

EDINBURGH ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SOCIETY

Scottish Charity No. SC006520

News

Issue 223 – Autumn 2024



NOTES FROM THE CHAIR - NOVEMBER 2024

The main item of news over the last few months has been the new base for our monthly lectures. They now take place in part of Edinburgh University in the lovely old building Paterson's Land.

The full address is LG34, Paterson's Land, Holyrood Road, EH8 8AQ

Lectures now take place at 7.00pm to allow time for the traditional tea/coffee and biscuits and chat.

You can park nearby after 6.30pm

Thanks to Deborah, our Secretary, for organising a good range of lectures for this session. December will see a Society Round up and Social evening on the 11th at the same venue. We hope to see a good turnout then.

November is, of course, conference month so members of your Committee have been using the opportunities to spread the word of the Societies work.

As well as our ongoing project at Cammo we have been involved with work at the Tormain environs led by member, Ben Bright. A range of archaeological techniques have been used and taught and there is the chance of excavation in the New Year.

Christine McPherson

CAMMO REPORT

Work has now finished at the East of the avenue where we were searching for the remains of the 3 buildings on the 1805 map. Unfortunately we found little evidence apart from a narrow spread of mortar to indicate that buildings were there. Finds have given dating evidence for early 19th Century material. We also found a large deposit of broken bottles! They are possibly 'onion' bottles. Some of the glass, particularly rims and bases are currently with a glass specialist for analysis. We eagerly await the results.

Since the consolidation work being undertaken by the Stonemasons has affected the areas of the Estate we can access safely, we are only now getting back to the Walled Garden. We hope to do geophysical survey in an area near the West wall. There is an enigmatic oblong on some of the early maps of the garden. We also hope to complete our search of the Glasshouse area now our spoil heap – as usual where we needed to dig – has been moved when the rest of the site was backfilled. The well that we found last January is to be made into a stone feature rather than being covered up, which is gratifying.

We managed a quick search of the Steading enclosure before hard core was put down over the floor surface. This led to half a bucket of ceramics including another lovely stoneware cream jar.

We are closing the excavation season at Cammo at the end of November and will return in January refreshed and reinvigorated – weather permitting...

Christine McPherson



STEADING STONEWARE CREAM JAR



WALLED GARDEN, SOUTH WALL, CONSOLIDATION IN PROGRESS



ONGOING EXCAVATIONS IN FRONT OF CAMMO HOUSE

THE WATSON FAMILY AT CAMMO (NEW SAUGHTON)

Following a visit by Shane Watson and family on Sunday 3 November from the Middle East it was thought appropriate to give a brief outline of the Watson family who lived at New Saughton for about 130 years. Shane has been researching various branches of the Watson family both in Edinburgh and elsewhere and is setting up a Watson Society. He was very appreciative of our tour of the estate.

The Watson family were a long-established family in the Parish of Corstorphine where they had acquired land at Saughton from the Abbot of Holyrood in 1524 and during the seventeenth century their land holdings increased in that parish. The family had a vault in Corstorphine church such was their status.

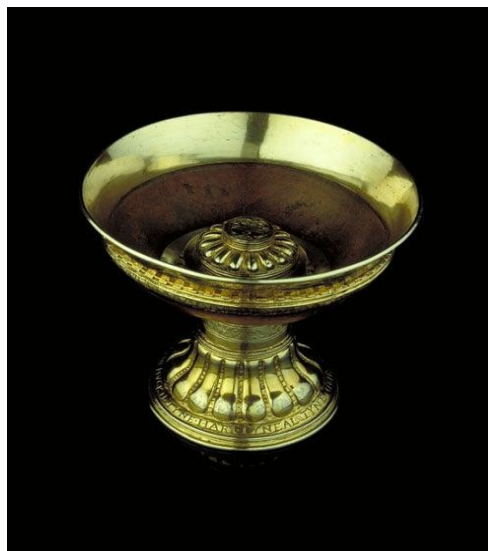
After his marriage to Lady Helen Hope, James Watson 1710-1778 bought Cammo from John Hogg in 1741 and promptly renamed it New Saughton. Although they had 8 children, he seems to have remained a man about town indulging his passions. His legacy in the estate is the bridge over the Bughtlin Burn which still stands and has his initials J1762W inscribed on the keystone.

James was succeeded by his only surviving son Charles Watson 1740-1804, for whom he bought a commission in the army. Charles was stationed in Minorca 1769-1774. On the death of his father, he returned to Scotland and at the age of 40 married Lady Margaret Carnegie in 1780. He organised a large amount of work at New Saughton. The entrance to the house was enhanced by the addition of a perron. He added to the prestige of the property by building a lodge house and entrance gates. A walled garden of approximately 2 acres was constructed of stone and brick beginning in 1780 with a heated south facing wall. Later a greenhouse was acquired. Bee boles for harvesting honey were inserted in the south wall close to the main entrance to the garden. Charles & Margaret had 4 children.

James 1781-1823 his eldest son joined the army and eventually became a major in the Gordon Highlanders. He served in Ireland and took part in the Walcheren expedition in 1809. In 1811 aged 30 he married Janet Ramsay of Barnton. They had 9 children. He made considerable alterations to the estate. The stables were built to the design of Robert Reid who was Master of Work to the Crown of Scotland. He added an extension to the house and changed the frontage to a battlemented style. The water tower was constructed as this had been a perennial problem at the house. James died in 1823 and in the inventory registered in Edinburgh Sheriff Court is mention of a large silver mazer, now in the National Museum of Scotland. The estate was inherited by Charles, 1813-36, followed by William Ramsay 1819-41 his remaining sons after which it passed to Helen 1822-1850.

Helen married Lord Aberdour, son of the Earl of Morton in 1844 at Barnes in London. They had a son Sholto Watson Douglas 1844-1935 and a daughter Alice who died aged 2. Helen died in 1850 and thus the estate passed into the Morton family. It was sold in 1873 to an Edinburgh brewer Alexander Campbell.

Ann Kerrigan



THE WATSON MAZER
MAPLEWOOD AND SILVER
ACQUIRED BY NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF SCOTLAND IN 1948
COURTESY OF THE ART FUND

EAFS AND THE WORK WITH THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND AT CULLODEN IN 2024

Each year at Culloden battlefield, the National Trust for Scotland holds a 'Big Archaeology Week'.

As usual members of Edinburgh Archaeological Field Society take an active part in the organisation of this event. 2 of us were part of the management team for the event and a local member joined us as a volunteer.

42 test pits were opened across the field where the front line of the Government troops were thought to have been assembled. A steady stream of public volunteers came to try archaeological excavation in these test pits. Groups from RAF Lossiemouth and Kinross Barracks also joined us. The 'Sappers' were very useful opening test pits and later back filling them. Their expertise in current military hardware gave an interesting slant on the artifacts we found. A group from Erskine Veterans Charity organised by Archaeology Scotland also took part.

As well as the test pits, a digger opened 5 long pits to the West. This was to enable a technique developed by Professor Tony Pollard and Gary Craig at Waterloo to be trialled at Culloden.

15 cm. spits were removed from the ground that had already been metal detected. As each spit was removed more metal detecting took place. As most musket balls found were at least 20cm and mostly about 30cm down, this technique gave a much greater return of finds. A large number of musket balls, grape and canister shot were retrieved. Also what seems to have been chain shot, this possibly supplied by the Navy. The number of musket balls that had obviously hit a target was sobering. Less 'warlike' finds included thimbles, buckles and a small knife. At the base of the trenches evidence of the use of the area well before the battle came to light. This included a superb firepit. Samples have been taken for dating and further analysis.

Over 100 members of the public took part in the Public Day event and it was estimated that over 5 thousand 'engaged with' the event in person or on-line.

The find of the week was made by Lorne MacLeod who works at Culloden for the NTS. It was an Edward 1st silver coin.

Christine McPherson



TESTPITTING AT CULLODEN

NEWS FROM ORKNEY

As part of my MSc placement over the summer, I spent four weeks working with Martin Carruthers at the Cairns on South Ronaldsay. The Cairns is an Iron Age Broch with an associated village complex which has been excavated by The University of the Highlands and Islands since 2006. While the Cairns is no Cammo, it is still a fascinating and dynamic site.

As a brief overview, Brochs are large “Complex Atlantic Roundhouses” associated with the Middle Iron Age. The Cairns broch dates from around 200BC to 200AD although the rest of the site remains active until well into the Norse period.



(Martin Carruthers)

This year there were several main areas of excavation, the cells, the broch interior, the overburden and structures O and B2. I was assigned to supervise the “Overburden” on the northeast side of the broch and in the centre of the site. It is the final section of the broch wall that has yet to be excavated, this was the job given to me and a dedicated team of excavators who spent the four weeks troweling, mattocking and shovelling the mountain of rubble and soil placed up against the broch wall. By the end of the season, we had several courses of masonry revealed.

Across the rest of the site, numerous fantastic artefacts were found such as a beautiful rotary quern which stands as the earliest example found at the site to date. Another significant find was a shard of glass which was later found to be Roman. This was found in one of the post-broch buildings. This is a significant find in Orkney as there are very few examples of Roman artefacts found so far.

With such an action-packed excavation season there's too much to squeeze into this short segment, however, a daily blog was written containing an overview of the work alongside all sorts of interesting titbits and perspectives. The blog can be found here <https://archaeologyorkney.com/category/the-cairns/>

Ross Dempster

THE TORMAIN RESEARCH PROJECT

Tormain Hill is located just west of Ratho, Edinburgh. Rising to a height of 450 feet above sea level, it is part of a chain of 300- million-year-old igneous rock outcrops, surrounded by sedimentary rocks at the lower elevations at its base. It is possible to see Cairnpapple, hillforts on Dalmahoy and Kaimes Hills, Arthurs Seat, the Pentland Hills, Firth of Forth and Fife from the summit. Previously, EAFS worked with the Scottish Rock Art Project to record Cup & Ring art panels at their highest point, so some members are familiar with the area. EAFS graciously agreed to help me investigate the area for new evidence as I work towards my dissertation at the University of Edinburgh.



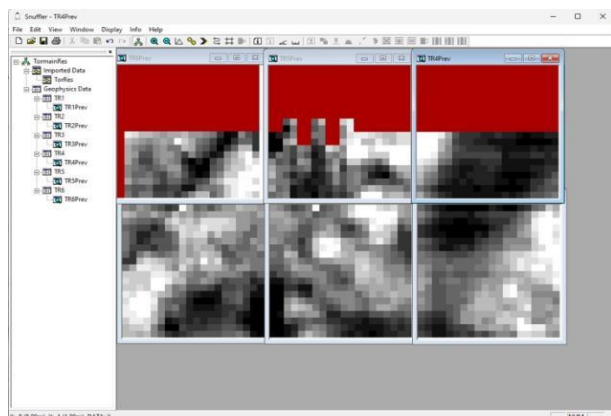
The idea for the project was sparked by the presence of this stone, which once stood on Tormain, containing a cross carved in relief (image left), now located in the cemetery of our partner, St Marys Church Dalmahoy. As the project is meant to be a community archaeological event, we conducted two workshops with the assistance of AOC Archaeology in July 2024 to introduce the concepts of desk-based research to members of the public, with a total of 34 people participating. The presence of the Cup & Ring art is common knowledge, and there are many stories about Tormain, some wrong and many unknown local Canmore sites or objects, such as 'The Ratho Barrow' and several axeheads, one which is dated to the Neolithic and originated in Antrim County, Ireland. After the workshop, a list of objects and areas of interest was created.

- Resistivity over five anomalous mounds and attempting to locate the position of The Witches Stone in the Bonnington Mains field.
- Record two stones along the footpath leading to the summit.
- Investigating an 11m x 6m possible structure in the woods.
- Resistivity in Sunnyside Field, owned by Hatton Mains, to investigate a possible enclosure and possibly take core samples of the adjacent bog area.
- Fieldwalk the top field on Ratho Mains, which had been used as a midden by Edinburgh until approximately 1950.
- Attempt to locate a missing enclosure that appeared in aerial pictures taken in 1943.

Our first event was to conduct resistivity and magnetometry (while training EAFS members and the public) across five anomalous mounds in a field owned by Bonnington Mains. After Neil had the site under survey control and the grids installed, 14 volunteers took turns recording the data. Unfortunately, the morning work was lost due to a faulty head, but the group still managed to collect



enough data to produce the interesting image below. The magnetometry didn't work due to the igneous geology. After reviewing the resistivity image (image below) with AOC, the project has decided to investigate the mounds further with permissions, either by higher resolution resistivity or excavation. It is still being determined precisely what the image shows, but there does appear to be a ditch on the left; while the centre is inconclusive, there is enough evidence to warrant further investigation.



After the success of the resistivity event, one of the stones of interest was recorded and found to be a 19th century gatepost.

The Sunnyside field investigation was out on hold until the cattle were removed from the field on November 16th, much later than anticipated. In the meantime, photogrammetry was conducted with Neil giving us survey control (below) of the area and Ross visiting from Orkney.

During the second week of November, a LiDAR scan of the possible structure was conducted, producing a picture that will be imported into Adobe Illustrator to map the site. Unfortunately, the notice for the LiDAR event was too short for people to attend, but I have the assurance of the University that I can borrow it again to do a training session at Cammo in the future. We will be working to develop a plan to investigate the possible enclosure in Sunnyside, record the final stone on the pathway, and excavate two test pits into the possible structure in the woods.



Ben Bright

CONFERENCES

On 26 October I attended the 2024 AGM and Members Day of Archaeology Scotland held in the Merchant House, Glasgow, a grand Victorian building incorporating items from its past history. The session opened with a short talk by Professor Tony Pollard on the Archaeology of the Battle of Waterloo. Luckily we would hear a more complete version at our meeting in November. This was followed by talks on the work of Archaeology Scotland from the Learning Team, and the Adopt a Monument team. A discussion on the future shape of Discovery and Excavation was next prior to the business of the AGM. Several new Trustees were appointed to the board. After lunch some of the audience made our way to Glasgow Cathedral for a tour of the building which was very busy with tourists. A very enjoyable day out in Glasgow in good weather.

Ann Kerrigan



OLD BELL AT GLASGOW CATHEDRAL

OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The Edinburgh Archaeological Field Society's new Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) statement is another step in ensuring that archaeology becomes more inclusive and accessible to our volunteers and students. Given our focus on human history and cultural diversity, it's essential that our field mirrors these values in both its practices and participation today. EDI initiatives aren't just about addressing imbalances—they're about identifying and challenging long-standing barriers, making sure that all voices are heard and valued. This commitment has also enabled us to access funding opportunities that align with these principles, strengthening our ability to grow as a society. By embracing diversity, we're enriching our research, improving community engagement, and ensuring field archaeology is a space for everyone.

You can also view our new EDI statement on our website, in our [What We Do](#) section, and all feedback on how we can make EAFS a more inclusive and diverse place to volunteer is welcome.

EAFS LECTURE PROGRAMME DECEMBER 2024 TO JUNE 2025

**ALL MEETINGS WILL COMMENCE AT 1900 IN ROOM LG34 PATERSON'S LAND
HOLYROOD ROAD
EH8 8AQ**

<https://eafs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/map-showing-location-of-Patersons-Land.jpg>

Wednesday 11 December 2024.	Round-Up. Brief summaries by members of their field work during 2024, followed by Christmas quiz and refreshments.
Wednesday 8 January 2025.	The Antonine Wall Fort at Falkirk. Geoff Bailey.
Wednesday 12 February 2025.	Excavations in the grounds of Cramond Regis, Edinburgh. Philip Karsgaard, Addyman Archaeology.
Wednesday 12 March 2025.	Annual General Meeting.

This Newsletter was compiled by Alan Calder, member of the EAFS Committee, with contributions from Committee Members.

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

Next Newsletter will be issued next year.

All Contributions welcomed.

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