

A TOUCH OF GAS

The Newsletter of Glasgow Archaeological Society




Issue 84 – Autumn 2019

Glasgow Archaeological Society, c/o Tho. & J.W. Barty, Solicitors, 61 High Street, Dunblane, FK15 0EH

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 There is now a Flickr account for members to download their photographs of Society events, moderated by Natasha Ferguson - <http://www.flickr.com/groups/gasmembers/>

Keep up to date with Society Activities on our website – www.glasarchsoc.org.uk

Lecture Programme 2019/20

17th October **Richard Annis:** Durham and Dunbar: Identifying Scottish Soldiers at Palace Green

Dalrymple Lectures

18th – 21st November **Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 6.30 pm, Thursday 7.30pm**

Professor Adam T. Smith of Cornell University - The Civilization Machine

19th December **Jim Mearns and Geoff Bailey:** Offa's Dyke - From Sea to Sea?

Student speaker: to be confirmed

16th January **Tertia Barnett:** Scotland's Rock Art Project

20th February **Graeme Wilson:** The Links of Noltland, Orkney

19th March **Irving Finkel:** The First Ghosts and the Babylonian Underworld

16th April **Adrián Maldonado:** Scotland at 1000 AD: An Artefactual History

Admission is free. All lectures take place at 7.30pm and finish at 9pm. With the exception of our AGM in April, which will be held in the Sir Alexander Stone building, 16 University Gardens G12 8QL, all other lectures are held in lecture theatre A in the Boyd Orr building of Glasgow University on University Avenue G12 8QR.

The Dalrymple series of lectures in November are held in the Sir Charles Wilson building, 3 Kelvin Way, Glasgow G12 8NN

The Dalrymple Lecture Fund

Jointly with Glasgow University the Society administers The Dalrymple Lecture Fund, a generous bequest by James Dalrymple to finance a series of free public Lectures on European topics of historic and archaeological interest.

The first Lecture Series was delivered in 1907, and recent speakers have included, Dr Chris Stringer, Professor Sir Barry Cunliffe, Ian Hodder, Professor Mike Parker Pearson, Professor William Hanson and Professor Roger Stalley.

The Fund also generously supports the publication of the Scottish Archaeological Journal.

Baca Nam Putan (Hill of Buttons), Balinoe, Tiree

Following a grant from GAS Heather James has provided AToG with a report on her work in Tiree.

A very rare Viking/Norse settlement site (or farm mound) is currently eroding out of a mound within the machair at Balinoe, on Tiree (NGR NL 0985 7421). The site was first discovered by Dr John Holliday of the An Iodhlann heritage centre when he noticed sheep scrapes were exposing rounded boulders and dark midden layers within a large mound near to the sea. He has collected a few sherds of pottery and several potential artefacts from beneath the scrapes. In 2017 he discovered a bone pin which has been identified as potentially of local medieval make (pers comm Colleen Batey).

While excavations were taking place at Lodge Farm, Kirkapol in 2017, Heather James (Calluna Archaeology) and Peta Glew (then of Northlight Heritage) organised a rapid, one day, examination of the mound which included a geophysical survey, cleaning and recording of two sheep scrape sections which was assisted by local volunteers (Glew 2018). The midden appeared as dark sand with shells, pottery and stones beneath about 0.5m of light yellow windblown sand. A broken clay loom weight was also retrieved. The bottom of the midden was not reached, but it was at least 0.5m deep. Charcoal has provided two radiocarbon dates. One from near the top of the midden was early-10th to early 11th century AD and the other from the base of the section was late 8th to late 10th century. This clearly placed the site in a Viking/Norse context.

A very limited geophysics survey consisting of two 20m by 20m grids revealed a halo of burnt material around the edges of the oval-shaped mound where the midden was close to the surface. The site was clearly under pressure from erosion from animals as well as the wind.

Further work was planned in order to better understand the extent of the midden and answer some important questions before funding could be applied for. How deep was the midden and how far out from the mound did it extend? Was the mound a single feature in the landscape or were there remnants of others nearby?

With the assistance of students and staff from the University of Glasgow, a second season of work was undertaken in April 2019. Heather Christie and Megan Kersten carried out a geophysical survey of a wide area around the mound and the results confirmed the discoveries from the previous year (Christie 2019) showing that there was a dense concentration of burnt material within the mound and very little, apart from geology, in the vicinity.

Ewan Campbell (also of the University of Glasgow) and John Holliday (An Iodhlann) carried out an auger survey across the same area as the geophysics. They found that the mound was distinctly different from the surrounding fields, in that it contained a deep midden at least 1m deep. The auger survey consisted of screwing a metal coring instrument down through the ground and then inspecting the colour of the sand that it brought up. Rather crude but effective.

Heather James and Ewan Campbell then examined the midden deposits further. Two of the scrapes in the sides of the mound were cleaned and recorded and small trenches dug at their base in order to reach the base of the midden deposits. A small trench was also dug through the top of the mound and midden was revealed and sampled, but there was no evidence of any structures. All the soil samples have been processed (floated and sieved) and a third charcoal sample from near the base of the midden has been submitted.

As a result of the work in 2019 we have been able to show that the mound consists of a midden deposit which is about 1m deep beneath 0.5m of sand. There are at least three phases of midden separated by layers of windblown sand, possibly indicating that the site was abandoned for certain periods. The mound probably also contains stone and turf-built structures as lines of boulders are eroding out of the section face. We can see that the mound has built up over several centuries and is an isolated feature in the landscape. It contains fish and mammal bones, charcoal, pottery and other artefacts which probably relate to a Viking/Norse settlement. This work has enabled a detailed application to be submitted to Historic Environment Scotland, and others, for funding to undertake a larger excavation in 2020 which will hopefully reveal the nature of the structures beneath the sand.

The author would like to thank the Argyll Estates and the tenant farmer Ian MacArthur, Barrapol, for permission to dig on this site. John Holliday was instrumental in commissioning and assisting in the organisation and management of the project. Colleen Batey provided the research agenda and Ewan Campbell undertook the auger survey and excavation of Trench B. The geophysical survey (Christie 2019) was undertaken by Heather Christie and Megan Kersten of the University of Glasgow. The University of Glasgow kindly provided the geophysics and auger equipment.

The project was funded by An Iodhlann, (The Windfall Fund), the Catherine Mackinchie Trust, the Glasgow Archaeology Society and Calluna Archaeology.

References:

Christie, H 2019 Geophysical Survey at 'Cnoc Na Putan', Balinoe and Island House Heylipol, Tiree. University of Glasgow unpublished mss.
 Glew, P 2018 'Cnoc Na Putan', Balinoe. Northlight Heritage Report no. 215.



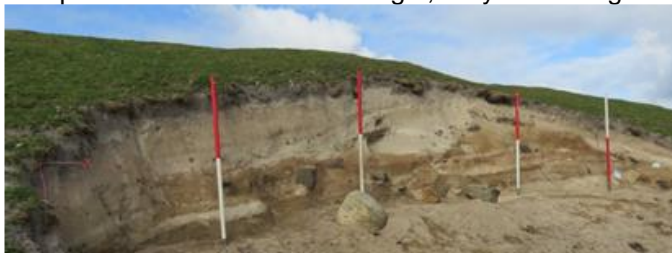
Ewan Campbell (University of Glasgow) excavating beneath an animal scrape

Trench D showing windblown sand over midden

Baca nam Putan mound with the animal scrapes and upper trench from north



To the left, two bone pins found in 2018. Above right, Clay loom weight found in 2017 & below right Trench A.



Scottish Archaeological Journal

The next volume of the Scottish Archaeological Journal will appear in Spring 2020. Articles include excavation reports from sites in Ayrshire and Moray and covering time period from the Neolithic to the medieval; there will be a few

conversation pieces including one relating to the Romans and Ireland and we will have a large selection of book reviews and some museum reviews giving you ideas of where to visit on your holidays next summer! We are continuing to push the Journal at conferences and if members are attending a conference that they think would take information on GAS membership and SAJ then please contact the editor. Please also consider writing for the Journal, the editor will be happy to guide authors through the review and publication process. Jim Mearns

Forthcoming Excursions

GAS Excursions 2019/2020

First Winter Excursion – Saturday, 9th November 2019 – Trades House, Glassford Street, Glasgow

Time: GAS members should meet at 10:50 am at entrance to Trades House, 85 Glassford St. Glasgow G1 1UH
The guided tour will begin at 11:00am

The Trades House of Glasgow was created at the time of reform of Glasgow's local government in 1605. It was established to help protect and support the Crafts of the City. Over the centuries it housed the Trades Free School for boys and girls and, using funds gifted by generous benefactors, has assisted those in need.

Today the Trades House is a charity focusing on both educational initiatives and supporting people in need. This charitable institution still meets in the Trades Hall in Glassford Street which, apart from the medieval cathedral, is the oldest building in Glasgow still used for its original purpose. After the tour our group will have the chance to enjoy tea/coffee and homemade shortbread in the beautiful surroundings of this historic establishment. Cost: £2.60 (refreshments) to be paid on the day.

Second Winter Excursion – Saturday, 18th January – A Tour of Paisley Museum's Secret Collection

Time: Group will meet at 9 High Street, Paisley at 10.45 am. The tour will last from 11.00 am until 12 noon

Paisley Museum is temporarily closed to the public, but we are fortunate in having the opportunity of being taken on a tour of the six stores which at present are housing the museum's collection.

Members wishing to join either of the winter trips please contact Margaret King – 0141 334 5174. **Places on each of the tours are limited.**

Summer Excursions 2020

First Summer Excursion - Saturday 13th June 2020

On our first summer excursion our group will visit Arbroath Abbey*, the substantial remains of a Tironensian monastery, founded by William the Lion in 1178. We will then head half a mile north of the town to St. Vigeans. Here we will see the St. Vigeans Sculptured Stones*, a fine collection of thirty-two early Christian and Pictish stones which are housed in cottages in the village. Our last stop of the day will be Edzell Castle*, located six miles north of Brechin. It is a remarkable and very beautiful complex with a late-medieval tower house incorporated into a 16th century courtyard mansion.

Second Summer Excursion – Saturday, 29th August 2020

Our itinerary will take us to Blackness Castle*, a fortress on a promontory in the Forth estuary. Built in the 1440's it was massively strengthened in the 16th century. We will then make our way to the town of Linlithgow where an experienced and knowledgeable guide will take us on a walking tour of the historic town. Later in the day we will travel to The House of The Binns in West Lothian, the seat of the Dalryell family which dates from the 17th century.

*denotes properties under the guardianship of Historic Environment Scotland.

Further information regarding the summer excursions will be sent out next year.

Membership Renewals – Subscriptions are now due and early renewal helps the Society. Please return your Renewal Form to Margaret Gardiner from whom Gift Aid Forms are also available.

Summer Excursion to the north of England



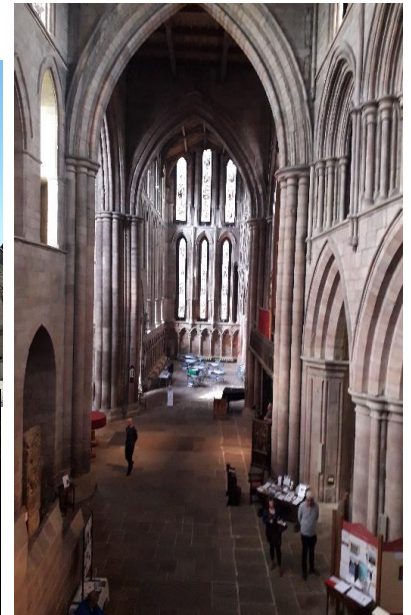
It was very wet as we left Glasgow but by the time we arrived at our first stop the rain had just about stopped. Our first stop was the 12th century Lanercost Priory. Founded in 1169 as an Augustinian House of Prayer it had previously been visited by Edward I, William Wallace & Robert the Bruce. It was built, at least in part, from recycled stone from the nearby Roman wall and only closed in 1538 as part of the Dissolution of the Monasteries. However, the north aisle of the Priory continues in use as a parish church.



A temptation gargoyle at the entrance to the priory is to remind you to leave temptation at the door, however few members could resist the temptation to ring the bell!

Our next stop was Hexham Abbey which had again been visited by William Wallace & Robert the Bruce before us.

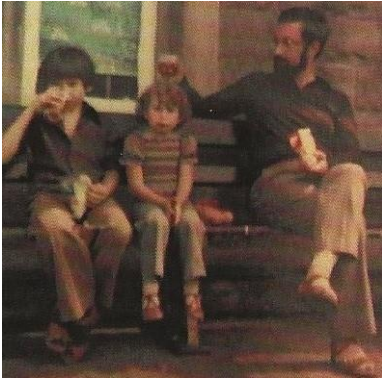
The Abbey was completed in 678 and although the main building is mainly 12th century, the nave was rebuilt as recently as the early twentieth century. The Saxon crypt was rediscovered in 1725 and was built with Roman stone. Some of the many highlights of the Abbey are the Frith Stool, a 7th century seat, enigmatic carvings on one of the chantry chapels, a Saxon grave stone, dozens of 500 year old paintings and a pre-reformation wooden rood screen.



Our final visit of the day was to Corbridge Roman town, the most northerly town in the Roman Empire. An extensive and very interesting site was made all the more enjoyable by a very enthusiastic guide. Although there is much still to be excavated the town already boasts a fountain and a strong room.



Lionel James Masters (August 1942 – April 2019)



It is with the greatest sadness and dismay that the Society, the Association of Certificated Field Archaeologists and his many friends and colleagues in both the professional and local communities throughout the West of Scotland and beyond, heard of the loss of Lionel on the third of April this year. He had for some years battled bravely through surgery and treatment with every hope that he had reached remission, indeed plans were afoot for a summer return to Orkney to investigate the startling new work on an island dear to his heart and for a further final lecture series on the Archaeology of Polynesia which he and Margaret had spent several happy years exploring. It was not to be.

Born in South Shields, he graduated from St John's College, Cambridge 1962-1965 with an MA in Archaeology and Anthropology, moving first to London for a PhD and then, with Margaret, to Dumfries in 1966 as a lecturer in Archaeology for Glasgow University, organising an influential Extra – Mural programme for Dumfries and Galloway. Moving to Glasgow in 1981 he continued this very successful three year Certificate Course in Field Archaeology which continued in various forms till recently, supplemented by outreach lectures to local communities and groups throughout South West, Central and Western Scotland and from then on as an Honorary Research lecturer until his 'retirement' to Doune in 2000. He was President of the Society from 1994 – 1997 and was a 'weel kent' face at lecture series with his friends amidship in the lecture theatre and especially attentive at any concerned with his beloved prehistoric passions and knowledge.

His contribution to Scottish Archaeology cannot be underestimated. For over fifty years Lionel devoted his archaeological career primarily to the voluntary and community sector, both as a mentor and as a voluntary participant. He had an incalculable and unquantifiable impact on a generation of field archaeologists both amateur and professional. His focus on the landscape was seminal for its era and in contacting and inspiring communities on how to recognise, record and publish work to a professional standard made him one of the father figures of community archaeology in Scotland.

This impact had also profound benefit for many who attest to his inspirational influence in opening up and enriching their lives through the medium of archaeology.

In 1987 his students formed an association (ACFA) to use the skills and support he inspired to offer our service to both local and the professional archaeological communities in measured field surveys. This has resulted in, currently, 142 published monographs and reports covering areas in both Scotland, northern England and further afield. Although a prehistorian, Lionel always based his course on privileging the total landscape and encouraged his students to view an archaeological vision from the prehistoric to the current field evidence. The corpus thus includes reports from worked flints in Lorn, total island surveys of deserted settlements in Raasay, South Rona and Glenlochay, Anti-Aircraft batteries in Rosneath and back close washhouses in Greenock.

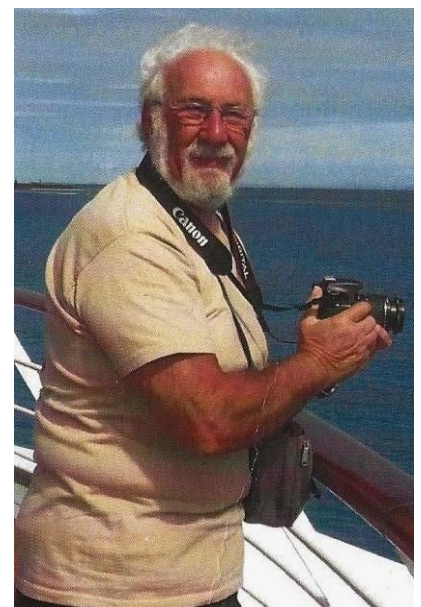
Apart from his presence in the field at sites with which he had a particular affinity, every report passed through his hands for comment and assessment for its archaeological content.

He also reached out beyond ACFA to an even wider community from Argyll to Galloway who have only known him as an enthusiastic and memorable lecturer able to widen their local archaeological knowledge and set it in the context of global archaeology, giving talks and organising visits to sites in Ireland, Menorca, Peru, Turkey and Rapa Nui.

Lionel's legacy is not just in the Society, ACFA or the wider webs of communities and societies he touched but in making a statement about what archaeology is for and what it is worth. Something he clearly understood.

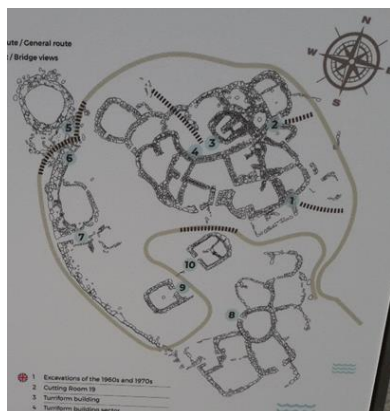
He was a remarkable and well-loved man and will be sorely missed and our sympathies and memories have been passed on to Margaret, David and Rachel.

Ian Marshall and everyone in ACFA.

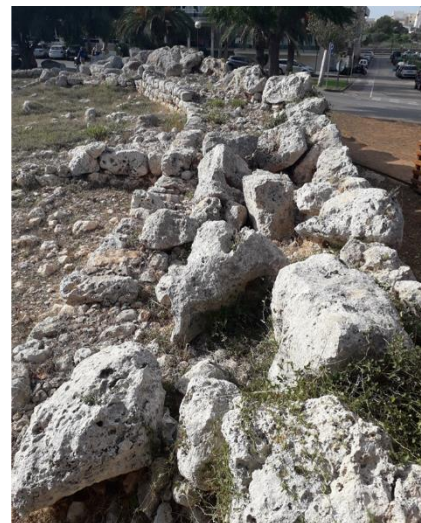


Talaiot s'Illot

If you find yourself on the east coast of the Spanish island of Majorca, Talaiot s'Illot is well worth a visit. Situated in the town of s'Illot, just one street back from the beach and in the middle of a square, occupied by hotels and holidays apartments, it is a prehistoric settlement thought to have been home to around 200 people and which was in use from around 1100 BC until around 123 BC when the Romans reached Majorca.



A number of very useful wooden access walkways have been erected to allow visitors to get an overview of various parts the site.



The s'Illot settlement is one of the most important sites in the Talayotic and post-Talayotic culture (850-123 B.C.) both for its monumental variety and its complex and vast historical evolution which starts off in the Bronze Age and reaches the Middle Ages. The archaeological site consists of different buildings surrounding the houses where the community lived.

The main one is the turriform monument (pictured below), a community building from the late Bronze Age (1200 – 900 B.C.) which is regarded as the predecessor of the classic circular and square talayots (watchtowers) of the Iron Age.



Around the turriform monument, different areas or rooms were later added, where some of the inhabitants of s'Illot probably lived. Among these structure is a kidney-shaped room which was excavated between the 1960,s and 1970,s and has become one of the reference models for houses in the Talayotic era.

The other structures on the site include a circular outer enclosure, which has been traditionally interpreted as a talayot: a surrounding wall (above right) preserved in fragments which joins different areas and two horseshoe shaped structure located east of the wall that are typologically related to sanctuaries which were excavated between 2014 & 2016.

Furthermore in the southern part of the settlement, which is closest to the sea, there is a network of structures that are set around a circular space which has yet to be excavated

One word of caution: when I visited, the footpaths around the site were very rough underfoot, but new information boards were erected during the week I was there so it maybe that plans are afoot to upgrade the access paths. Access is free and guided visits can be arranged for two euros.



<http://arqueomallorca.com/en/ficha/sillot/>

Alan Gifford

CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions to future issues should be sent to the Newsletter Editor – Alan Gifford, 33 Crawford Avenue, Lenzie, G66 5HW (0141 578 1285) alangifford@ntlworld.com

Contributions are published in good faith. Views expressed by individual contributors are not necessarily those of Glasgow Archaeological Society or its Council. It is assumed that Contributors have obtained all necessary consent from other parties or Organisations to whom reference is made.

Material can be supplied by "hard copy" but email attachment is preferred (Word) to save retyping! Photographs and drawings are welcome (png or jpg format).

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Members are reminded of the Society's Policy under this Act.

Members' details are held electronically in computer and are used solely for administrative purposes of the Society. Details are not provided to any outside body other than Edinburgh University Press for the purpose of distribution of the Scottish Archaeological Journal.

Any member who wishes to exercise the right to have his or her name excluded from the database should contact Margaret Gardiner, the Membership Secretary

Electronic Communication

It is our Policy to use E-mail communication where possible reminding members of the forthcoming lecture, other events of interest and to distribute *A Touch of GAS* and inform members of events that arise between issues.

We would urge members if possible to subscribe which can be done through the website. Council accepts that members may be either unable or unwilling to receive *E-Bulletins* (it is astonishing how quickly one's "Inbox" fills up!) and that is their right. We can assure members that they will not be disadvantaged by not subscribing inasmuch as they will continue to receive twice-yearly Newsletters.

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