

# EDINBURGH ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SOCIETY

Scottish Charity No. SC006520

## News

Issue 192 – March 2013



### SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

2013 subscriptions are now overdue. If you are one of the twenty-four 2012 members who have not so far renewed their membership, and wish to do so, please send your renewal subscription in as soon as possible, or pay at the next lecture meeting on 10 April. Single membership is £15.00 (country and concessions £10.00), the corresponding family rates being £22.50 and £15.00.

### April lecture meeting



At our April lecture meeting, on Wednesday 10 April at 23a Fettes Row, the topic for Dr Stephen Carter's talk will be *Wind Farms: Good or Bad News for Archaeology?* Do these massive turbines, and the roads and cables required to service them, destroy archaeology, or are they enabling us to discover new information from sites which would otherwise go uninvestigated? Dr Carter, a former President of Archaeology Scotland and a founding director of Headland Archaeology Ltd will present his analysis of this controversial topic.

### May lecture meeting

The last lecture before our summer break is on Tuesday 14 May, when James Simpson will be talking about the restoration of Penicuik House. Mr Simpson's architectural practice, Simpson and Brown, is supervising the consolidation of the burnt out shell, familiar to many members from the geophysical surveys we have undertaken beside the house to find the foundations of its predecessor. This talk coincides with an opportunity for members to train in building recording at Penicuik House – see page 4.

## **Glenmorangie Annual Lecture: *Art and Archaeology: Material Engagements***

This year's lecture is to be given on 11 April at the National Museum of Scotland by Professor Colin Renfrew (Lord Renfrew of Kaimsthorn), the distinguished and highly regarded archaeologist (former Disney Professor at the University of Cambridge) and Member of the House of Lords. In his 2003 book *Figuring it out: the parallel visions of artists and archaeologists* he explored some of the insights to be gained from studying points of contact between the disciplines of contemporary art and archaeology. Professor Renfrew will reflect back from an archaeologist's point of view and explore the exciting and enlightening ways archaeologists can benefit through creating a dialogue with contemporary art, artists and practice.

Doors open 6:15pm for a complimentary glass of Glenmorangie Original. Lecture starts at 7pm. Tickets £6 (£5 for concessions and NMS members). [Book tickets online](#) or call 0300 123 6789.

## **Underworld: the use of caves, rock shelters and underground places during the Scottish Iron Age**

This one-day seminar to be held on Saturday 27th April at the Highland Council Chamber in Inverness will focus on recent work undertaken at two Highland sites; High Pasture Cave and Fiscavaig Rock Shelter, both on the Isle of Skye. High Pasture Cave is one of the most important Iron Age ritual sites excavated in Britain. Amongst a host of discoveries, archaeologists found the remains of what is believed to be the earliest stringed instrument ever found in Western Europe. The results of the most recent research into the two sites will be presented at the seminar. Places are free, so please book early, by contacting Highland Council Historic Environment Team (01463 702504 or [archaeology@highland.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@highland.gov.uk))

## **Scottish Society for Northern Studies - *Early Mediaeval Meikle***

This day conference will be held on Saturday 13 April, 2013 in Kinloch Memorial Hall, Meikle, at 10.00 a.m. Speakers include Mark Hall (Perth Museum), Nick Evans (University of Edinburgh), Elizabeth Pierce (University of Glasgow), Martin Goldberg (National Museums of Scotland) and Peter Drummond (University of Glasgow). Anna Ritchie will conduct a tour of Meikle Museum, Kirkyard and Sculptured Stones. Full details at [www.ssns.org.uk](http://www.ssns.org.uk)

Conference fee (includes light lunch): SSNS Members: £18; Non-Members: £23; Registered Students: £8. Includes entry to Meikle Museum. Friends of Historic Scotland should bring their membership cards.

Bookings to Gillian Zealand, 6 Kirk Road, Fowles, Dundee DD2 5SB (01382 581152 [agzealand@btinternet.com](mailto:agzealand@btinternet.com)).

## **Trimontium Trust Spring Lectures**

Thursday 18 April - Dr Ciara Clarke (*AOC Archaeology*) The Lewisvale Park Altars Project: 'The unconquered Sun, and partner.'

Thursday 25 April - Dr Matt Symonds (*Editor, Current Archaeology*) 'Doomed to fail, or failed tactics? Roman fortlets in SW Scotland.'

Thursday 2 May - Colin Wallace (*University of Liverpool*) 'Headhunters in Roman Iron Age Scotland.'

## **Flodden 1513**

Flodden 1513 is the project to commemorate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Flodden. There is a host of events in the Borders, on both sides of the Tweed, throughout the year, including many in April and May. For full details see [www.flodden1513.com](http://www.flodden1513.com).

### Rosie Wells 1949-2013



With the death of Rosie Wells on 3 March after a long battle with cancer, the Society has lost a good friend and benefactor. Rosie, originally a teacher of English, was latterly Head of English at Marling School, Stroud, Gloucestershire. Following retirement, she and her husband Dr John Wells moved to Armadale in 2004, where she immediately became involved in the local community.

Rosie was the driving force behind *Rosie's Community and Heritage Website* – [www.armadale.org.uk](http://www.armadale.org.uk) - and with John played a major role in the History of Armadale Association.

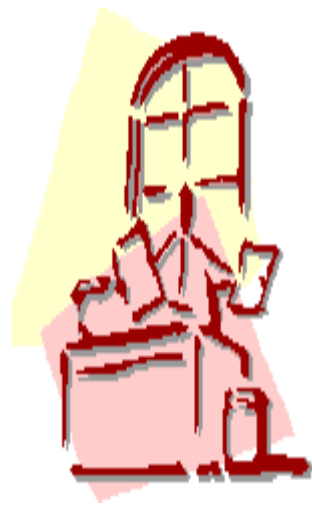
Their broadening interest in matters archaeological led Rosie and John to found the West Lothian Archaeological Group, followed by the West Lothian Archaeological Trust. Their pioneering and innovative use of pole- and kite-mounted cameras for aerial photography of archaeological sites gained widespread recognition in archaeological circles.

It was through Rosie and John that the Society became involved in surveys and excavation at Ogilface Castle, Stand Hill and Gormyre Hill.

Our condolences go to John, son Cade and daughter Heidi in their loss. The website [www.armadale.org.uk/rosieobit.htm](http://www.armadale.org.uk/rosieobit.htm) is a fitting tribute to the very full life of a vibrant lady, always helpful, cheerful and keen to be involved in new activity.

### **NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

**Would you like to become Editor of the Society's Newsletter?**



**The only skills required are the ability to use Microsoft Word or a similar program, and a passing acquaintance with spelling and grammar. Most of the content is provided by members or collated from e-mails.**

**I'll be happy to mentor you through the first few issues, and I'll retain responsibility for printing and distribution. We publish five issues each year, at the end of January, March, May, July and September.**

**If you think you may be interested and want to find out more about it, please contact me – details at the end of this issue.**

**THE EDITOR**

### **Penicuik House Project – Training in Building Surveying**

The Society has been offered a number of places on this course, which will run from Monday 13 May until Friday 17 May 2013, 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. Attendance on the Monday is a must for health and safety reasons, and also comprises the introduction to the project, including buildings archaeology. Tuesday to Friday covers building drawing, recording and photography, plus some digging. Although desirable, it is not necessary to attend the full week. However, depending on the number of applications, to go for less than the full week might exclude others who could attend full time. There is no formal charge for this training, but any donations to the Penicuik House Project would be gratefully received. If interested, please contact Alan Calder (01383 723523 or [alancalder@btinternet.com](mailto:alancalder@btinternet.com)).

### **'VIKINGS' National Museum of Scotland to 12 May 2013**

NMS is the only UK venue for this outstanding exhibition of more than 500 objects from the world-renowned collections of the Swedish History Museum in Stockholm. By bringing together unique objects with new research and hands-on displays, the exhibition reveals who the Vikings really were, and creates a vivid picture of how they lived more than 1,000 years ago. [www.nms.ac.uk/our\\_museums/national\\_museum/upcoming\\_exhibitions/vikings.aspx](http://www.nms.ac.uk/our_museums/national_museum/upcoming_exhibitions/vikings.aspx)

### **Haddington's History Society**

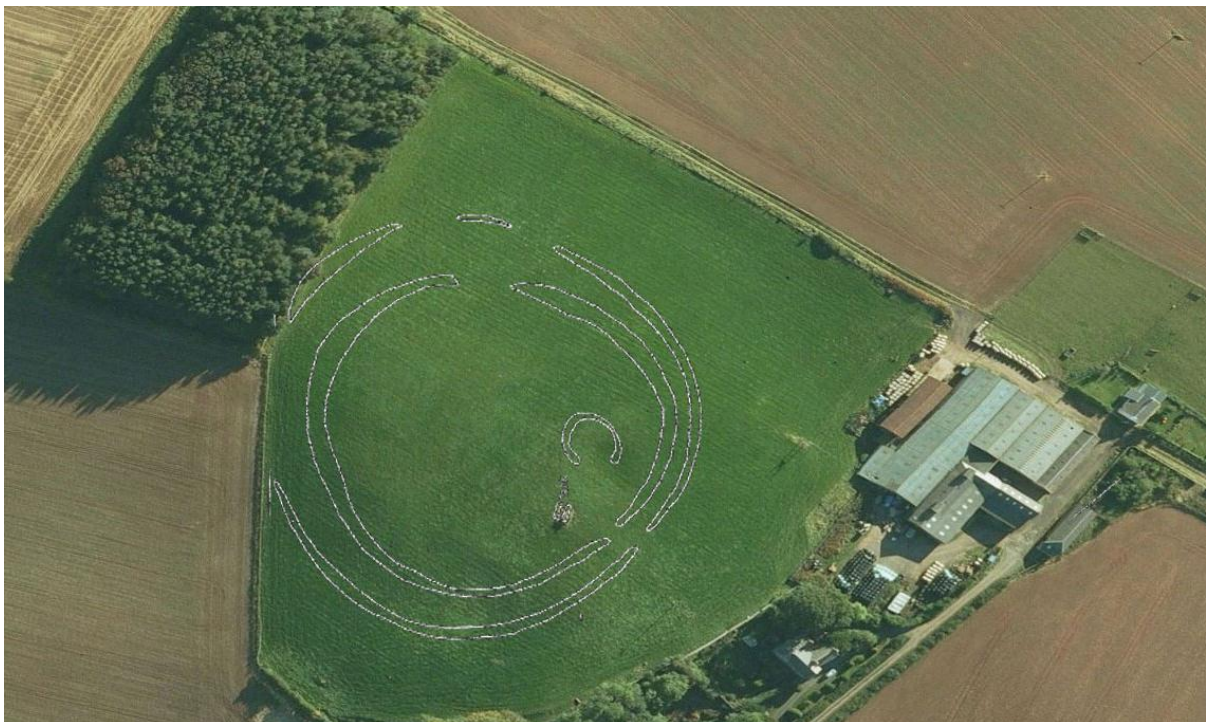
On Thursday 18 April at 7.30 pm in Haddington Town House members of Haddington's History Society will be presenting their findings from their archive research on the convent and village at what is described as Haddington Abbey. In anticipation of our geophysical survey of the Abbey site, the History Society has generously invited us to come along free of charge. Please let their treasurer know on arrival so that she doesn't ask you for the £2 non-members fee! Our survey has been delayed by adverse weather slowing crop growth, but is now forecast for later this month, possibly 20 or 27 April, the precise date to be intimated by the usual e-mail alert in due course.

### **Rhind lectures**

The Rhind Lectures will be given this year from Friday 3 May at 6pm to Sunday 5 May at Royal Society of Edinburgh, 22-26 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2PQ by Professor Richard Fawcett, University of St Andrews, on *The Church Architecture of Late Mediaeval Scotland*.

## Sheriffside

The Editor has had, by courtesy of David Connolly, a sneak preview of the draft report on Rampart Scotland's second season at Sheriffside. The site is a double-ditched cropmark enclosure seen in an aerial photograph in a sloping field above Sheriffside Farm, near Gifford, East Lothian. The original aim of the project was to add detail to the existing rectified aerial photograph and to provide an assessment of the nature of the surrounding archaeological remains and a date for it. The first season consisted of a geophysical survey by the Society and hand excavation by Rampart of a single trench over the cropmark outer enclosure ditch to recover dating evidence. The features revealed by the geophysics did not coincide with the cropmark evidence, and the trench failed to find the cropmark features, instead identifying a terraced structure. A radiocarbon date of  $2030 \pm 30$  BP, was obtained from a piece of alder species from this terrace, which when calibrated to two sigma (92.4%) gave a date of 120 BC to AD 60.



The second season of the project from 6 - 9 April 2012 examined another portion of the putative enclosure with the aim of establishing whether the rectified aerial photograph image was wrong or if the terrace had destroyed the enclosure at this location. The Society returned to carry out further survey work, while Rampart undertook excavation of two further trenches. The excavations revealed a series of ditch features and post-holes from which charcoal samples for dating were recovered. No artefacts were recovered.

Our survey clearly showed differential features across the study area. There are clear results showing both the modern quarry dug into the western slope of the hill and the pump house visible in the photograph. While the geophysical plot clearly shows the circular ditches of the cropmark enclosure, their outline as defined by the plot is clearly different to that of the rectified aerial photograph and it may be that the rectification aligned the wrong set of features with each other and translocated the position of the enclosure.

The main trench excavated by Rampart ran perpendicular across the ditches as indicated by the rectified plot of the cropmark. The trench identified three broad sets of features: two

sets of pairs of ditches orientated roughly north-west south-east (Ditches 1, 2, 3 & 4) and a group of post-holes lying between them. Ditch 1 comprised a very substantial ditch feature measuring 2.7m deep and c. 9m wide, with an even, steep profile on the outer edge and a stepped profile on the inner. It was filled with three highly compacted and homogenised fills: the basal fill comprising the redeposited natural subsoil which had collapsed immediately following excavation of the ditch and measuring about 0.22m thick: the middle fill comprising a highly homogenised mid-brown gravel up to 1.7m thick from which was recovered alder/hazel charcoal giving a radiocarbon date of 1760±30 BP which when calibrated to two sigma gives a date AD 211-384; and the upper fill comprising a highly homogenised silty clay fill measuring up to 1.25m thick. Ditch 1 cut both the natural subsoil and an earlier feature, Ditch 2

Immediately to the south-west of Ditches 1 and 2 lay six post-hole or pits the latter three of which were in a rough east-west line. Only one was excavated, a sub-oval post-hole with vertical sides and a flat base, 0.50m by 0.32m and up to 0.32m deep. The fill comprised a dark brown silty clay with three sub-rounded packing stones and a dense charcoal layer. Oak charcoal from this feature was dated to 2215±30 BP, which when calibrated to two sigma gives a date 378-202 BC. Oak charcoal recovered from Ditch 3 gave a date of 2475±30 BP, calibrated to 766-486 BC. These features are interpreted as representing either the remains of box ramparts or palisades.

In summary, the features identified appear to reflect various phases of enclosure: ditches and lines of palisades or box ramparts over a potentially 1000-year period. The radiocarbon dates do not date the features, rather they date charcoal producing activity that took place in the immediate environs of the features and which subsequently became incorporated into the fills of the features. The radiocarbon dates from both seasons indicate five broad periods of activity:

- 1) c766-486 BC: post-hole Group 2 and Ditch 3;
- 2) c378-202 BC: post-hole Group 1 and possibly Ditch 2;
- 3) c120 BC-AD 60: scooped terraced settlement;
- 4) cAD 126-260: Ditch 4;
- 5) cAD 211-384: Ditch 1.

These dates clearly indicate a shifting pattern from light defence to open settlement to more heavily defended settlement, although both the duration and nature of the associated activity within the various phases of enclosure are unclear.

It is hoped to return to Sheriffside in 2014 to investigate further.