies at the junction of the Selkirk/ Peebles road and the ancient Minchmoor Road as it descends to the Ettrick crossing, so is a likely location for occupation over many centuries. Volunteers should meet at the cottages at 10.00 a.m. If you are interested in joining the survey party, please contact Dave Jones (0131 337 7165) who may also be able to advise about car sharing.

Castle Greg (from Dave Jones)

We expect to return to complete our survey of the Roman fort sometime in October.

Farl o' Cakes Field, Lauriston

We have been asked to do a survey on the field to the north (another apparent round house), but

no dates have been discussed yet.

Gormyre Hill (from Dave Jones)

We hope to return finish our survey here during the next few weeks – date to be announced.

OTHER NEWS

Penicuik (from Jill Strobridge)

For those curious about the history of Penicuik I've just discovered that John J Wilson's 1891 book *The Annals of Penicuik* is available on-line in its entirety on the Electric Scotland website <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/penicuik/>. This is a really valuable book because although Wilson sometimes simply reproduces antiquarian verbal legends without proof, and tends to focus largely on the landed gentry, he has also done meticulous research. Anyone interested in the histories of Penicuik, Bavelaw, Logan House, Newhall etc. including fortified houses and the changes in land use and ownership should read this!

NVQ in Archaeology

The Society has been contacted by Denise Telford, who is seeking to get in touch with anyone interested in taking a National Vocational Qualification in Archaeology. Denise says "I have worked in both professional and academic archaeology since 1995 and am currently starting to train with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeology Assessor (of candidates studying an NVQ in Archaeology). As part of my training I am looking for candidates who may be interested in studying for this qualification. I would be happy to provide details of the course, course fees etc, and my own CV." Denise can be contacted at denisetelford@hotmail.com. More details of the qualification can be found at <http://www.archaeologists.net/modules/icontent/index.php?page=199>.

SCOTTISH ARCHAEOLOGY MONTH

Cramond (from Val Dean)



The glorious weather on 12 and 13 September encouraged lots of visitors to Cramond for the joint EAFS and Cramond Heritage Trust Archaeology Month event. John Dods took walks, of 45 and 12 people respectively, to Cramond Island each day. Some of them were so interested that they came back to do a further walk around Cramond and its archaeology. We were again most

grateful to Patrick Cave-Browne for presenting his Ancient Technology workshop and giving people the chance to try their hand at making fire by using a bow drill or at making string from nettles. Inside the Maltings, early writing methods were available for people to use. The exhibition on many aspects of Cramond's history proved more popular than ever.

Green Knap, Craigluscar, near Dunfermline



In conjunction with Dunfermline Heritage Community Trust, on 26 September we mounted an exhibition relating to Green Knap and Craigluscar Estate at the car park at Glassiebarns. The fine weather unfortunately did not bring out visitors in any numbers. We had put a lot of work into clearing nettles around the farmhouse, and in removing obstacles on the access path. We also marked out features of the Iron Age fort on Craigluscar Hill, which overlooks Green Knap. A guided walk led by a Fife Council ranger in the afternoon visited both sites, and our guests, though few in number, were most appreciative.

Society lectures – autumn/winter programme

Wednesday 14 October 2009 “Cramond Excavations 2008” by Martin Cook, Project Officer, AOC Archaeology

Tuesday 10 November 2009 “The Archaeology of Beer and Brewing” by Rebecca Boyde, Adult Education Tutor and Researcher, Archaeology Scotland.

Members will have the chance to sample beers made in traditional styles!

Wednesday 9 December 2009 2009 project updates and AGM

Tuesday 12 January 2010 “Metal Detecting and its Role in Archaeology” by Alastair Hackett, Secretary, The Scottish Detector Club

Wednesday 10 February 2010 “A post-medieval landscape in Ardnamurchan: working with students towards a landscape characterisation study” by Cara Jones, CFA Archaeology

Cramond Roman Fort #1 (from Val Dean)

Following on from last year's excavation, the temporary backfill has been removed from a large part of the site. Walls have had their clay bonding carefully picked out and replaced with a weather-proof lime mortar. Those walls which need to be left covered have had their lines marked out with setts and gravel. The path, on the line of the *via principia*, has been made wheelchair

accessible, and the signage will be reinstated. The surrounding grass is being restored and hopefully will have recovered by the spring!

Cramond Roman Fort #2 (from Dave Jones)

A letter has been received from Dr George Findlater, Senior Inspector of Ancient Monuments, to say that the Monument Warden will visit Cramond, to make a report on the area between the known northern ditch and wall line of the Severan fort and the Kennels, which is being burrowed by rabbits. Our area and linear array resistive measurements here, coupled with the features found in Trench C during our excavations, suggest that the Antonine fort extended north almost to where the Kennels now stand.

We look forward to hearing the result of the inspection, and what action will be proposed. Further survey could be arranged but until we know the views of Historic Scotland, the Occasional Paper covering the survey in the manse garden and the area south of the Kennels is on hold.

Society Archives now held at RCAHMS (from Hugh Dinwoodie)

For some years now we have been pleased to include the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments in Scotland as an institutional member of our Society. In their library is a box-file in which are placed recent copies of our Newsletter and, each year, our Annual Reports. These can be consulted at any time during their normal opening hours.

In contrast, it has been apparent for some time that the Society's own library does not offer members the same facility. It is small, it is only opened on Society lecture nights, and it is inaccessible at all other times. Furthermore, there could be doubt about the long-term preservation of documents there.

The RCAHMS file did not include much material earlier than about the year 2000. The Society was founded in 1975, from an earlier body founded in 1971 as the Edinburgh and South of Scotland Archaeological Association (ESAA). Various (mostly incomplete) runs of Newsletters, Annual Reports, Committee Minutes, etc were held, either in the Society's library or in members' houses. As yet another decade approaches, and older members retire, this material becomes of more potential historical value but also at greater risk of being permanently lost.

It has now been possible to assemble, and deposit with RCAHMS, a complete run of Newsletters, from No.1 in January 1975, and Annual Reports from 1976, until 2008 in each case. To these have been added AGM Agendas and Minutes to 2008, similar records from ESAA between 1971 and 1974, the more voluminous Committee minutes from 1975 to 2006, the Historical Research Sub-Committee Minutes from 1981 to 1993, and a few other documents.

The Society thanks those members who parted with some of their old records, or allowed them to be copied. We are most grateful to Ian Fraser for facilitating the accession of this material by RCAHMS. We understand that in view of the shelf space necessary it will be held in their archive storage, separately from recent documents as noted above, which will still be on the library shelves. The older historical documents will be indexed under 'MS 5947', and available on request at the library desk. Incidentally, they do not at present seem to be visible on 'Canmore' – probably because Canmore searches for places, not Society records.

Archaeo News

Do you know about Archaeo News, a free e-mail newsletter? It's a news digest of items of archaeological interest from newspapers and other media across the globe. The focus is on archaeology up to the Iron Age. Every issue contains a fascinating snippet you won't have seen elsewhere. By way of example, a recent issue contained 13 articles ranging from the latest discoveries made in Scotland, Ireland, China, England and Bulgaria to the controversies about the M3 motorway in Ireland and the threat to the Neolithic axe findings in India. Both the Council of British Archaeology and Current Archaeology magazine run these news feeds into their webpages. The authors are keen to spread the word about Archaeo News even further, so why not check out their website (where you can sign up for the newsletter) at <http://www.stonepages.com>

Howburn Farm - an update (from Ian Paterson)

	Initially, lithic materials recovered from Howburn Farm by fieldwalking and excavation were considered by lithics specialists Alan Saville of the NMS and Torben Ballin to be comparable with those from the famous Star Carr site in Yorkshire and to be of late Upper Palaeolithic - earliest Mesolithic date. However, they subsequently revised their opinion and, on the basis of a tanged point, suggested a Late Upper Palaeolithic date for the site. Thus the site, some 14 000 years old, became, by some 4000 years, the oldest discovered in Scotland. In order to recover further materials, a major excavation of the site began on 2 May 2009. Over the period of the dig, which concluded on 27 July, the members of the Biggar Archaeology Group were joined by more than one hundred and fifty individuals, some for a single visit, others repeatedly.
A tanged point. Photograph by Alan Saville	

Many of these volunteers were local but others travelled from Newcastle, Carlisle, Glasgow and Edinburgh. Members of a Dutch family also joined in, as did children on holiday from Bosnia and Canada.

The excavation was a complete success. A large assemblage of flint tools, including tanged points, long and short end scrapers, burins, piercers and cores, was recovered that was diagnostic of the Hamburgian period of the Late Upper Palaeolithic. While many of these were contained in the ploughsoil, a considerable number were from an underlying stratum that had survived intact in places. It appeared that this had been subjected to cryoturbation processes at the time of the Loch Lomond Readvance which caused the flint items to be dispersed throughout its thickness.

Although the experts have not yet studied the material in detail, there are obvious similarities with artefacts recovered at Slotseng in South Jutland.

http://palaeo.wikidev.net/Settlements_of_the_Hamburgian_and_Federmesser_Cultures_at_Slotseng_South_Jutland

Further information is available on the BAG website <http://biggararchaeology.org.uk>

Other dates for your diary

Saturday 10 October 2009 Archaeology Scotland Members' Day and AGM, Smith Art Gallery and Museum, Albert Place, Stirling, 10.00 a.m.

Saturday 7 November 2009 TAFAC Annual Conference, Dewar's Centre, Glover Street, Perth, 10.00 a.m. Tickets from John Sherriff, RCAHMS

Saturday 14th November 2009 SRP Annual Conference 2009, Ben Nevis Hotel, North Road, Fort William PH33 6TG see www.scotlandsruralpast.org.uk

Sat 28 & Sun 29 November 2009 The Roots of Nationhood: The Archaeology and History of Scotland, University of Glasgow Full info at www.scottisharchaeologicalforum.org.uk

First Millennium Studies Group 2009-2010

Held on Tuesdays at 5.30pm in the Lecture Theatre, University of Edinburgh Archaeology Department, High School Yards, Edinburgh.

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| 6 October 2009 | James McMeekin, Project Officer, Headland Archaeology | Excavations at Carnmeen ringfort and souterrain, Newry, Co Down |
| 3 November 2009 | James Bruhn | Negotiating Frontiers: Modeling the Impact of the Roman Occupation on the Social Landscape of Southern Scotland |
| 1 December 2009 | Euan MacKie | Clickhimin and the oldest brochs, or how a heap of rubble changed everything |
| 12 January 2010 | Nick Hodgson | The Iron Age on the Northumberland coastal plain: new discoveries and perspectives |
| 3 February 2010 | Katherine Forsyth | The Insular epigraphy in the Fifth to Seventh centuries AD: Observations and speculations (or Celtic inscriptions as crisis symptom) |

Annual Report

As usual we will be producing our Annual Report prior to the AGM. Contributions for the Annual Report are required no later than 31 October and should be sent to Val Dean (val@valdean.plus.com)

Editor's Note

Many thanks to all contributors to this issue. Newsletter 176 will be due at the end of January 2010. Please submit contributions by 20 January 2010.

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(Views and opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Society, its Committee and Members, or the Editor).

30 September 2009