



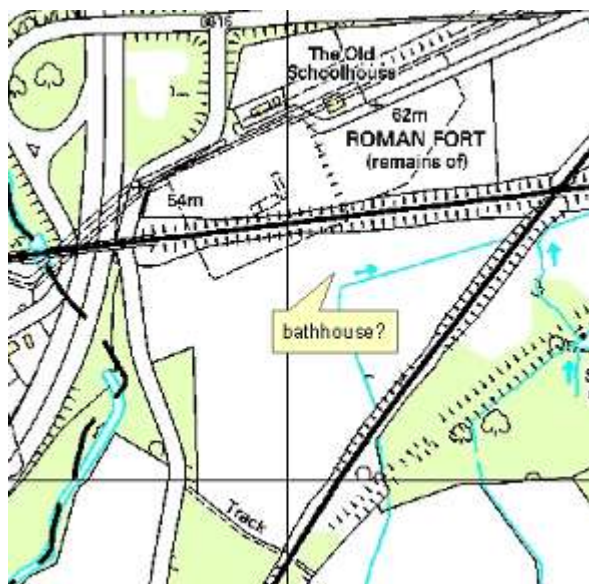
Frontiers of Knowledge - The Search for Castlecary Bathhouse

In July members have the opportunity to join Geoff Bailey of Falkirk Council in trying to locate the Roman bathhouse at Castlecary Fort. Here Geoff previews the dig.

One of the great things about the Antonine Wall is that we don't know how extensive the frontier complex was, and our understanding of it is blinkered by existing ideas. This was amply demonstrated at Carriden when we found a bathhouse and then an annexe beyond the known archaeological area. Until then external bathhouses were thought to be an oddity and so they were not sought.

Consequently, when in the 1970s Jim Walker noted a spread of box flue tiles to the south of the fort at Castlecary he thought nothing of it. However, the find spot is right by a stream, which would have been convenient for the water supply. We now have the opportunity to show that there is a bathhouse beyond the known area of archaeology (and hence outside the scheduled area).

Castlecary is one of only two Antonine Wall forts to have stone ramparts, the other being Balmuildy. Excavations were published in 1903 and concentrated upon the interior of the fort, so part of a bathhouse is known against the east rampart: a latrine was found against the north rampart (see photo): the annexe lies to the east. Extensive geophysical survey within the annexe and to the south of the fort revealed – nothing. So, once again we intend to buck the current understanding of a fort environs against the odds.



Many of you will know the location because of the Castlecary Arches over the A80 – where all the road works are now. Access to the site is from the south through a farm gate at the end of a track. I'm trying to arrange parking at the end of the track and will let you know in due course if that is possible, otherwise the best place to park is near the old schoolhouse. I'll be on site from 17 July-1 August. Happy hunting!

Did we find Iudeu? (from John Urquhart)

Dave Jones' note in the last issue prompted me to carry out some research of my own on the subject of Iudeu, and I quickly discovered that James Fraser had himself written an article, "Bede, the Firth of Forth, and the Location of *Urbs Iudeu*." (*The Scottish Historical Review* 87.1 (2008): 1-25) on the subject of its whereabouts. This article can be found on the Edinburgh University Press website. www.euppublishing.com/toc/shr/87/1

The site of Iudeu, first mentioned by Bede c.731, has been debated for many years. What Bede says is that the Firth of Forth has *in medio sui* (in its middle) the stronghold of Iudeu. The precise meaning of this phrase is itself the subject of debate. Does it mean that the site is out in the middle of the Firth? Or does it mean that it is halfway along its shore?

Iudeu has conventionally been identified with Stirling, but Fraser convincingly dismisses this, and gives good reasons for ruling out a number of other possibilities, including Inchkeith and the former Roman strongholds at Inveresk and Cramond, before concluding that there are three strong candidates: Carlingnose Battery at North Queensferry (his preferred option); Blackness Castle promontory; and Cramond Island.

To my mind it is fatal to the Carlingnose candidacy that it lies in the Pictish kingdom on the north side of the Firth of Forth, rather in the Bernician territory ruled by King Oswy south of the estuary. Bede is clear that the Firth marked the boundary between the two kingdoms. It is hard to imagine that the Picts allowed alien occupation of this prominent site on their side of the border.

I am also doubtful about Blackness, because Bede, when writing about the Antonine Wall, describes its eastern termination (at Carriden) by reference to its distance from the monastery at Abercorn. If Iudeu, the principal Bernician stronghold in the area, was at Blackness, which lies closer to Carriden than Abercorn does, would Bede not have described the termination of the Wall by reference to its distance from Iudeu rather than Abercorn? This objection is reinforced by the fact that Bede describes the western termination of the Wall by reference to Dumbarton Rock, which he sees as the equivalent in the Firth of Clyde to Iudeu in the Firth of Forth.

This leaves Cramond Island, for which Fraser makes a good case, and the identification is not compromised by geopolitical or textual considerations in the way that Carlingnose and Blackness are. So my vote goes to Cramond Island.

It follows that, in answer to Dave's question "Did we find Iudeu?", I don't think we did. Bede's description surely means it is either on an island or on the shoreline. The site surveyed by the Society meets neither of these criteria. But as Fraser himself concludes, "*If the debate is to be settled, it is likely to be so only at the end of the spade and the trowel.*"

How about some field walking on Cramond Island?

Perthshire Archaeology Month

June is Perthshire Archaeology Month 2010, and Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust have put together a massive programme including guided walks and tours, events, lectures, presentations, displays and exhibitions. There is something happening somewhere nearly every day during the month. Booking for most events is essential. For details go to www.pkht.org.uk or www.perthshire.co.uk/archaeology

Recent activities

Sunderland Farm Cottages, near Selkirk – 10 April The proposal to survey eight more 20m by 20m squares to the north of the Cottages was achieved, with lots of variation in the resistance values recorded. The hope of finding earlier buildings was partly realised but most of the site appears to be taken up by a crossroads. A block of high resistance on the south east of the crossing could be buildings. The current road, the A707, could have been made as part of the “turnpike” when the Yair Bridge was built over the Tweed in 1760. An older road appears to have been straightened in this process, with the present Sunderland Farm Cottages facing the new road and older properties demolished. The east-west section of the crossing aligns with a gate onto the road and another gate giving entry to the hill field; new gates but on an old alignment. **We will be returning to survey on the field on the east side of the A707 on Monday 21 June, meeting at David Beaver’s house, 5 Sunderland Farm Cottages, at 10.00 a.m. As many volunteers as possible are needed. If you can help, please ring Dave Jones on 031 337 7165. Dave may also be able to co-ordinate transport for those seeking a lift to the site.**

Fort Knowe, Laurieston – 15-17 April Various Society members, together with local volunteers, assisted Dr Geoff Bailey of Falkirk Council in a pre-development excavation in the garden of Fort Knowe, a house which sits in the south-west corner of Mumrills Fort on the Antonine Wall at Laurieston, Falkirk. The house and garden are excluded from the scheduled area. Two trenches were dug, restricted to the sites of a proposed conservatory and a dining-room extension respectively. In the conservatory trench we found the intervallum road with a spur road coming off at right angles. Norah Carlin found a nice piece of decorated samian. To either side of the secondary road were timber buildings, evidenced by post-holes. One of these buildings had a hearth, suggesting that it was the centurion’s quarters at the end of a barrack block. In the smaller “dining-room trench” trench we found the clay-bonded stone base of the south rampart of the fort with just the edge of the road as it approached the south gateway of the fort. The trench did not reveal the gateway itself, which must have lain just outside the permitted excavation area.



The conservatory trench



Samian find

Cramond – 19 April The proposed seven linear array line were reduced to six, two in the grounds of Cramond Tower (our thanks to Eric Jamieson), one east-west along the grass verge of the Kirk Cramond road, and three beside the kennels. This brings our total to sixteen sections to try to make sense of the V-shaped supposed Roman ditch lines. What appears to be slumped infilling of some ditches with low resistance material is in sharp contrast to clear V shapes that look as if they could have been deliberately backfilled with high resistance material (perhaps demolition debris?). Ground levels have changed, possibly with landscaping after the demolition of the old village, truncating some ditches with later levelling burying the truncation. We are still far from being able to join V sections to show ditch lines with any confidence.

Gormyre Hill – 15 May The 40m by 40m area of the embanked enclosure together with the adjoining 2000 sq.m. was magnetometry surveyed by Peter Morris. This is the area we previously carried out an area ground resistance survey. Three resistive linear array measurements were then made, two east-west across the site and one south-north down the hill. The hill is typical West Lothian basalt which has a high magnetic signature: this made zeroing of the magnetometer

very difficult and the interpretation of the print-out equally hard. Where the area ground resistance showed more anomalies within the embanked area than in that to the north and east, the magnetometry shows the opposite. The three linear array printouts have significant high resistances that largely align with those in the area resistance plot. These resistances go down to a depth of over 2m (more than twice the depth to which the area resistance can “see”) but all are underlain by low resistance suggesting they are not bedrock. No explanation can yet be offered; we hope to dig to resolve this.

Future plans

In addition to Selkirk and Castlecary, there are a number of other projects lined up for the summer and autumn:

White Castle Fort: The one problem, regarding a topographical survey required by Historic Scotland, seems to have been resolved. The survey and excavation are expected to proceed from 1 to 14 August.

Tullibardine We may be involved in a survey relating to the “Great Michael” hedge at Tullibardine in the week beginning 23 August. According to Collins Encyclopedia of Scotland, “it is recorded that the length and breadth of James IV’s battleship, the Great Michael, was planted in hawthorn at Tullibardine by the wright who helped make her”. The ship was built in 1511, and is said to have been 240 feet long with a crew of 200 sailors, 120 gunners and 1000 soldiers. She was lent to France in 1513 and later sold. Her commander was Sir Andrew Wood of Largo (c1460-1540).

Cousland Pottery: The dates for the Cousland “Big Dig” are now confirmed as 30 August to 11 September, subject to funding arrangements being finalised. The excavation will explore the pottery kiln site shown in the geophysical surveys and confirmed by a brief excavation last year.

Old Pentland Churches: It is now proposed to amalgamate the two weekends previously proposed and do both the resurvey and the digs on 18 and 19 September, as part of Scottish Archaeology Month.

Temple: The farmer has given permission for the proposed survey and dig, postponed from earlier this year. We hope that this project on the Knights Templar site will eventually take place but no dates have been set.

The future of the Society’s library

There were no adverse responses to the Committee’s consultation on the proposal to donate the Society’s library to the WS Society, to be made available to members at the Signet Library in Parliament Square. Some alternative suggestions were received and investigated but did not offer a satisfactory solution. The Committee therefore decided to go ahead with the proposal. We have made a formal request to the WS Society to accept a donation of our library, which they will consider at their next meeting.

If, as anticipated, the WS Society agree, we expect that we will be able to inform members in the next Newsletter when the transfer will be effective, and what the arrangements will be for members wishing to obtain access to the collection. A list of the books in the collection will be placed on the Society’s website. We intend to retain certain items, such as the Society’s own publications and occasional papers, along with some research material by Society members.

Whither EAFS?

A reply from Tam Ward

The item by Dave Jones must surely touch a nerve in many archaeological societies. Why do they exist? Increasingly, societies appear to be doing less and less actual work of any sort and are simply becoming (or in some cases always were) passive. This is fine as far as it goes, at least people are learning about the past.

However, how much more rewarding to contribute to our heritage by discovering new aspects about it, all very well but how difficult would that be? The answer is – easy, in fact it could be described as a walk in the park, the park being a ploughed field where there may be every chance of finding interesting and important artefacts ranging from earliest times to the present.

This is what Biggar Archaeology Group does every spring and many find spots and indeed even sites are added to the data base each time. It's a great feeling when one of the group picks up a flint arrow or tool dating back thousands of years, and more often than not each person in the search finds something of interest, just for going for a walk. Recording objects has never been easier by using a GPS, so the entire tool kit is a pocket full of plastic bags, a marker pen and the GPS. The finds are soon cleaned, re bagged, catalogued and reported to NMRS – and the job is done. For a relatively simple effort, a group or even an individual can make a big difference to the story of a locality, sometimes providing the only story of a place.

Qualifications are minimal, a slight degree of fitness. Rewards can be huge, changing history.

If all archaeological societies could muster a group to do this type of work on an annual basis they would make a massive contribution to our knowledge of the past. But there is another important reason for field walking and that is modern cultivation practices are having a dastardly effect on archaeological finds and sites as never before. Deeper ploughing and more violent machinery are wreaking havoc on whatever remains of the past in the fields. There must come a point when very little remains.

Iain MacNeil, 46th Chief of Clan MacNeil (from Dave Jones)

Iain MacNeil, who spoke to the Society in March 2003 on the subject of Hebridean Galley Castles, died in February 2010 and was buried on Barra. He is succeeded by his son as 47th Chief. He was a citizen of the USA but also had homes in Edinburgh and Barra. An eminent professor of law, he numbered Barack Obama among his pupils. His Irish forefathers came to Barra in the 11th century and built Kisimul Castle. It fell into disrepair but was restored by his father, the 45th Chief. He spent his early years living there and went to school in Castlebay.

His talk to the Society highlighted the intervisibility of many castles, or at least the ability of more than one castle to observe an area of seaway – very necessary when raiding was a regular occurrence. He also suggested that the practice of dating grave slabs from the garb of the carved figure was inaccurate, as the change from chain-mail to full armour never took place for those fighting from galleys.

Society lectures

There are no Society lectures until the autumn – more details in the next newsletter. The Committee will shortly start looking at setting up the lecture programme for next year. If you have any suggestions, please let the Editor know.

Turkish Resistivity (from Brian Tait)

I'm just back from central Turkey – doing archaeological sites in Anatolia and Cappadocia. One interesting site we visited was Kerkenes which is thought to be the ancient city of Pteria which was built by late Phrygians in about 600BC and destroyed by Croesus in 547BC just before he was defeated by Cyrus the Great. The city walls measure some 7 km and they are doing electrical resistivity (their description) of all the very rough area inside the walls – as can be seen by this photo. It makes our eight or so squares a day in manse gardens look fairly easy going. The dig has been going since 1993 and they have years more to go.



(Editor's note: Clearly, geophizz is the same the world over – more people watching idly than doing the work!)

Just a tick

The last week of May was Tick Awareness Week, and effectively the start of the tick season. Anyone spending time outdoors, on grassland, in woodland or amongst bracken, especially if it has been frequented by sheep or deer, can be caught by the bite of a tick – a brown/black eight legged insect sometimes no bigger than a dot, which can bury its head in your skin. They will crawl to protected places such as the groin or behind the knees. Tick bites can cause Lyme disease, which has a multitude of symptoms, including vomiting, severe headaches, muscle pain and rheumatic-like conditions. Clearly, this is something that field archaeologists should protect against. The best protection is to avoid exposing bare skin. Use DEET-type creams or sprays. Spray clothes as well as skin. Tuck trousers into socks. First aid kits should contain a pair of fine tweezers to remove the insect, taking care not to leave any part embedded in your skin. It is a myth that a tick will withdraw its head if you burn its bum with a cigarette – it will just inject more poison into you. Unfortunately, doctors are not as aware of the disease as they might be, and may not diagnose the problem. To find out how to deal with ticks see www.stopthetick.co.uk, and for information on Lyme disease see www.lymediseaseaction.org.uk.

Dates for your diary

14 -16 June	<i>Dating and Deposits</i> Medieval Pottery Research Group	Isle of Skye Innkeeper's Lodge, 18 Dundee Road, Perth Contact George Haggarty haggartyg@aol.com
21 August	<i>A Workshop on NLS Manuscripts: A Closer Look at The Perth Psalter and The Perth Hammermen Book</i> Olive Geddes and Kenneth Dunn , NLS	Booking essential Mark Hall 01738 783414
3-5 September	<i>Engaging the Recent Past</i> Society of Post-Medieval Archaeology	University of Glasgow
10-11 September	<i>Perth: A Place in History</i> Two-day Conference to celebrate Perth800 Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust	Perth Concert Hall see: www.pkht.org.uk booking essential tickets: www.horsecross.co.uk
18-19 September	Society for Clay Pipe Research Conference	Stirling Castle Contact Dennis Gallagher dq011c0754@blueyonder.co.uk
22-23 October	Munro Trust International Seminar	University of Edinburgh
30-31 October	Scotland's Rural Past Conference	Crieff
6 November	TAFAC Annual Conference	St Andrews More details in next issue

Course - Introduction to Field Archaeology

This course is being run at Holmwood House, Cathcart, Glasgow, from 21 June to 3 July, by the University of the West of Scotland in partnership with the National Trust for Scotland. The two-week course will combine classroom learning with practical archaeological field work, giving students experience of excavation, site recording, find recording, basic survey techniques and post excavation techniques. Cost £300. For more information contact Stephen Clancy at Lifelong Learning Academy, University of West Scotland, tel 0141 848 3193, email stephen.clancy@uws.ac.uk,

Unpaid subscriptions

Just a reminder to any member who intended to renew membership for 2010 but forgot to do so - please contact the Treasurer immediately, or we will assume you wish to resign your membership, and remove you from mailing lists etc. This could be your last Newsletter!

Editor's Note

Thanks to all contributors. The deadline for Issue 179 is 24July.

Editor: J. Urquhart, 91 Milton Road, Kirkcaldy KY1 1TP 01592 644710 john.urquhart1001@btinternet.com

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