

EDINBURGH ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SOCIETY

Scottish Charity No. SC006520

News

Issue 199 – Autumn 2014



The Committee has agreed that the production of the newsletter be reduced from 6 to 4 issues per year. It is proposed to try this out as follows; the end of February [spring], end of May [summer], end of August [autumn] and end of October [winter].

We hope that this will still meet the balance between keeping up-to-date with ongoing projects and forthcoming events supplemented by the regular advance notices issued by the Secretary ad hoc.

Ed.

Society News

Lecture Programme

The dates for the forthcoming 2015 programme has been agreed as follows

Wednesday 14 January

Tuesday 10 February

Wednesday 11 March

Tuesday 14 April

Wednesday 13 May

Tuesday 13 October

Wednesday 11 November

Tuesday 8 December

We will continue to use the venue at 23a Fettes Row, Edinburgh, and meetings start at 7.30pm. Full details of speakers and events will be included in the next edition.

Field Activity Updates

Photo Briefings

Saughton Hall



In June we assisted AOC Archaeology at an excavation on the site of the former Saughton Hall. Traces of basement or cellar levels were located together with some potentially older wall foundations.

Kinneil

Next was a visit to Kinneil led by Geoff Bailey including the fortlet, Kinneil Old Church and access to part of Kinneil House and the museum.



Again, Geoff Bailey reports that, while the recording at Kinneil Church at the end of June took somewhat longer than anticipated, it proved to be an interesting experience for himself as well as those doing it.

Two of the paving slabs are of 13/14th century date and are a useful addition to our knowledge of such rare stones.

Having the time to look carefully at the site helps to see things that have been overlooked – on the last day a wall poking out of the turf south of the chancel, which does not appear on any plans, was noticed. The site has been re-covered with new topsoil and will be turfed

Garvald Mains

Our next outing was a survey of Garvald Mains Hillfort for David Connolly on a particularly wet day with some impressive thunderstorms in the vicinity but happily not too close.



Falkirk Roman Fort, the Pleasance

Geoff Bailey's summer holiday dig this year was around the area of Falkirk Roman Fort in the Pleasance. The back garden dig on week 2 recovered a good quantity of Roman Pottery including a Nene Valley ware beaker pictured below left.



Copies of Geoff's report are available on request

Polmont.



At Polmont we were involved on the site of a south graveyard extension which involved a very large digger but only a small area of rig and furrow was found.

Crailing, near Jedburgh



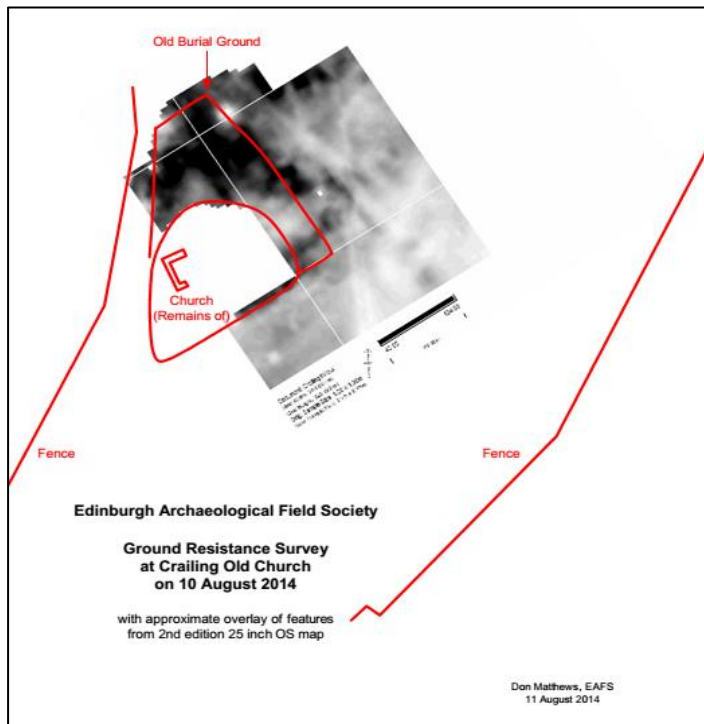
The Society was invited by Archaeology Scotland to conduct a limited geophysical survey at the old church of Crailing as part of their programme for Scottish Archaeology Month (SAM). The site is situated on private land near Jedburgh and our contribution was a precursor to a more in-depth study of the site, including ground clearance and the recording of grave stones, by the local community.

The graveyard and church at Crailing, together with the neighbouring church and graveyard at Nisbet, is mentioned in the records of Jedburgh Abbey in the 11th/12th c. Today, both early churches have gone and only their graveyards remain – Crailing does at least have two upstanding walls of the old church to indicate where it once stood. Little else is known about the site, but from early maps it would appear that the graveyard was extended at some stage, and today this appears as a platform above the surrounding pasture.

The estate of Crailing, together with the village, was associated with the Cranstons and a memorial to Lord William (heavily ruinous) stands against the north wall. Sometime before the church went out of use a new church was built more conveniently down in the village and it became the joint church for Crailing and Nisbet. The bell, gifted by Lord Cranston and dated 1706 which formerly hung at the old church, now hangs in the united church. The stones in the graveyard at Crailing Old are excellent examples of a local mason's work, many dating to the early 1700s.

Today the old graveyard is surrounded by a fence. That is to say the area in which the old church is known to have stood and where the upstanding stones may be seen, is enclosed. The graveyard extension as shown on old maps is devoid of all features that might be associated with a graveyard. It was to the area out with the fenced area that the geophysical survey took place and in all some eight 20x20m squares were completed.

The results were inconclusive as to definite features, but a high resistance area to the north of the church might represent a rubble spread and a north south linear trend of both high and low resistance across the site might indicate the presence of water conduits/drainage channels or former route ways. A particularly wet area to the south of the old church might also indicate the presence of a well or spring.



It remains to be seen if further geophysical work would improve the picture and it can only be hoped that local volunteers, thru the Archaeology Scotland, Adopt -a- Monument scheme, maybe encouraged to excavate the foundations of the old church. It might further be commented that a full restoration of the Cranston memorial would not go amiss.

Cramond Heritage Trust

The Society and Cramond Heritage Trust are joining forces again for the 2014 Scottish Archaeology Month event at Cramond. It will be based at The Maltings, Riverside, Cramond, on Saturday 27 and Sunday 28 September from 11am to 5pm each day.

This year the exhibition will include a section on World War One and its effect on the folk of Cramond. There will be a workshop where people can sort and identify excavation finds, reconstruct a broken ceramic vessel or try their hand at writing with a quill pen or use a stylus on a Roman wax tablet – this is where assistance from Society members would be welcome in encouraging participation.

Each day at 2pm there will be a choice of guided walks – either to learn about the 18th-century Riverside Iron Mills or about Cramond from its origins around 8500 BC through until recent times.

If anyone wishes to help or would like further information, please contact Val Dean val@valdean.plus.com

Next Newsletter

The next Newsletter will be issued at the end of October 2014. All Contributions welcomed.

Until then, enjoy your archaeology!

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