

PAS

Peeblesshire Archaeological Society

Newsletter

January 2026

Uncovering The Tweed - Colin Bell looks back on his year as a volunteer with the project

New Year Armchair Photo Quiz for Amateur Archaeologists - Gillian Brown tests your local knowledge

From Hundleshope to Heyshott, Part Two - Trevor Cowie continues his look at the archaeological contribution of Miss Phoebe Keef

2025-26 Lecture Programme

**THE JANUARY LECTURE FEATURES THE GALLOWAY
HOARD - DETAILS ON PAGE 19**



Welcome

Colin McLean, Newsletter Editor

A very good New Year to you and yours! My first task is to apologise to regular contributor David Bartholomew for having incorrectly attributed his article and photographs in the December issue - that was entirely my error.

Some of you will have noticed that I am a photographer and that my interest (and my studies in the very distant past) are primarily in historic buildings rather than archaeology. It is more common therefore for my cameras to be pointed at something sticking up from the ground rather than something buried beneath it.

I have visited a few historic piles in the last month. A disappointment was Loch Doon Castle. That it was relocated, doubtless very carefully, by the HM Office of Works in 1933 to accommodate the raising of Loch Doon as part of the Galloway Hydro Electric Scheme, seemed to me to render it sterile; detached from its historic context. I didn't photograph it.

More interesting, to my eyes certainly, was the nearly derelict shepherd's cottage at Old Kirkhope, further up the valley from where Colin Bell and others were surveying (see pp 4-7). I have more to find out before

writing it up further, but I found the abandoned baby's cot especially poignant.

On many occasions over the past two decades, driving the A72 up the Tweed Valley towards Walkerburn, I have noticed Elibank Castle, perched high on the southern slope, and I visited late in December. It is very dilapidated, and a prominent sign warns you to keep out, so I did, using the drone to afford me some safe views. It originates in the late 16th century but was ruinous by the early 18th. Virtually all decorative features, such as there were, have disappeared, but there are traces of extensive terraced gardens.

Light is everything for good photography, and early January has offered some spectacular days, with strong low-angled sunlight. Lyne Kirk was one place that seemed to literally glow.

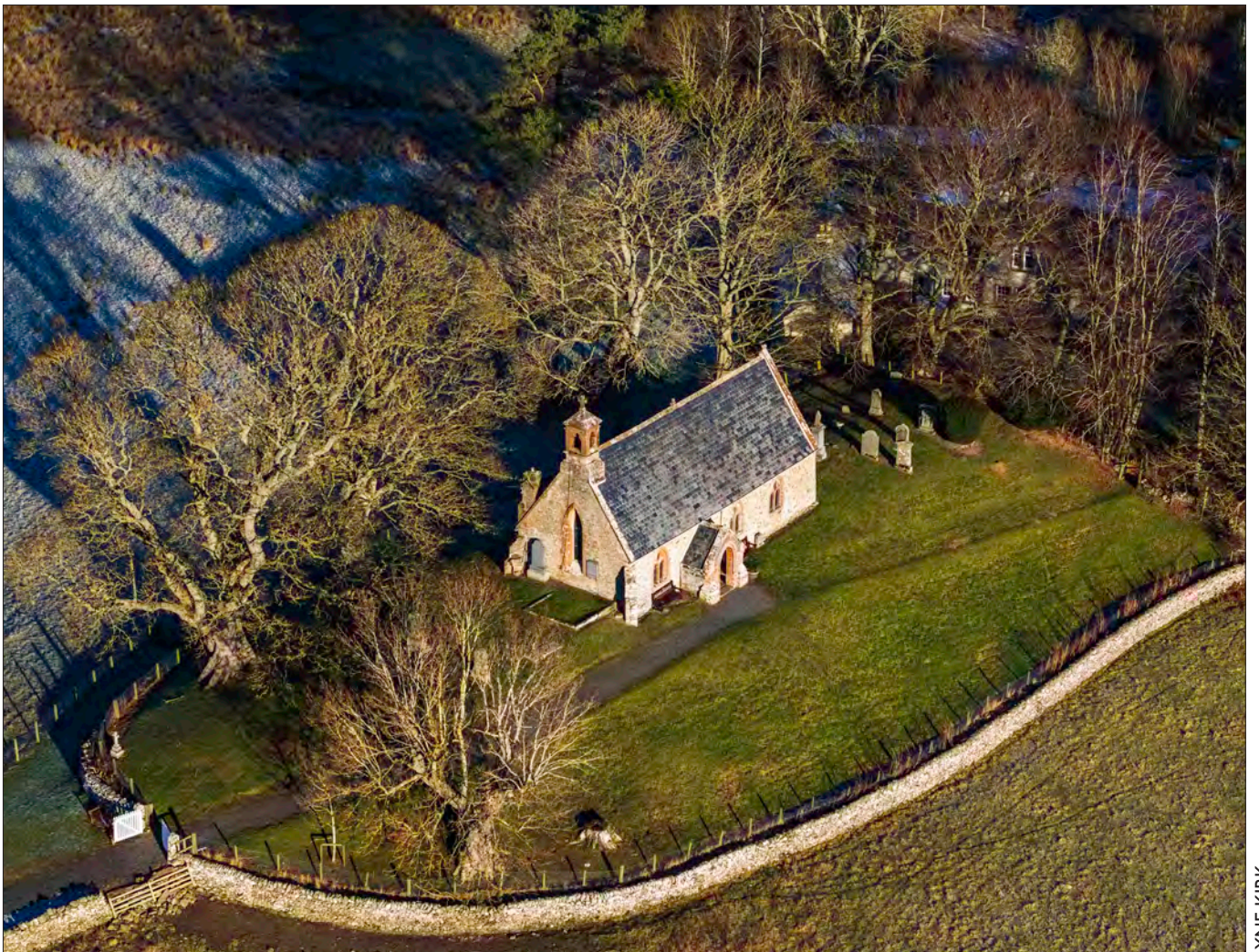
The Newsletter wouldn't exist without the hard work and patience of the various authors, and for their contributions to this issue I'd like to thank Colin Bell, Gillian Brown, Piers Dixon, Trevor Cowie and Richard Welander. It's your Newsletter and you too could contribute by writing a piece and/or sending in photographs of somewhere interesting you have visited or have been reading about. ■



ELIBANK CASTLE



OLD KIRKHOPE COTTAGE



LYNE KIRK

My Year as a Volunteer on the Uncovering The Tweed Project

Colin Bell

In October 2025, Graeme Cavers of AOC Archaeology presented to PAS, giving us an update on the progress of the 3-year Uncovering the Tweed project, part of the wider Destination Tweed initiative. As someone recently retired from a career in financial services, but keen to pursue my interest in archaeology, this community-based archaeology programme came along at just the perfect time. I thought it might be interesting for others to hear about my experiences during my first year participating in the project as a volunteer.

The starting point was looking for undiscovered (or under-recorded) areas of archaeology on the project's LiDAR map, covering the area roughly 2km each side of the Tweed from source to sea and extending south of Moffat. AOC laid on some online LiDAR training sessions to get people up to speed with the concepts and capabilities of the software, including how to download and analyse tiles from the Scottish Remote Sensing Portal. I have to say, this became quite compulsive over

map and I've found and flagged at least a dozen likely, but previously unrecorded, Bronze Age or Iron Age settlements.

My first ever experience of an archaeological dig was in October 2024 at Adie's Brae, a scooped settlement at Corehead north of Moffat. Two large trenches had been opened and I was set to work on the lower of the two where the rings of a couple of roundhouses were identified. One volunteer uncovered a beautiful example of a packed post-hole which extended down one metre.



PERFECT PACKED POST-HOLE, ADIE'S BRAE

I sectioned and excavated what initially appeared to be a fireplace and, below it, a couple of kilos of charcoal and burnt bone. It was a jaw-dropping moment for me during Graeme's update when he divulged that the lab results showed that the bone fragments were not in fact the remains of someone's meal from 2,000 years ago but rather a human cremation burial! My last of four days on the dig was also back-fill day – rookie mistake! Unsurprisingly, the volunteer count shrank substantially that day. Graeme and Katie from AOC, myself and another volunteer managed to back-fill 25 tonnes of stone, soil and turf by hand and spade. None of us thought we would finish that day but it's amazing what you can do if you just get on with it.

In January and February 2025, the project moved on to geophysical surveys of the Easter Happrew Roman Fort and the interior of the much more distinct Lyne Roman Fort on the other side of Lyne Water. Although Lyne had been extensively excavated in 1901, it had never had a geophysical survey, so this held out the potential



ADIE'S BRAE DIG, COREHEAD

the dark winter nights as you got your eye in for tell-tale shapes and features of common targets. Just one more river tributary before bed...! So far over 250 new sites have been logged on the project's online LiDAR



INTERPRETING THE REMAINS AT ADIE'S BRAE

TAKING RESISTIVITY READINGS,
EASTER HAPPREW



to add new information to aid the understanding of the fort and how it was used. We spent around four days at each site with a resistivity meter frame whilst AOC staff covered the sites with a magnetometry rig. With Dan Shiel, contracting for AOC, we got very adept at marking out 30m squares with 2m wide channels and taking resistivity readings every metre up and down the

of my mind. On the last day at Easter Happrew, Katie O'Connell of AOC arrived with some printouts with the results of the survey work so far and it was great to see that familiar playing card shape of a Roman fort appearing below what seemed like a very innocuous sheep field. An intriguing and unexpected discovery was what appears to be an enclosed shape outside the main fort entrance – some sort of temple site perhaps? - a possible reason to go back again and investigate some more!

Also in January, AOC organised a lithics workshop in Paxton House run by Kristian Pedersen and Torben Ballin from Denmark. Torben showed us his collection of Danish lithics – platform cores, blades, scrapers, arrowheads etc – and handed each of them around so we could get a closer look and feel of them. He explained that Danish lithics are larger than their equivalents in Scotland because flint is found there in larger pieces. Flint is not found naturally around the Tweed – any flint has been brought here from further south and is typically pebble sized. Being a reductive process, knapping to



A WORKOUT WITH THE MAGNETOMETRY FRAME, EASTER HAPPREW

channels before moving to the next square. The beeps from the resistivity meter became quite hypnotic and I went to bed each night with that ringing around the back

make lithic tools produces smaller end products if the starting piece is smaller to begin with. The ultimate aim of the workshop was, firstly, to equip us with knowledge to spot lithics on the ground when field or riverbank walking and secondly to help categorise the lithics found over the years by John Home Robertson in his fields at Paxton, in a narrow strip of land between

UPSTANDING RAMPARTS, LYNE ROMAN FORT



TEST-PITTING, PAXTON, BERWICKSHIRE

the Tweed and the Whiteadder Water.

In November we returned to Paxton to continue the test-pitting of a field in this area to help to try to identify where the lithics might be most concentrated. The first day was wet and curtailed early because the mud was sticking to everything and making riddling impossible – we were probably missing more objects than we were finding. Day 2 was dry and everything was so much easier. I was delighted to find a fragment of late Mesolithic flint blade that had likely been broken

BROKEN FLINT BLADE FRAGMENT



by the plough but where you could clearly see a couple of areas where it had been struck around 8,000 years ago to create an edge.

In May, AOC organised a survey of a probable moated site on a river terrace at Fairnilee near Yair Bridge. This previously unknown site was identified on LiDAR and was actually very visible in the corner of a grazing field. I was fortunate to have a go using the magnetometry rig, painting in segments on the digital display as I pushed it up and down the field. We also carried out a plane table survey of the site, backed up by accurate GPS plots of the ditches and mounds. A later dig confirmed the likelihood of a moated site and unearthed a nice lithic arrow head.

In July, I participated in walkover surveys at Corehead, Moffat and at Hamilton Hill in Peebles which aimed to verify on the ground some of the sites identified during the LiDAR work. Near Corehead we surveyed the walls of a structure situated beside a diverted burn, as well as a post-Medieval turfed enclosure. At Hamilton Hill we looked at a couple of probable unrecorded Iron Age forts/settlements, including a possible multi-vallate fort sitting just above Neidpath Castle, as well as a rectangular post-Medieval turf enclosure.

Finally, in December, I helped out with a photogrammetry and structured light scanning (SLS) survey of the stone, cross and cross base at Kirkhope in the Manor Valley, near to the spot where the famous Coninie Stone was found. It was a chance to learn some new skills of how to record images of upstanding archaeology which can then be converted into a 3D archivable representation that can be rotated and examined from all directions off-site. It was a freezing day but warm company!

All in all, it has been a great year for learning about local archaeology and about the practical aspects of archaeological techniques. My thanks to the many local



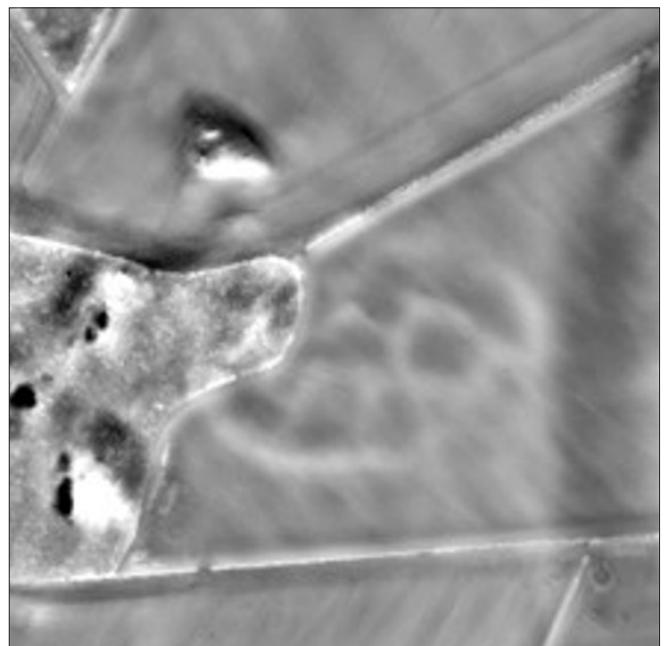
SURVEYING AT KIRKHOPE, MANOR VALLEY
COLIN McLEAN

volunteers I have met and the archaeologists at AOC Archaeology who so willingly shared their expertise and experience as part of the project, especially Graeme Cavers, Cathy McIvor, Katie O'Connell, Jamie Humble, Kai Wallace, Kayt Armstrong and Dan Shiel. Roll on 2026! ■

All photographs provided by Colin Bell, unless otherwise credited. LiDAR images from the Scottish Government Remote Sensing Portal



POSSIBLE RING-DITCH HOUSES, AULDTON, NEAR MOFFAT. PERHAPS FROM THE 1ST CENTURY BCE.



IRON AGE FORT ABOVE HAYSTOUN, PEEBLES

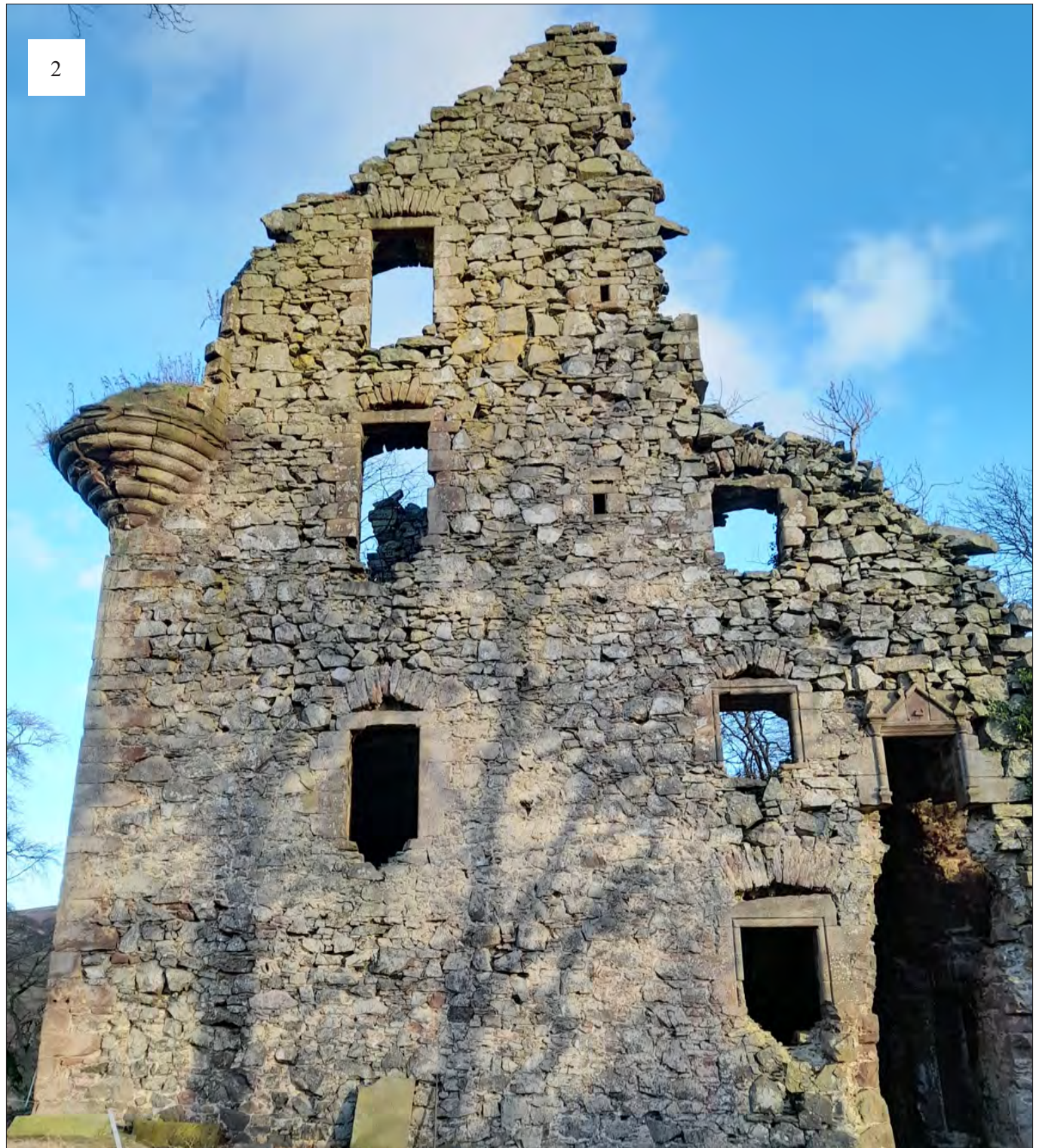


SURVEYING THE CROSS AND CROSS-BASE AT KIRKHOPE,
MANORVALLEY @ COLIN McLEAN

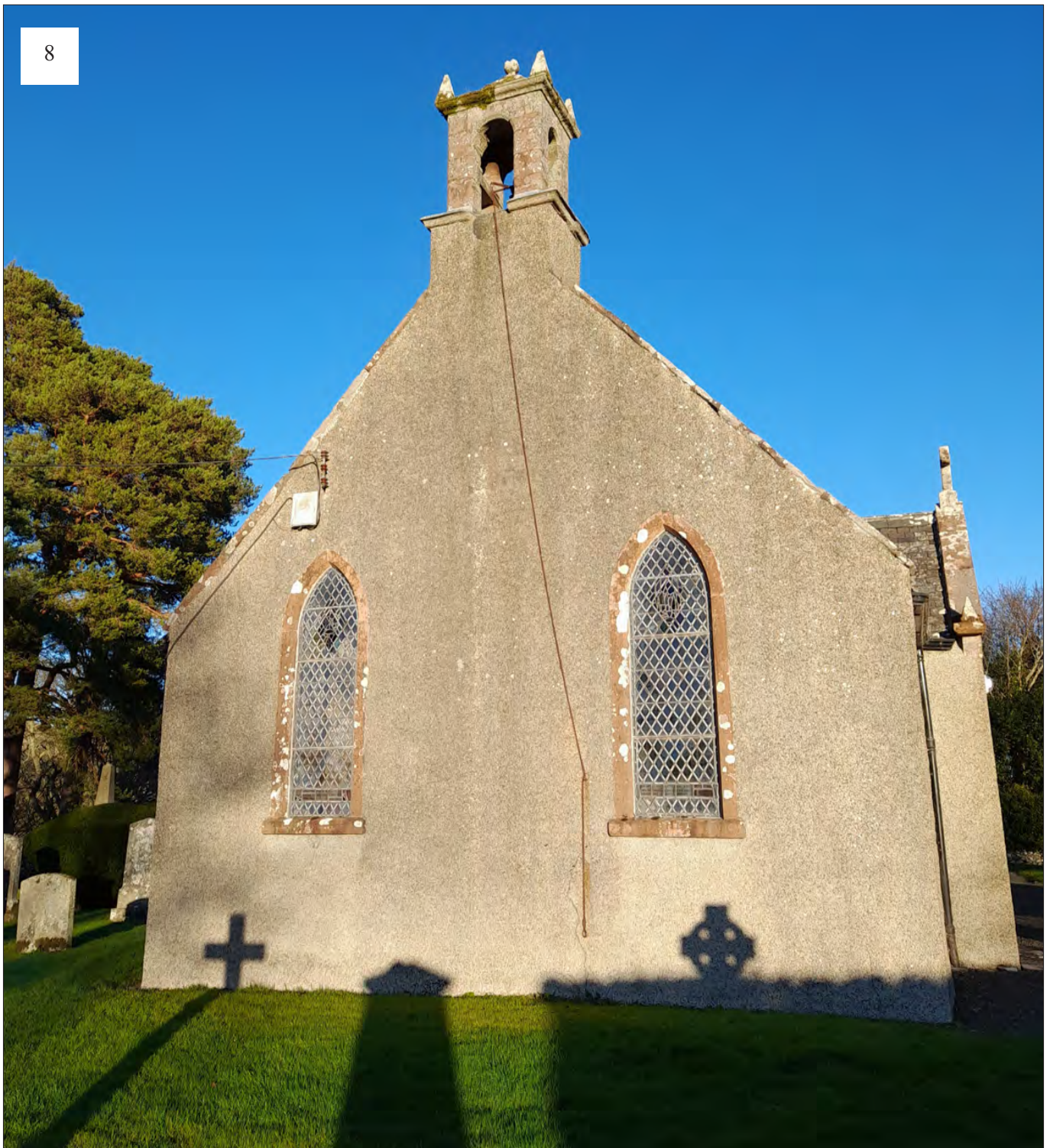
New Year Armchair Photo Quiz for Amateur Archaeologists

Gillian Brown

Can you identify what and where each of these is in Peeblesshire? You might have walked or driven past them once or many times but a crisp January day might be the perfect opportunity to get out and have a closer look. (Answers on pages 16-17)







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10



From Hundleshope to Heyshott: In Search of Miss Keef (Part Two)

Trevor Cowie

This article is continued from the PAS Newsletter December 2025

From the Southern Uplands to the South Downs. In our December Newsletter, I explained how I had been inspired to find out more about the seemingly unknown Miss P A M Keef who had carried out excavations in 1939 on the prehistoric fort on Chester Hill, Hundleshope, to the south of Peebles.

Drawing on a variety of sources of information, much of it not previously published, it has been possible to construct the outlines of a biography. In the first part of my article, I sketched out the main episodes of Phoebe Alice Marion Keef's story from her birth in 1895 to an army family based in India through to the development of her interest in archaeology during the 1930s. Miss Keef's single season of excavation at Chester Hill on the eve of World War 2 was to be her only recorded foray north of the Border and over time she was to become a forgotten figure in Scottish archaeology; by contrast, she was to become relatively well-known in Sussex, the county which was to become her home for the rest of her life.

Miss Keef and Sussex archaeology. I ended the previous instalment by referring to the small collection of worked flints from Blackdown, near Haslemere, which Phoebe Keef donated to the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland in February 1939 (Fig 1). In a way, this small collection of flints is a token of what was to become her abiding passion - the archaeology of Sussex. During the early 1930s, in addition to working as a volunteer on various excavations, she appears to have developed a keen interest in fieldwalking (or *surface artefact collection* as it would be termed today); a few years later she went on to publish a short note on 'Surface Flint-Chipping Sites in West Sussex' while a longer paper described the results of a combination of surface collecting and small-scale excavations which she had carried out on several sites on Bedham Hill, Pulborough (Fig 2).

However, her interests were not confined to prehistoric sites and lithic collections. As noted previously (see December newsletter), Phoebe Keef had worked before the outbreak of war at the significant Roman villa complex at Angmering, near Littlehampton. Those excavations (in 1938 and 1939) had been directed by Mortimer Wheeler's protégé Leslie Scott - and in Scott's report on the results of the first season, Phoebe Keef is singled out for thanks for her exhaustive catalogue of the Roman tiles and bricks. However, their relationship subsequently became strained after Keef undertook further excavations on the site in 1941 without



FIG.1: FLINTS FROM BLACKDOWN, SUSSEX © HUGO ANDERSON-WHYMARK, NMS

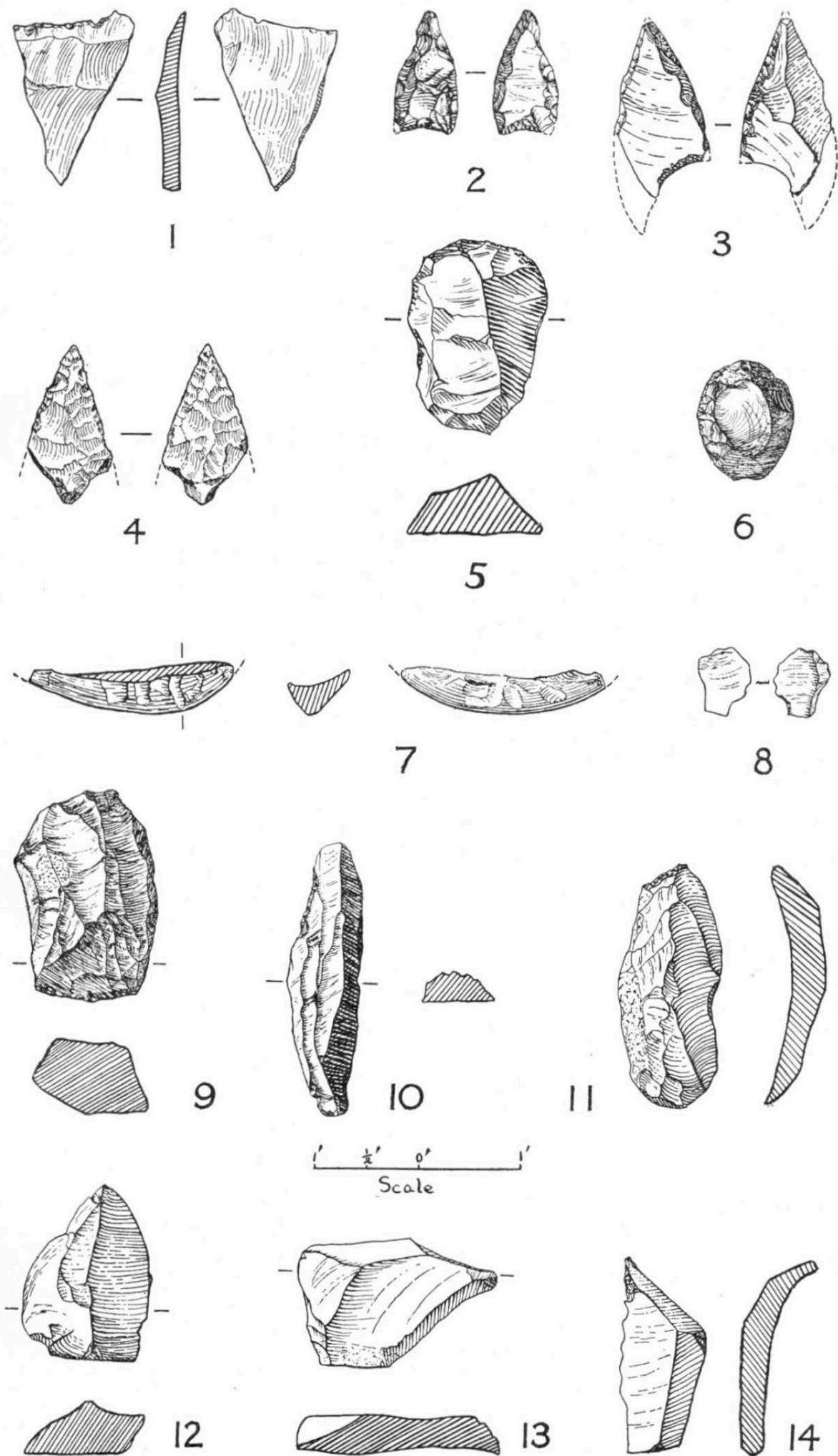


FIG.2: FLINTS FROM SITE 1, BEDHAM MANOR FARM



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informing Scott, who was by then away on war service. At the time, as she was to note in her subsequent interim report, Phoebe Keef herself was working at the Hospital in Littlehampton, but was given leave of absence to carry out the excavations.

In the immediate post-war years, Miss Keef's name is associated with the important Early Iron Age fort on Harting Beacon, where she opened a number of trenches during the years 1945-1947. Although investigations by Owen Bedwin in the 1970s were later to result in reinterpretation of her work, her excavation of one of the hillfort gateways produced two spectacular finds in the shape of a pair of Late Bronze Age gold ornaments of the type known as lock rings (Fig 3), now back in private ownership having formerly been on loan to the British Museum. Other publications from this time reflect the width of her interests: they range from records of flint arrowheads at Trotton and pottery from Didling to a note on a Roman road on Bepton Down - all places in her West Sussex stamping ground.

Working with the West Sussex Archaeology Group, which she organised and ran, she excavated various sites in the 1950s and early 1960s. Unfortunately a number of the sites that she investigated were left unpublished and her notebooks and finds subsequently lost; however in some instances her site records have survived, permitting reassessment and posthumous publication - as in the case of a 4th century AD Roman farmstead at Lamb's Lea, West Sussex excavated by Phoebe Keef in 1953-54 and eventually published in summary form by Oliver Gilkes in 1990.

However, one of her more successful digs at this time involved the excavation in 1960-1961 of an early Mesolithic hunter-gatherer camp site on Iping Common to the west of Midhurst. Significantly perhaps, collaboration with up-and-coming lithic and palaeoenvironmental specialists in the shape of

John Wymer and Geoffrey Dimbleby meant that this significant site was fully published to a high standard in the Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society. Phoebe Keef had been a member of the Prehistoric Society since 1949 and I rather suspect she would have relished the wider recognition this finally brought her.

Miss Keef in later life. Despite making various enquiries, there seem to be no recorded photographs of Phoebe Keef herself and instead we have to conjure up an image of her based on words alone. During the late 1940s and 1950s she seems to have lived in various addresses in the Bepton area; however she subsequently moved to a cottage in Heyshott. It is in this area of West Sussex that older residents still have memories of Miss Keef.

In particular, the recollections of her former immediate neighbour Pearl O'Leary provide fascinating glimpses into Phoebe Keef's character. Recorded in the course of an excellent community archaeology project which ran from 2014 to 2017 under the auspices of the South Downs National Park, several of Pearl's recollections are recounted by James McInnes in *Secrets of the High Woods*, the publication which resulted from that project.

According to James, 'what was fascinating was the way she invented an alternative family history for herself when chatting to people who dug with her in the 1960s. As one said during an oral history interview: "she was a small lady who had iron-grey hair and rosy cheeks. She had a posh voice (she said she went to Roedean), was softly spoken and very chatty. She used to hum a lot and sing under her breath. She always had a long-haired dog on a long piece of string, never a lead. Her father had cut her off without even the proverbial shilling because of her interest in archaeology and her refusal to be presented at court as her sisters were.'" However, Miss Keef actually went to school in Wimbledon, her father had died when she was three years old, she didn't

have any sisters and wasn't disowned! (James McInnes in *Secrets of the High Woods*, p87)

In another chapter, one of the other contributors to the project, Sarah Stickland recounted how, according to Pearl O'Leary, Miss Keef used to walk from Heyshott with her dog to watch the horse racing at Goodwood (a distance of some seven miles!). It seems that Pearl didn't think Miss Keef went in but simply watched over the wall or just enjoyed the general atmosphere.

Despite the absence of any surviving photos, it even seems that Phoebe Keef used to be caught on camera, for according to Pearl "the television cameras [at Goodwood] always used to seem to wait for her, because we used to sit here and watch the racing on the television and just before the racing started, the cameras used to switch to Miss Keef walking along towards the racecourse. First of all you saw the dog and then they used to focus the cameras along this piece of long, long, long string. And at the end of the string was Miss Keef in a very large hat, dressed in a blouse of many colours, or coat of many colours, and a very long skirt right down to her ankles She was one of the characters of the racing in those days". (Sarah Stickland in *Secrets of the High Woods*, p120).

Several previously unpublished snippets of information have also emerged in the course of my enquiries. Eric Holden was a doyen of Sussex archaeology in the mid-20th century: one of his daughters remembers that on one occasion Miss Keef's dog was sick in the back of their father's car while her sister recalls that Miss Keef used to access her cottage by climbing in through one of the windows after losing the key or because the door didn't work. Unsurprisingly, both girls thought she was rather eccentric.

Miss Keef lived in Heyshott (Fig 4) for many years, only moving to Woodberry House, Petworth (apparently then a residential home) the year before her death early in 1979. She was one of the Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland whose deaths were intimated

in the Society's Proceedings for that year: Phoebe Keef had been a Fellow of the Society since 1938, elected shortly before her excavations at Chester Fort.

While I have in a way come back to Hundleshope and my starting point, last words should go to Pearl O'Leary, the lady from Heyshott whose recollections do so much to fill out the picture of Miss Keef:

"Miss Keef . . . used to sit on the side of the trench and she loved a Woodbine cigarette, and she'd sit there puffing away at the Woodbine. And I'd say 'Would you like a cup of tea?' 'No, just a cup of water.' And she used to bring a hunk of brown bread. She wouldn't let me feed her That's all she used to have and then afterwards she used to walk all the way back to Heyshott. So you could see what kind of lady she was, but first and last in her life was archaeology." (James McInnes in *Secrets of the High Woods*, p87).

Acknowledgements

In addition to published sources consulted in the course of compiling this biographical sketch of Phoebe Keef, I have been grateful for assistance received from a number of individuals. My starting point was a very helpful Wikipedia article compiled by Dr James Nevell, while along the way I also received very useful information and potential leads to follow from Dr Jaime Kaminski (Editor, Sussex Archaeological Society). I am also indebted to my cousin Dr Robert Hutcheon for undertaking genealogical research into the Keef family on my behalf. However, my warmest thanks go to Richard Pailthorpe (former Director of the Weald & Downland Museum) for various useful leads and above all to James McInnes who very generously shared the information he had gathered about Miss Keef in the course of the *Secrets of the High Woods* Community Archaeology project. Finally Dr Hugo Anderson-Whymark (National Museums Scotland) and Dr Neil Wilkin (British Museum) very kindly supplied information and images. ■



FIG.4: MISS KEEF'S COTTAGE, HEYSHOTT, SUSSEX ■ RICHARD PAILTHORPE

Armchair Archaeologists

Photo Quiz Solutions

1. "NETHER CAIRN", NORTH MUIR

An impressive prehistoric burial cairn that lies visibly about 137m. north west of the public footpath from West Linton to Garvald along the Pentland Hills trail. According to *RCAHMS Inventory* (1967) this is "*the best preserved example of its kind in the county*". It measures 15m in diameter, 3.7m in height. About 1m outside the present base there are slight indications of a surrounding ditch about 1.8m in width. About 731m. north east is another large burial cairn, "Upper Cairn", about 4.2 metres in height, but its base and flanks have been robbed for stones. These can be viewed on a circular walk starting from West Linton golf course, following signs to Garvald. From Garvald walk south west to Dolphinton, then follow signs back to West Linton along the remains of the Roman road, thought to be built by legions under Agricola about 80AD.

2. DROCHIL CASTLE

It lurks on a tree covered slope behind Drochil Castle Farm, off the B7059, overlooking the confluence of Tarth and Lyne Waters. An impressive ruin now, but described as having been "*one of the most remarkable Renaissance mansions in Scotland*" (*The Buildings of Scotland: Borders*, 2006). Built on a Z-shaped plan it has two opposing circular towers with a rectangular main block on three floors, running E-W. It's supposed that Drochil's design is based on a French model in which rooms were grouped on either side of a central corridor. The first floor principal apartment measured 50ft by 21ft, with windows lighting it along the south side and a substantial fireplace on the north wall. The castle was erected, possibly around 1578, by James, 4th Earl of Morton, Regent of Scotland, but his enjoyment of it was foreshortened by his execution in 1581, accused of complicity in the murder of Lord Darnley, husband of Mary, Queen of Scots.

3. OLD MANOR BRIG

A scheduled monument 1.25 miles WSW of Peebles. It's a single arch, hump back bridge, made of rubble stone, designed by William, Duke of Queensbury, erected in 1702 by his son, Lord William Douglas, Earl of March, at the foot of Manor Sware spanning Manor Water. A stone plaque on the downstream side commemorates this. The Earl of March was allowed to defray the cost of the bridge from the vacant stipend at Manor Church, which at the time was being reconstructed. Look over the bridge for bobbing dippers on the water's edge. Close by, spanning the Tweed is Manor Bridge, a low, five- arched rubble bridge with sandstone ashlar details, built in 1883 to replace a ford.

4. HILLFORT, SOUTH EAST OF EASTER DAWYCK, STOBO

This (NGR: NT 197 372) lies almost hidden by bracken above the John Buchan Way as it climbs from Easter Dawyck Farm toward the stile down to the

Glack. *RCAHMS Inventory* (1967) describes it as Fort and Settlement. *The Atlas of Hillforts of Britain and Ireland* (2024) (<https://hillforts.arch.ox.ac.uk>) notes that it shows evidence of several periods of construction: an outer enclosure and a later inner enclosure. The inner oval enclosure measures 52m E to W and contains four stone-founded round houses. Three further round houses are visible between the ramparts in the ESE. There appears to be an entrance in the NE and in the W. It's not been excavated and is currently grazed by sheep. Worth a visit for the views up and down the Stobo Valley.

5. THE 'SILLER HOLES', LEAD LAW

The clue may be in the hill name! A large group of pits and spoil heaps on the north west face of Lead Law beside the old green road to Stoneypath. The site of medieval lead and silver mines. Although now just humps, bumps and a boggy pond. However, when the pond was excavated in 1993 medieval pottery and fragments of leather shoes and a woollen sleeve were found. These can be seen in the National Museum of Scotland. Legend has it that Mary of Guise, Regent of Scotland 1554-1560, (mother of Mary, Queen of Scots) paid her army with silver from the Siller Holes.

Starting either from West Linton village, or its Golf Club (shorter walk), there is an easy, signposted, circular walk taking the Old Drove Road towards Cauldstane Slap contouring above Lyne Water, going up to Baddingsgill, returning along the single track B road. This goes past the Siller Holes, where there is an information panel.

6. THE GIANT'S STONE, TWEEDSMUIR

A standing stone (described as 5ft 2in. in height in the *RCAHMS Inventory* (1967), but scarcely reaching my waist now) in rough pasture beside the single track road from Tweedsmuir to Menzion farmhouse. It appears smaller because the ground level was raised to improve the road. The Inventory records a large burial cairn 80ft. north west of it on the right bank of the Tweed (partly eroded by the river and early excavations). But forestry hides any visual link. Two other shorter stones stand nearby. The three stones are as vertices of a right angle triangle intersected by the road. However, there may once have been additional stones forming a circle or other alignment subsequently removed for building. Commercial forestry now obscures what must have been an extensive, dramatic view of the upper Tweed. But it still retains a strange spirit of place. (Or perhaps it was being there as a winter sun set and the moon rose.) An interpretation panel describes the site and recounts legends related to the Giant's Grave. Notably of "*a huge and mighty fellow, that robbed all on the way, but was at length from a mount in the overside of the River surprised and shor Death as Tradition goes*"(1715, Alexander Pennecuik).

7. BEE BOLES, WEST LINTON KIRKYARD

These sheltered stone ledges are for semi-circular straw bee skeps. They can be seen, close to the main road, in the south east corner of the older part of the kirk

graveyard. Built into part of the south wall of a late 18th century burial aisle to the Douglasses of Garvaldfoot and the Lawsons of Cairnmuir, and before that part of the garden wall of the old manse, where perhaps there was honey still for tea.

8. DRUMELZIER KIRK, BELL TOWER

The west gable has a distinctive square belfry with a pyramidal cap, four pinnacles and a ball finial. The RCAHMS Inventory (1967) notes that the bell appears to be inscribed 'DRUMELZIER 1745 ?ROR'. 'ROR' may be the initials of a Mr Ormiston of Edinburgh who is said to have recast the bell that year. The church has undergone frequent alterations from an early medieval beginning as a chapel, later becoming a parish church. A "drastic restoration" took place in 1872. A 17th century burial vault for James Tweedie (said to have been killed in 1612 in single combat by the Laird of Dawyck) lies at the east end of the church. On the hillside above the kirk looms the remains of the Tweedie's Tinnis Castle.

9. LOUR FERMTOUN, TOWER AND HILLFORT

These footings are viewed from the green road that starts at Dawyck Mill, by Stobo, and continues up to the saddle at Dead Wife's Grave and down into Manor Valley by Posso. The *Atlas of Hillforts of Britain and Ireland* (2024) describes the site as a D-shaped contour fort, backing onto an escarpment above the Lour burn. Excavations in 1959-60 found a fragment of a glass bangle dating from the 1st or 2nd centuries AD and the upper stone of a rotary quern. It was subsequently occupied in the post-medieval era as a tower and fermtoun (the RCAHMS Inventory (1967) refers to it as a *township*). Lour is recorded as part of the estate of Dawyck since 1543 and it's noted on Blaeu's 1654 map of Tweeddale. An estate plan indicates that the site had been abandoned by 1794. The remains are recorded as two types: rectangular and sub-rectangular buildings; courts and enclosures. A jigsaw of humps and bumps underfoot with three entrances surrounded by several systems of plough rigs which are very visible in slaking winter light and frosts. Much as the now-felled sycamore dominated part of Hadrian's Wall, a substantial maiden tree draws the eye as a sentinel on the site.

10. CARLOWSE BRIG, TWEEDSMUIR

An information panel on the bridge gives different accounts of the origin of its name. One such is that it spans the waterfall, Carlow's Linn. An earlier bridge is shown on William Edgar's map of Peeblesshire surveyed in 1741 and believed to have been built between 1694 and 1741. The only way to cross the Tweed before this was via a ford and stepping stones, near Tweedsmuir Kirk, further down river. This random rubble masonry bridge was erected in 1783. In order that carts with wide loads could cross, it was originally built without parapets. The single track road continues south east over wild moorland below Broad Law down to St Mary's Loch. The bridge was renovated in 2014, replacing the stone and rubble core with concrete.

PHOTO QUIZ SCORE CARD

One point for each correct answer

1-3 Still not getting out enough?

4-6 Good observation skills

7-9 You're clearly out with The Inventory under your arm

10 Please consider writing a Quiz for the Newsletter



DROCHIL CASTLE © GILLIAN BROWN

2025 Halkett Hendrie Memorial Lecture

Richard Welander

It seems a long time ago now, with Christmas and New Year intervening, but back in early December the Halkett Hendrie Memorial Lecture, our annual collaboration with the Tweeddale Society, was given by Peter Yeoman, an old friend and supporter of PAS. After his very popular lecture in November 2024 ‘To be a Pilgrim - an image of popular faith in medieval Scotland’, we invited Peter back to talk about his recent research for Historic Scotland’s new Edinburgh Castle guidebook. Peter battled his way from Edinburgh on a very stormy night and, although the weather may have prevented some from attending, there was an excellent turnout at the Eastgate Theatre.

Formerly Historic Scotland’s Head of Cultural Resources, Peter has spent a lot of the last 40 years investigating the hidden medieval story of Edinburgh Castle and reckons he is beginning to get the hang of it! In a lively and entertaining talk entitled ‘The Lost Royal

Lodgings of Edinburgh Castle and the Birthplace of Great Britain’, Peter explained the devastating impact of medieval siege weapons and later gunpowder artillery on the dozen or more medieval towers of Edinburgh Castle that were royal residences and accommodation for royal offspring, courtiers and government officers. These towers are now lost almost without trace - but evidence does survive if you know where to look! Archaeological investigations closely coupled with targeted historical research has transformed our understanding of Edinburgh Castle and Peter revealed for the first time some exciting new findings (and ahead of his talk later this month (see Events page) to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland). Unfortunately, there was a technical problem with the video recording of Peter’s talk so we can’t share any YouTube link with those of you who were unable to attend or would simply like to hear the lecture again. However, all is not lost. Peter is giving his talk again on Thursday 16th January as part of the Society of Antiquaries 2025-26 Public Lecture Programme. A hybrid talk, it’s free to attend in person or online and can be booked via this [Eventbrite link](#) ■



January Lecture

Richard Welander

Turning thoughts to this new year, we are starting with an old favourite for many PAS members - the Galloway Hoard, that remarkable collection of early Viking Age objects discovered in land adjacent to Balmaghie Church by metal detectorists and subsequently excavated by archaeologists back in 2014. We've been fortunate to hear about the Hoard's discovery and excavation from Andrew Nicholson, Dumfries and Galloway Council's archaeologist in October 2017 and about its contents and initial conservation from Dr Martin Goldberg, Senior Curator at National Museums Scotland in December 2018. Following on from this, our speaker this month, Dr Orla Craig, is going to tell us about its context. Talking about her thesis topic 'The Archaeological Landscape and Historical Context of the Galloway Hoard', Orla explains "In the past, scholarship into early medieval Galloway has seen it as a peripheral zone, on the edge of various overlapping kingdoms. New research following the discovery of the Galloway Hoard, a massive collection of Viking Age silver and gold objects, suggests at this period in the region's history was in fact dynamic and distinct. This talk will discuss the archaeological landscape and historical context of the Galloway Hoard, the multidisciplinary evidence for Galloway around the time that the Hoard was buried, and what we can now say about the Vikings in Galloway".

It was clear from the outset that the discovery of the Galloway Hoard was going to trigger numerous research opportunities for many PhD students, and

Orla was one of the first to take up the challenge. Since being awarded her doctorate in archaeology from the University of Glasgow in Spring 2024, Orla has been working at Historic Environment Scotland as an Ancient Monuments Officer in the Planning, Consents and Advice Service.

Orla will be speaking at our next meeting on Thursday 15th January. As usual we'll be gathering at the St Joseph's Neighbourhood Centre in Rosetta Road, Peebles and the talk will start at 7.30 pm. Hope to see you there! ■



DR ORLA CRAIG



BALMAGHIE CHURCHYARD ■ ORLA CRAIG

EVENTS



ORNAMENTAL SILVER PECTORAL CROSS DECORATED WITH GOLD AND NIELLO INLAY AND SYMBOLS OF THE FOUR EVANGELISTS, WITH A COILED WIRE AND ORGANIC CHAIN, FROM THE GALLOWAY HOARD. © NMS

PAS Lectures 2026

Unless otherwise indicated, all lectures start at 7.30pm, and are held in St Joseph's Neighbourhood Centre, Rosetta Road, Peebles.

January 15th 2026: The Archaeological Landscape & Historical Context of the Galloway Hoard – Dr Orla Craig, Historic Environment Scotland. See p19 for details

February 19th 2026: Hillforts, Settlements & Ancient Geography – Strat Halliday

March 19th 2026: Recent Work on Lindisfarne: New Light on a Central British Monastery – Professor David Petts, University of Durham

April 16th 2026: Annual General Meeting & Members' Evening.

Other Events

January 22nd 5.00-6.00pm (online) Care-full: An Examination of Care in Archaeology and Heritage - Prof. Hannah Cobb FSA FSAScot MCIfA NTF PFHEA. Society of Antiquaries of London in conjunction with the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. Tickets (free) [here](#).

Join PAS

If you're not yet a member of the Society, then do join us: it costs only £25 pa (£35 for couples).

- We have monthly lectures from September until March
- We organise site visits and outings
- We run local projects and digs
- We produce this newsletter
- And we're a friendly bunch!

To join, visit our web site at www.peeblesarchsoc.org.uk and go to the Membership page.

A Reminder - you will recently have received an email inviting you to renew your subscription. If you have already re-joined – thank you! If you have still to respond, we hope that this is still on your “to do” list and that you will continue to support PAS!

The PAS Newsletter is produced and distributed by Peeblesshire Archaeological Society - <http://www.peeblesarchsoc.org.uk>. We are always keen to publish members' news, articles or letters. Please send them to the Editor, Colin McLean: PASEditor@icloud.com