



PAST

Peeblesshire Archaeological Society Times
Autumn issue / November 2021

Recent Talks and Reports

Looking back...and looking forward

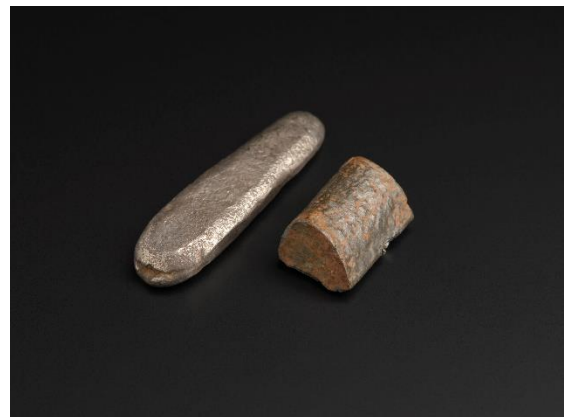
As winter chases around the heels of autumn, PAST recaps earlier talks on Zoom, updates on fieldwork activities by members, shares the rigours of a field trip and brings some old and new local finds into the lamplight. Settle down somewhere comfortable with a hot drink.

- **PAS Talks**
- **Fieldwork**
- **PAS Field trip**
- **Local Archaeology in the spotlight**

PAS TALKS

Adrián Maldonado: 'The Viking Age in the Borders: An Archaeology of the 9th to 11th centuries'.
16 September 2021

Dr Adrián Maldonado is an archaeologist specialising in early medieval Scotland. He obtained his PhD from the University of Glasgow in 2011, and has been a lecturer at the Universities of Glasgow and Chester. He joined the **National Museums of Scotland (NMS)** in 2018 as **Glenmorangie Research Fellow**, investigating the collections relating to the Viking Age and the origins of the kingdom of Scotland, 9th to 12th centuries AD. He is now providing research support for the ongoing conservation and exhibition of the amazing Galloway Hoard.



Silver ingots from Sprouston and Branxholme, Roxburghshire. The complete one may pre-date the Viking-age, while the chopped fragment has been used as payment in a Viking-age 'hacksilver' bullion economy. (Photo: Trustees of National Museums Scotland.)

Dr Maldonado explained that the reconsideration of old and new finds in the NMS collections has revealed an important seam of evidence for the Viking

Age (9th to 11th centuries) impacting the Scottish borderlands. Objects ranging from exotic imported dress items to silver 'pocket change' show that the border valleys connected the Danelaw to the Norse lordships of the North and West.



Carnelian beads, imported from as far away as India, became fashionable among Vikings. This one was identified in an excavation assemblage from Coldingham, Berwickshire. (Photo: Trustees of National Museums Scotland.)

Beginning with the raid on Lindisfarne in 793AD he explained that the monastery kept operating for at least another 100 years. Crosses on Lindisfarne from the 9th and 10th centuries show interesting links with Irish and early Scots iconography. With examples from Islay and Orkney he illustrated how grave goods were assembled from not just Norway but the Rhineland, the Low Countries, Ireland and even the Middle East and the Mediterranean. While traditionally seen as plundered items many are unlikely to have been. As he put it, not everyone who was dressed and buried as a Viking came from Norway. Many were buried in Churches.

Running through a list of known dates of battles and reigns in the 9th century he showed how branches of the Viking 'Great Army' had fought in and sometimes

controlled parts of Pictland, Strathclyde and other areas of Scotland. The turmoil of the period affected the whole of what was to become Scotland. Raids were carried out by Picts, Britons, Irish and Anglo Saxons as well as Vikings. Monasteries were plundered for wealth, food and slaves. Much of the plunder that did make it to Norway was religious in origin, as if it held special interest, not just a monetary value.

Metal detecting is now uncovering items such as ingots, lead weights and European and Arabic coins across South West Scotland, but also occasionally in South and East Scotland. A whole economy of trade based on hack silver, carefully weighed, became established in the 10th century. Evidence is growing that the Scottish royal burghs established by David were set up in existing trade hubs.



Sandstone 'hogback' from Tynninghame, E Lothian, with worn carving of part of a beast and fine chequer-board ornament. These grave-markers are often linked to the Vikings, but this one may have been partially re-cut as late as the 12th century. (Photo: Trustees of National Museums Scotland.)

Dr Maldonado finished with five thoughts to sum up:

- the Scots Viking Age involved many more parties than just the Norse and Danes;
- there is potential to further explore the links with the Viking Great Army;

- there is considerable overlap between Viking, Anglo Saxon and Northumbrian material, suggesting a lot of cross-influences;
- there are many links to Ireland that have yet to be explored;
- and there is a need to further consider the nature and role of monasteries in the material rather than religious context.

His wide-ranging and informative talk thus moved through the last days of old Northumbria, the first Royal Burghs and the diverse roots of the kingdom of Scotland. His talk showed how understanding of the likely impacts of the Vikings on Southern Scotland is still evolving and how story of our own local area in this period is still far from complete. His beautifully illustrated presentation drew on many previously unpublished images of recent find – and many of these will appear in the forthcoming book **'Crucible of Nations: Viking Age to Medieval Scotland'**, the latest publication resulting from the Glenmorangie Research Project at NMS.

Jeff Carter

Dr Joanne Rowland: 'Djedhor and the cult of Horus Khenty-Khety: contextualising a Ptolemaic animal necropolis in the Southern Nile Delta'. 21 October 2021

Dr Joanne Rowland is an archaeologist specialising in Egyptian prehistory and the early historic period. In 2016 she became a Senior Lecturer at **Edinburgh University**. Having worked on projects in the Nile Delta since 1998, Dr Rowland has chosen to focus on a site at Quesna, which lies to the North of Cairo. Excavation between

2007 and 2020, in collaboration with colleagues from various universities and institutions including **the German Archaeological Institute** and **the Egyptian Exploration Society**, has unearthed a huge necropolis filled with mummified creatures. The multi-disciplinary team includes specialists in animals, ceramics, and inscriptions in an effort to discover the purpose of the site.

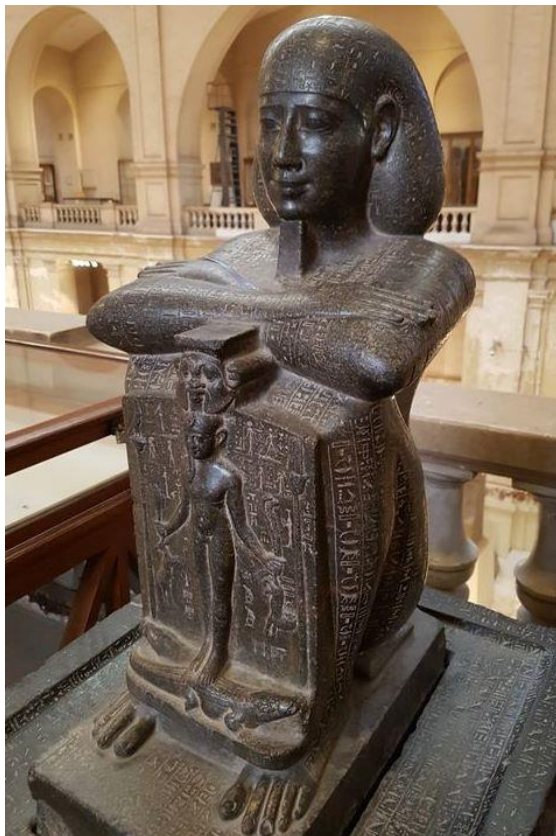


Excavations at the large cemetery or necropolis (literally 'city of the dead') at Quesna have revealed evidence for huge numbers of animal offerings, particularly falcons, as part of the religious rites (Photo: J. Rowland).

The large sand mound at Quesna was being used for brick making until archaeological remains started to turn up in 1989. Excavations by the local Ministry began in 2000 but after magnetometer and auger surveys in 2006/7 it was realised that a structure about 140 metres in length lay beneath. This has proved to be filled with thousands of mummified and non-mummified creatures, and has become known as the falcon necropolis because of the number of these birds found. The ceramics found indicate it was in use from the second century BC to the sixth century AD.

Dr Rowland explained that mummifying creatures had a long history in Egypt, with the earliest known examples dating from the fourth millennium BC. Of some 83 animal necropolises (or *necropoleis*) found, 33 are dominated by raptors, and 10 by shrews. With many Egyptian deities having animal forms, some of the sites can

be associated with particular gods, but it seems likely some remains were of pets and some were animals that were themselves venerated. The later sites, such as Quesna, are referred to in inscriptions and seal impressions which suggest the birds and animals were being bred on or near the site to be purchased by worshippers and sacrificed as offerings to the local deity.



Black basalt statue of Djedhor in The Egyptian Museum, Cairo (Photo: W. Webb).

The excavations have provided new evidence to link this necropolis to nearby Tell Atrib (ancient Athribis) where the local deity was Horus Khenty-Khety. It is possible the site was founded by the priest Djed Hor Pashed, known from inscriptions to be associated with Athribis, who was regarded as a healer. He is associated with the embalming house and with feeding the sacred falcons. Over time the structure was extended from the first Falcon necropolis, perhaps more than

once, and the different rooms/areas have varied collections. The quality of the mummification also varies. At least five of the eight species of shrew in Egypt are also present. In Egyptian mythology, shrews were attributed with having saved Horus from Seth and, as such, were venerated.

Comparative finds and texts from other sites have aided interpretation of the remains at Quesna. At the well-known and extensively excavated site at Saqqara, for example, some fifty people were involved in a dog cult and in producing bronze statues for sale to be left as offerings. However as only sample excavations have been undertaken so far within the various parts of the huge building at Quesna, it is very likely that a great deal more evidence is going to be discovered in the future.

Jeff Carter

FIELDWORK

Shootinglee Report for PAST, November 2021

Excavation took place during April to November 2021 on the site of a building previously recorded in 2012 as part of the survey of Shootinglee, a forest stead in what was formerly Ettrick forest (DES 2012,166). The building is situated on a wide terrace 25m NW of a peelhouse (DES 2019,184). The previous season's excavation (DES 2020,125) revealed that the building stands within/on the walls of an enclosure on ground levelled off with a thick spread of reddish brown clay.



A sunny day in mid-April at the start of the 2021 season. (Photo: Joyce Durham)

With further excavation of the S half of the interior it was found that, as well as the central byre drain, there is another drain around the edge of the cobbled surface. This drain is cut into the reddish brown clay layer, with sloping edge stones and capping: it terminates at the same point in the W wall as the byre drain which it cuts.



This photo shows the relationship of the two interior drains near where they exit the byre under the west wall. (Photo: Joyce Durham)

Excavation of the S wall revealed a blocked single width entrance (0.8m wide) which predates the curved drain in the interior. Outside the entrance a bridge of slabs covers an open drain adjacent to the wall and led to a roughly paved yard. A possible cruck slot was found in the outside of the S wall about 1m from the

SW corner. In the middle of the N wall there is a second entrance with a built up area of paving outside. Further excavation of the stone-lined drain outside the N wall found that it did not extend under this built-up area.

The NW corner of the building was removed to excavate the earlier enclosure. Outside the building to the S a 1m wide trench cut alongside the S baulk found that the clay levelling here was 0.35m deep and a section across the enclosure wall was also excavated. Some pieces of charcoal have been recovered from the core of the wall, but no other finds. Work continues to obtain dating evidence of the enclosure wall.

Finds have been mostly from the 17th century onwards and consist of clay pipes, pottery, glass and metal including a small billion coin.

The building is interpreted as having had two phases. It was originally a 17th century byre with a door in the S wall and a central drain. In the 18th century it was rebuilt possibly as a stable with a cobbled floor and covered drain on the S side of the byre drain and an entrance in the N wall leading to a paved yard.

Piers Dixon and Joyce Durham

Glenlude Survey, 26 May 2021

Pre-forestry survey led by Piers Dixon and Strat Halliday, supported by Neil Crawford, Bill Glass, John Vipond, Fi Martynoga, David Drury and Andy Jepson, plus Joyce Durham (briefly). A recce in April by Strat Halliday, Piers Dixon and Joyce Durham located some of the sites not visited on this occasion. A handheld

Garmin GPS was used to map the sites and these have also been recorded in a separate Excel spreadsheet.

Summary

The survey was more productive than initial impressions of the farm might have suggested, it being primarily hill farm, with no woodland to speak of and little in the way of cultivable land. It usefully demonstrates how initial appearances can be deceptive.

Glenlude Farm is first mapped by William Edgar in 1741. The area of in-bye fields immediately NW of the farmhouse and steading includes drystone-walled fields of 19th century date as well as later post-and-wire fields. Fragments of earlier earthen-banked enclosures of post-medieval date are traceable on the SW edge of the drystone fields (site no 1, not mapped). Edgar's map also shows a road running to the W of the Farm, which is confirmed by braided hollow trackways on The Rig (no 20). The Rig also has several marker cairns (nos 19, 22-23) and a marker stone (no 24) to aid passage along the route. In modern times it has been used by the Southern Upland Way, near which a Treasure Cache (no 25) was found associated with a publicity drive for the route about 20 years ago. Sheep farming structures are a significant element in the sites recorded and illustrate the main land use of the last 300 years; they include the present livestock enclosure on the S flank of the Rig (no 26) and various turf and drystone sheep pens, enclosures and linear sheep shelters.



***A burnt mount, c.500m W of Glenlude House on the Glenlude Burn during survey.
(Photo: Strat Halliday)***

Remarkably, prehistoric activity is represented by three large burnt mounds that were found along the Glenlude Burn (nos 2 & 4) and its tributary the Kinchie Cleuch (no 9), and two cultivation terraces (no 30) above the modern fields above Glenlude House, near which a terraced hut platform (no 29) was also found, the possible site of a timber round house. Burnt mounds were places where people heated up stones in wood fires and then placed the hot stones in water-filled containers or troughs to heat the contents. Almost invariably the sites lie close to a watercourse reflecting the need for a ready water supply. The by-products of this process are piles of heat-shattered and reddened stone lying in a matrix of black charcoal enriched-soil – and it is these which form the mounds we see today. Dating from as early as the Bronze Age, they are indications of regular prehistoric use of the area, possibly for grazing and/or hunting purposes. The purpose of burnt mounds still remains open to interpretation. Commonly they are interpreted as cooking sites (where the food would have been prepared by boiling); however, it has also been suggested that they could have functioned

as a simple form of sauna by using the same hot-stone technology to create steam. This is not as implausible as it sounds, for 'sweat-houses' were used in rural Ireland until the relatively recent past. The cultivation terraces are typical of prehistoric field systems that are found in Yarrow and widely across Peeblesshire.

Inventory of sites (*see plan at end*)

Glenlude Burn

1. **Earthen field bank.** On W edge of stone-diked fields, probably an earlier field boundary, not mapped.
2. **Burnt mound**, NT30536 29401. On edge of boggy hollow, U-shaped and open to N, 13.5m by 10m, W arm shorter stands 0.5m in height and E arm 0.7m. A sondage revealed angular stones in a dark soil.
3. **Shieling hut possible** NT 30057 29223. On N bank of burn is a possible shieling hut cut by the burn on it S, marked by a stony bank to W, N and E (not measured).
4. **Burnt mound**, NT 29724 29226. This kidney-shaped burnt mound measures 8m from N to S by 10 transversely and stands 1.8m height downslope, the W arm is barely visible. It opens to the N where there is a boggy hollow. A sondage revealed angular stones.

Kinchie Cleuch

5. **Sheep shelter**, at NT 29969 29282. A Y-shaped earthen bank measuring 39m from N to S,

spread to 4m in thickness and 0.4m in height with two arms, each 8m in length, at the S end: NT 29969 29272.

6. Circular drystone **sheepfold**. An arc of earthen bank externally around the NW side, probably an earlier version in turf.
7. **Bridge**, NT 29892 29281. The stone abutments of a footbridge, beside the track leading W from the drystone stell.



The abutment of a bridge over the Clinchie Cleuch Burn.

(Photo: Strat Halliday)

8. Possible **shieling hut**, NT 29903 29265. On a terrace on the N bank of the burn, measures 4.8m WNW-ESE by 2m within a stony bank visible on the S and E, 0.2m in height and 1.2m in thickness. Possible entrance on the W end where the bank dips
9. A **burnt mound**, NT 29841 29348. It is situated on the edge of a shallow runnel that descends the slope parallel to the NE lip of the steep-sided stream gully known as Kinchie Cleuch. The mound is kidney-shaped on plan, with its open side facing into the runnel

on the NE. It measures about 6m from NW to SE by 4m transversely and between 0.2m and 0.7m in height. A sondage revealed angular stones in a dark soil matrix.

10. **Sheep Shelter**, NT 29766 29450 to NT 29765 29435 A sheep shelter, comprising a ruined drystone wall some 13m in length and 0.7m in height set at right-angles to the contours, is situated on the S flank of The Rig above Kinchie Cleuch.

Middle Rig

11. Greywacke **quarry**, NT 29258 29029. At the crest of the hill just below the Southern Upland Way runs N-S along the E of the crest over c.30m along Middle Rig.
12. **Sheep Shelter**, NT 29331 29035. A linear stone sheep shelter that appears on the 1st edition OS map.
13. Turf **bank**, NT 29309 28904 to NT 29345 28901. A turf bank drops down the slope over a distance of about 35m E and W towards the top of the Glenlude Burn.
14. **Iron Fence Stanchion**, NT 29069 28948. An iron fence stanchion has been set into a stone on the crest of Middle Rig a little NE of the present boundary between the moorland to the NE and the forestry to the SW. Square in section and about 1m high, at its base the stanchion splits into two in the form of a tuning fork, and both prongs have been leaded

into sockets in the stone. It is on the line of the boundary shown on the 1st edition OS 6-inch map (Peeblesshire 1860, sheet XXI).

Yellow Mire Burn

15. Possible turf **sheep pen**, NT 29396 29565. In an area of well drained grass land, measures 6m from ENE-WSW by 5m transversely, over ill-defined earthen banks 1.5m thick and up to 0.3 high. Marker stone is situated close by.
16. Possible turf **sheep pen**, NT 29411 29538. It measures 4.3 in diameter over earthen banks, 1.2m in thickness and 0.2m in height.
17. **Marker stone**, NT 29387 29569. A small marker stone standing 0.3m in height, close to a turf sheep pen.

The Rig

18. A drystone **Sheepfold**. A sub-square shaped sheepfold has been built on the crest of The Rig making use of exposures of bedrock. Points along its perimeter were recorded: NT 29927 29723, 29937 29719, 29945 29722, 29944 29741 and 29921 29737.
19. Drystone **marker cairn**, NT 29764 29904. It extends 4m in length, NW-SE, and stands 1m high wall on crest of the NE facing side of The Rig.
20. A **trackway** can be followed from N to S over the crest of The Rig, braiding at the top of the Sprain

Burn, where it coincides with the route of the Southern Upland Way, and bifurcating at several other points elsewhere (see plan). One arm mounts the slope from the top of the Sprain Burn roughly parallel and a little below the Southern Upland Way, but coordinates were only taken at its northern end. The other arm climbs the slope more directly and can be followed as far as the moss at the top of the Kinchie Cleuch Burn. It was not traced further southwards, but either re-connects with the line of the Southern Upland Way or takes a more westerly route.

21. **Sheep shelter**, NT 30023 29500.
On S flank of Rough Rig, a collapsed drystone wall, extending 20m from N to S, standing 0.5m in height.
22. **Drystone marker cairn**, NT 29881 29726. It stands 0.7m high and 2.5m diameter. Marked on OS map at 29890 29732.
23. **Drystone marker cairn**, NT 29759 29643, 0.5m high, similar construction to the previous one but more tumbled down.
24. **Marker stone**, NT 29581 29906. A small standing stone, c.0.4m high.
25. **Treasure cache**, NT 29662 29861. A hollow fibreglass cache in style of Innerleithen cross shaft with opening on SE covered by cup and ring mark.
26. **Livestock enclosure**, NT 29830 29603. A drystone livestock enclosure for sheep, still in use, is depicted on OS map.

Sprain Burn

27. Two turf **shieling huts**, NT 31022 30099. On the terrace to the S of

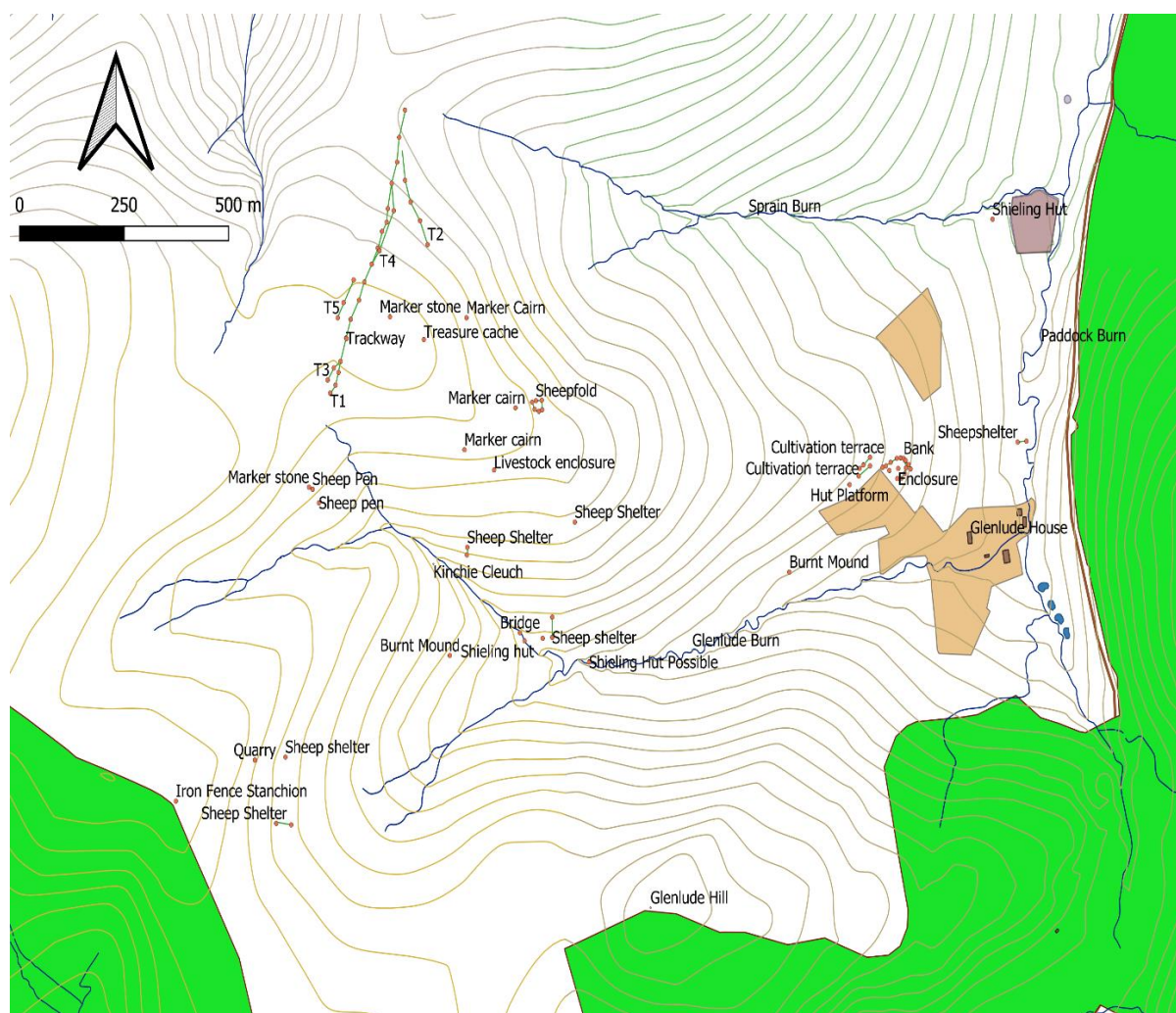
Sprain Burn, one overlies the other at right angles, c.9m across overall.

Glenlude House

28. **Enclosure**, centred at NT 30796 29606 (further NGR point recorded in Excel spreadsheet). Sub-circular enclosure, c.40m diameter, within a bank 2m across and 0.3m high. It is cut by a modern track on SW and a second bank forms an arc to it on the NE, suggesting a rebuild. There is also gap in the bank on the SE, which may be intentional. A turf pen lies within it, NT 30775 29602, on a terrace to the W side of the enclosure and above a hollow on its E.
29. **Hut platform**, NT 30680 29574.
Situated above the stone-dyked fields at Glenlude House, it measures 7.5m from NW to SE by 8.5m transversely with a terrace 0.4m high on the SE and a shallower terrace at the back.
30. **Cultivation terraces**, 1) NT 30702 29591-NT 30729 29611, 2) NT 30729 29628-NT3070429606. Two cultivation terraces, standing c.0.4m in height and about 12m apart run along the contour on the SE facing hillside above the stone-dyked fields at Glenlude House.
31. **Sheep Shelter**, NT 31082-NT31103 29660. Large grass-covered bank of stone, 3m thick and 0.8m in height on an E-W axis on the W of a drystone field dyke beside the Glenlude Burn.

**Compiled by Piers Dixon,
Strat Halliday and Joyce Durham.
14 April and 28 May 2021.**

Plan of archaeological features recorded at Glenlude Farm



PAS FIELD TRIP

Dormount Hope Field Visit, June 2021

In 2020, one regular activity that was off the table due to the pandemic was the summer field trip. However, by the early summer of this year, it was possible to take advantage of the gradual easing of government restrictions to arrange a visit to Roxburghshire to see the deer trap at Dormount Hope, described by Piers Dixon in his fascinating talk on medieval deer hunting in December 2020.

(If you missed it, the talk is still available on our website at https://www.peeblesarchsoc.org.uk/archived_zoom_meetings.html)

The proposed visit also offered an opportunity to meet up with members of **the Yetholm History Society** to whom Piers had also lectured on the topic - although this meant that overall numbers had to be limited in order to comply with Covid restrictions and to cope with restricted space available for car parking at Buchtrig Farm, the starting point for the walk.

In the event, Saturday 12th June saw a combined group of around a dozen PAS and YHS members, led by Piers, setting off

from Buchtrig on the track to Dormount Hope. The deer trap comprises a series of linear earthworks, with a combined total length of well over 3km which enclose the head of the Dormount Hope valley. The form of the earthworks varies, much more stonework being visible along its eastern arm, and as we progressed around the monument, both its impressive scale and its changing character became clear.



Piers addressing the party on the site of the earthwork; to the right, the ground falls away to Dormount Hope. (Photo: Graeme Watson).

Initially for example, as we struck off uphill along the western rim of the valley, we were following a substantial, well-defined bank and ditch with the ditch on the down-slope side. As we made our way up this stretch - the deer trap's western arm - we also stopped to view and consider the significance of a series of four cross-ridge dykes which intersect with the main linear earthwork but are clearly earlier.

The junction with the uppermost of the cross-ridge dykes marks the point where the deer trap begin to swing east, and shortly after this a hop across the fence enabled us to enjoy packed lunch in the sunshine in England, where we were inspected by a family of curious feral goats. When we had set off from Peebles in the morning the weather forecast had

been indifferent at best, but in fact the whole day proved to be one of glorious sunshine and for once waterproofs and warm clothing remained in rucksacks.

Setting off once more, we returned to home turf and followed the line of the monument again as it snaked around the head of Dormount Hope, staying just shy of the present day Border line. A deep cleuch on the western slope of Lamb Hill marks the SE extremity of the earthwork system and as we made our way northwards from this point, Piers drew attention to the marked change in the character of the monument in this section, with coursed drystone walling revetting the earthwork on its downhill side.



Along the eastern arm of the deer trap, the bank is revetted with stone. At one point, seen here, a stone-walled enclosure has been built on its west side and is probably secondary. (Photo: Trevor Cowie)

Taking our leave of the deer trap towards its north-eastern end (where it reverts once again to a stretch of substantial bank and ditch), we made our way down into Dormount Hope itself, stopping to view a late prehistoric scooped settlement discovered on the valley side by Piers Dixon and John Gilbert in 2019. After climbing up the opposite slope and past the abandoned shepherd's house at Peelinick we rejoined the main farm track

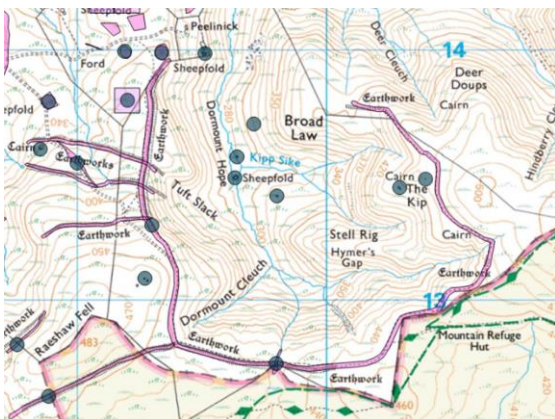
to Buchtrig to round off our circuit of Dormount Hope.



Descending from Broad Law into the Dormount Hope valley. The cottage in the distance is Peelinick, last inhabited in the 1930s. (Photo: Graeme Watson)

As we took our leave of the YHS group, everyone agreed that the joint outing had worked very well and expressed a wish to join forces for another field visit in the future. Thanks are therefore due once again to Piers for arranging an excellent trip, for guiding the party round an impressive and intriguing monument, and for laying on wall-to-wall sunshine. All in all, a Grand Day Out!

Trevor Cowie



Dormount Hope: map extract from Canmore showing the extent of the linear earthwork around the valley.

LOCAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Vervel (noun): (falconry) a metal ring bearing the owner's name or coat of arms, attached to a hawk's jesses

Earlier this year a small but fascinating object caught my eye in the then newly published issue of *Discovery & Excavation*, the annual round-up of recent finds and fieldwork in Scotland. Found in 2019 in the Manor Valley to the west of Peebles, it consists of a little silver ring, less than 20mm across, barely a millimetre in thickness and just one gram in weight. At first sight, it could even be mistaken for an old worn metal washer, but on closer inspection an inscription can be made out on each face, reading 'Ja : Nasmith of Posso' on the front and 'in Tueddale' on the back.



Hawking ring or vervel found in the Manor valley: the inscription reads 'Ja : Nasmith of Posso' on the front and 'in Tueddale' on the back. (Photo: Treasure Trove Unit/Crown Copyright).

In fact, this little inscribed ring has a fascinating story to tell. Although it is the first recorded example from Scotland, it belongs to a distinctive class of objects known as hawking rings or **vervels**, which formed part of the equipment used by falconers during the late medieval and

early post-medieval periods. The hawk would have had a leather thong, known as a jess, tied to each leg and at the end of each jess was a vervel (or varvel), derived from an Old French word *vervelle*. These had two functions: one was to enable the jesses to be attached to a leash which in turn tethered the bird to its perch or block when at rest. Their other, more important, function was to identify ownership in case the bird was lost – a bit like the ID tag on a dog's collar today! This was usually done by engraving the rings with the owner's name and/or place of residence, which brings us back to the ring from Manor and its reference to a James Naesmyth of Posso in Tweeddale.



Detail from hunting scene depicting falconry on medieval tapestry probably made in Arras, France (1430-1440): vervels can be seen attached to the jesses trailing from the hawk's legs. (Photo: Victoria and Albert Museum, London).

The Naesmyths had acquired lands in Manor by the 16th century and the direct family association with Posso lasted until the 20th century. Within that range, the likely date of the ring can be narrowed down by comparison with finds from England, where most of the inscribed vervels of this kind date from the late 16th and 17th centuries. Unfortunately, identifying the individual named on the

ring with absolute certainty is complicated by the fact that James remained a popular Naesmyth family name over several generations! However, one very strong candidate is the James Naesmyth (1575-1658) who was appointed Royal Falconer to King James VI. Indeed, Manor seems to have acquired a reputation for the quality and hunting ability of its birds of prey, which were seemingly much sought after by Scottish kings and nobility.



Detail of falconers from The Art of Hunting with Birds by the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, compiled in the 1240s AD. (Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons).

Despite its small size and rather worn appearance, this little silver ring therefore represents a fascinating tangible link with the lives and pursuits of significant historical figures from Peeblesshire's past. Its discovery reinforces the high status nature of falconry, for hunting birds were costly to train and maintain. However, the falconer's choice of words when his bird failed to return are probably best left to the imagination!

Acknowledgements

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to Stephen Scott for creating the layout of Illustration 1.

Discovery and Excavation in Scotland is published annually by Archaeology Scotland (for further details see

<https://archaeologyscotland.org.uk/>)

For further information about Treasure Trove in Scotland see

<https://treasuretrovescotland.co.uk/>).

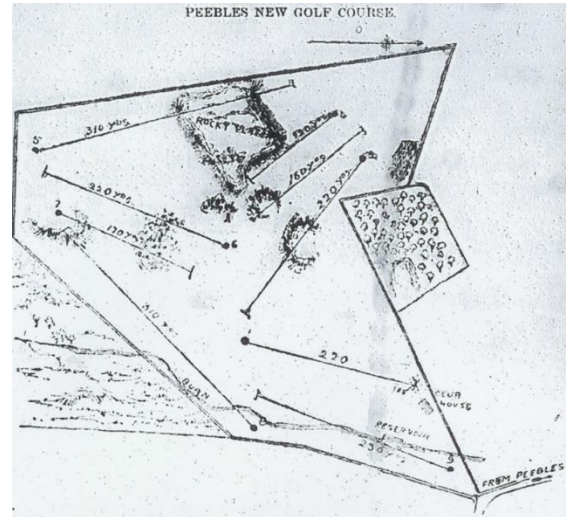
Trevor Cowie

Some Morning Hill Musings

For those with an interest in archaeology the main rewards of the bracing walk up from Peebles onto Cademuir are its prehistoric hillforts, culminating in the impressive stone-walled fort at the western end of the ridge. However, even as they set off from Craigerne, observant walkers will become aware of traces of past human activity in the shape of flat-topped grassy mounds and platforms on the slopes of Morning Hill. If they just glance quickly at their OS Explorer map, casual visitors might be forgiven for assuming some connection with the 'settlement' picked out in the familiar Gothic script used to denote an antiquity. If so, those unwary visitors would only be about 2000 years wide of the mark!

As those more familiar with the modern history of the Burgh will know, far from being the house stances associated with some ancient settlement, the series of platforms visible on the hillside are the sites of the former tees and greens of the original Peebles golf course! Formally opened in the spring of 1893, a golfing yearbook of 1905 described the course as 'hilly and of a sporting character with good turf and greens. The hazards consist of whins, quarries and bunkers. The view

from the course is very fine'. Morning Hill was the home of Peebles Golf Club until 1908, when it moved to its present location at Kirklands.



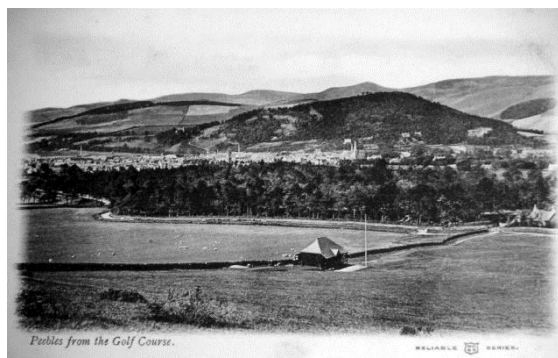
Sketch plan of the Morning Hill course published in the Edinburgh Evening Dispatch (Image courtesy of Harry Ward).

Of course our understanding of these features benefits from a wide range of historical sources such as local knowledge, old newspaper archives, photographs and club records but what is to be seen on the ground now is also a useful lesson in field archaeology: it amounts to what could be described as the archaeology of late 19th and early 20th century leisure activity.



Field archaeology by numbers! The course can still be followed on the ground today: the photo shows the first green (Photo: Trevor Cowie).

In fact, Morning Hill is just one of hundreds of Scottish golf courses that have been closed, re-located or completely redesigned over the last century. Details of many of Scotland's former courses have been recorded by golfing historian Harry Ward, author of *Forgotten Greens: The Abandoned Golf Courses of Scotland* (2019).



The Morning Hill course and pavilion (seen here) were formally opened by Mr Walter Thorburn MP on Saturday 8th April 1893, 'in the presence of a large gathering of ladies and gentlemen' (Image courtesy of Harry Ward).

But what about that 'settlement' identified on the Ordnance Survey map? The summit of Morning Hill is indeed occupied by the remains of a small prehistoric fort or settlement. The site was as only recognised in the 1960, the surrounding rampart having been reduced to a low bank by centuries of stone robbing and agricultural activity. As a result, its scant remains would not have posed much of an additional obstacle to the Victorian or Edwardian golfers teeing up for the testing 310-yard 5th hole!

Looking back in time, the concerns of the golfers seem pretty minor compared to the challenges and hazards which would likely have been faced by the hilltop's Iron Age occupants, ranging from crop failures and disease to tribal feuds and warfare. However, there is probably one thing

about Morning Hill on which they would all have agreed. The view is very fine!

Acknowledgement:

For further information regarding the Morning Hill course, see Harry's excellent *Forgotten Greens* website (<https://www.forgottengreens.com/former-courses-of-existing-clubs/peebles-course/>). Many thanks to Harry for permission to make use of images! The name Ward will be still familiar to older members of the society: Harry's brother Tam was the driving force behind the formation of PAS!

Trevor Cowie

