



November 2022 Newsletter

Welcome to November's newsletter! With the 2022-23 season now in full swing we hope that you are enjoying our series of lectures.

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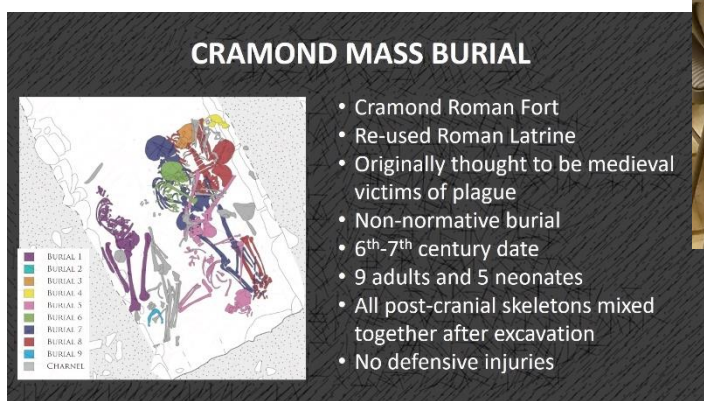
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1) Previous lecture: Dr Angela Boyle, Violence and conflict in south-east Scotland from AD400 to AD850 – a biocultural study

On **Thursday 20 October** we welcomed human remains specialist [Dr Angela Boyle](#) to the St Joseph's Neighbourhood Centre in Peebles to speak about 'Cowboys and Indians? A biocultural study of violence and conflict in south-east Scotland c. AD 400 to c. AD 850'. It was lovely to see members attending this fascinating insight into how osteoarchaeology can challenge traditional perceptions of past societies.



St Joseph's Neighbourhood Centre, Peebles
(Photo: A Jepson)



Analysis of mass burial at Cramond Roman Fort, 6th-7th century
(Courtesy of Dr Angela Boyle)



2) Next lecture: Dr James O'Driscoll, *Chevaux de frise* in Britain and Ireland

Chevaux de frise is a term used to describe settings of stones or wooden stakes placed upright in the ground outside the walls of early fortifications with the intention of making access more difficult for an enemy approaching on foot or on horseback. The relatively few examples of such defences known from prehistoric sites in Britain include two of our most impressive local forts - Cademuir, near Peebles, and Dreva near Broughton.

As our guest speaker this month, we look forward to welcoming [Dr James O'Driscoll \(Aberdeen University\)](#) who will be giving a presentation on '*Chevaux de frise* in Britain and Ireland' in which he will explore the origins and significance of these distinctive and intriguing features. James's talk will be delivered via Zoom on **Thursday 17 November**, commencing at 7.30pm.



Aerial view of the great stone-walled fort on Cademuir Hill, Peebles (Photo: James O'Driscoll). The remains of the chevaux de frise lie within the broad gully on the eastern flank of the fort (to the right of the image)

Chevaux de frise, a term describing a series of deliberately introduced stones or wooden stakes positioned outside an ancient fortification,

have been identified at a small number of sites in Ireland and Britain. The technique was traditionally assumed to have originated in Central or Eastern Europe around 800–600 BC before spreading westwards, appearing as a defensive reaction to the use of horses in warfare. However, recent work on Iberian examples has begun to identify Bronze Age precursors as well as challenging the traditional defensive interpretation. This talk brings together the most recent evidence from Ireland and Britain, identifying a similar Bronze Age horizon and highlighting the potential defensive, and non-defensive, functions of *chevaux de frise*.



View of part of the Cademuir chevaux de frise, comprising the remains of an 80m long band of earthfast stones located in the gulley east of the fort wall. The obstacle is positioned so that it would have been invisible to an attacking force until they breasted the edge of the gully and were among the stones (Photo: T Cowie)

Dr James O'Driscoll is a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Aberdeen, specialising in the investigation of prehistoric hilltop enclosures and hillforts, their contemporary landscapes and socio-economic setting. Since completing his PhD, which focused on Irish hillforts, James has worked on a number of projects including the recently completed *Atlas of British and Irish Hillforts*, as well as the '*Hillforts, Warfare and Society in Bronze Age Ireland*' project.

James's talk will be live streamed via **Zoom** on **Thursday 17 November** commencing at **7.30pm**. PAS MEMBERS will automatically receive an email invitation and link to the event.



3) Report on Halterburn Valley field trip - Richard Welander

Members will recall a short summary covering the Halterburn Valley field trip appeared in the July/August newsletter. On Saturday 11 June a dozen PAS members had gathered near to Kirk Yetholm for the summer field trip to the **Halterburn Valley**. The trip had been arranged by [Piers Dixon](#) in conjunction with [Jean Hirst](#) of the [Yetholm History Society](#). YHS are carrying out a field survey of the valley together with members of the

[Association of Certified Field Archaeologists](#). Led

by [Dugald MacInnes](#) of ACFA

and Piers, and with input

from [Strat Halliday](#), the

group visited a very

interesting selection of sites

including a distinctly breezy

Green Humbleton fort, taking

in various settlements,

enclosures and areas of rig

on the way, before

descending to Witchcleuch,

an impressive medieval

grange of Kelso Abbey. We

are delighted to announce

that a fuller illustrated report

on the trip written by [Richard](#)

[Welander](#) is now available

and is attached with this newsletter.



Medieval watermill at Witchcleuch Burn (Photo: R Welander)

The society would like to thank Richard for his article.

4) Drumelzier's Hidden Heritage Project – Thirlestane Barrows fieldwork

Last month we brought you news of the next stage of the [Investigating Drumelzier Hidden Heritage](#) project being masterminded by the [Arthur Trail Association](#) in collaboration with [GUARD Archaeology Ltd](#). The aim of the project is to undertake fieldwork at several sites in the Drumelzier/Broughton area in the hope of shedding light on Tweeddale's early medieval past.



Since last month's update the project has focused on the **Thirlestane Barrows** near Broughton - cropmarks only discovered during the dry conditions of 2018. An aerial photographic survey revealed that these cropmarks included at least four potential barrow graves. These appeared to comprise circular and square ditches each enclosing what may be a grave, originally buried beneath a small mound of earth cast from the enclosing ditch. Although centuries of ploughing had removed all surface traces of the mounds, the ditches were visible from the air.

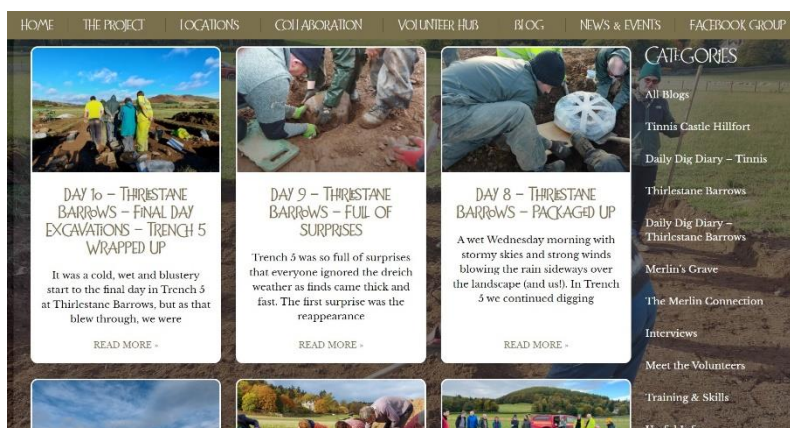
Such barrow graves can be Iron Age or early medieval in date. It is likely that these barrow graves represent the graves of some of the inhabitants of the numerous hillforts in the vicinity. In particular, they may relate to the occupation of **Tinnis Castle Hillfort** which lies approximately 1 mile to the east.



Thirlestane Barrows dig: Grave cuts in Trench 4, a circular feature in Trench 5 and a bone find (Photos: Dark Age Digs/GUARD)

The excavators undertook geophysical surveys of two fields and limited excavation between 17 and 28 October to confirm if these were indeed barrow graves and to investigate the nature of the archaeological evidence they contained.

Several Peeblesshire Archaeological Society members participated in the survey and excavations. Whilst we await the final report members can read the fascinating daily fieldwork blog by following the following link <https://dark-age-digs.com/category-daily-dig-diary-thirlestane-barrows/>. Videos of the Merlin Conference held in September can be viewed at <https://merlintrail.com/merlinconference/>.



Dark Age Digs website (dark-age-digs.com)

With thanks to PAS members **Dr Ronan Toolis** (GUARD Archaeology Ltd) and **Robin Crichton** (Arthur Trail Association) for supplying details of the project.

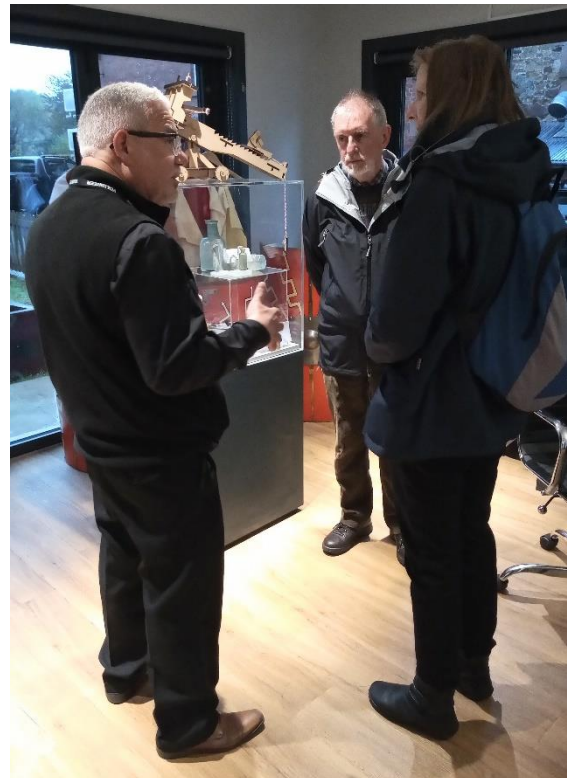


5) PAS visit to Trimontium Museum, Melrose

On the rainy afternoon of **Sunday 23 October** a party of 15 assembled in the Market Square at Melrose for the society's visit to the new **Trimontium Museum**. Once inside, we were welcomed by [Dr John Reid](#), Chairman of the [Trimontium Trust](#), who set the scene for our viewing of the displays by outlining the story of the museum.

It is a story that can be traced back some 30 years when a local band of history enthusiasts formed the Trust with the aim of promoting public awareness and understanding of the Romans in Scotland and in particular the significance of the major Roman fort at Trimontium (near modern Newstead). As well as establishing imaginative educational and visitor outreach programmes, the Trust developed a small independent museum in Melrose's Ormiston Institute. Over time however, the museum displays began to show their age and the decision was taken to upgrade both the building and the exhibition, to create additional display space and to adopt up-to-date interpretation methods to bring the Trimontium story to a new generation of visitors.

With generous support & funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the South of Scotland Economic Partnership, National Museums Scotland and Scottish Borders Council/Live Borders, plus many other organisations & individuals, the Trust was able to realise these ambitious goals. Despite the pandemic, their £1.4 million redevelopment went ahead on time and within budget and in April this year, the new Trimontium Museum was officially opened by the Trust's patron, HRH the Duke of Gloucester.



As well as assisting behind the scenes at the museum, the Trimontium Trust's volunteers work front of house by greeting and helping visitors (Photo: T Cowie)

Drawing on the collections of National Museums Scotland, Live Borders and private collectors, the museum tells the story of the Romans in the Scottish Borders and their relationship with the local population. Among the most striking exhibits is an interactive virtual model of the Roman fort, offering various fly-arounds and walk-



throughs which help to convey in a very imaginative way the nature of a site of which little is in fact now visible above ground. Among the cased displays, one of the most eye-catching is that devoted to the splendid hoard of over 200 silver denarii found at Synton, Ashkirk, Roxburghshire.

The Trust can justifiably be hugely proud of what it has achieved, and thanks go to [John Reid](#) (Chairman, Trimontium Trust) and [Frances Mann](#) (Volunteer & Visitor Experience Manager) and volunteers [Pat Greenshields](#) and [George Hogg](#) for making us welcome and for facilitating a very enjoyable and informative museum trip on a rainy autumn afternoon!



P.S. Despite all this success, the Trust is not resting on its laurels and is now in the process of raising further funds to permit the construction of additional facilities, which will take the form of a dedicated learning, community and research space to be built to the rear of the original building. Clearly another PAS visit is going to be in the offing before too long!

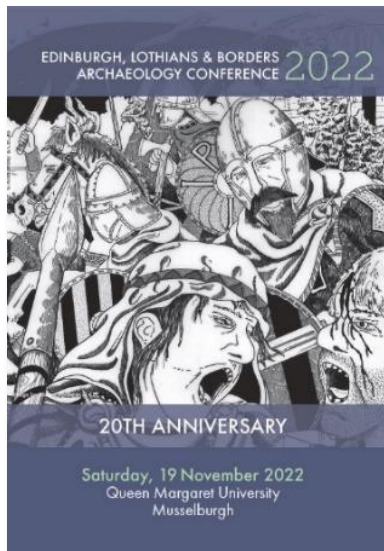
For further information about the work of the Trimontium Trust and the museum development project, see John's article 'New light on Trimontium: building a museum against the odds' published in Current Archaeology, April 2022 and available at <https://the-past.com/feature/new-light-on-trimontium-building-a-museum-against-the-odds/>.

The Trust has always promoted imaginative outreach and educational activities. Here, Neil tries some of the reconstructed legionary equipment for size! As well as his helmet and shield, the legionary would have had to gear up with his sword and dagger, two javelins, a pick, a shovel, two wooden stakes, a leather bag with food for three days and a woollen cloak. And last but not least, extra underpants... (Photo: T Cowie)



6) Reminder: Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders Archaeology Conference

November sees the return of the Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders Archaeology Conference. ELBAC is the annual conference organised by the City of Edinburgh Council, East Lothian Council and Scottish Borders Council. It provides an important opportunity to hear and discuss first-hand accounts of the archaeological fieldwork and research being undertaken in Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian and the Scottish Borders.




CHAIRS	Morning: John A Lawson (CECAs) Afternoon: Andrew Robertson (East Lothian Council)	1405-1430	PRESTON TOWER – RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK Bruce Glendinning (CFA Archaeology)
0900-0930	Registration, tea & coffee	1430-1455	TREASURE TROVE IN EDINBURGH, THE LOTHIAN AND THE BORDERS Antony Lee (Treasure Trove Unit NMS)
0930-0950	WELCOME 20 YEARS!!!	1455-1505	Discussion
0950-1015	SURVIVING THE INDUSTRIAL ERA – THE NEOLITHIC, BRONZE AGE AND IRON AGE OF WEST EDGE, LANG LOAN Maureen Kilpatrick (GUARD Archaeology)	1505-1535	COFFEE/TEA BREAK
1015-1040	UNEARTHING A DARK AGE LEGEND AT DRUMELZIE Dr Ronan Toolsie (GUARD Archaeology)	1535-1635	FROM SMALL THINGS... Updates from around the region
1040-1050	Discussion		UNEARTHING A BEAST – THE GREAT SEA SERPENT Harry Francis (CFA Archaeology)
1050-1115	COFFEE/TEA BREAK		REVISITING OLD HAUNTS: UPDATED EXCAVATION IN EDINBURGH OLD TOWN Kirsty Dingwall (Hoodland Archaeology)
1115-1140	CAMMO, THE NEVER-ENDING STORY... Christine McPherson (EAFS)		1722 WAGGONWAY – RESEARCH AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS FROM SCOTLAND'S FIRST RAILWAY Gareth Jones (1722 Waggonway Project)
1140-1205	TIMBERS, TREES, AND TIME: THE SOUTH-EAST SCOTLAND OAK DENDROCHRONOLOGY PROJECT Dr Coralie Mills (Dendrochronicle)		ROSLIN KILNS – AN UPDATE Rob Engl (AOC Archaeology Group)
1205-1230	COWBOYS AND INDIANS? THE SKELETAL EVIDENCE FOR VIOLENCE IN EARLY MEDIEVAL SOUTH-EAST SCOTLAND Angela Boyle (University of Edinburgh)		EXCAVATION OF PROBABLE ENCLOSURE DITCH, DALHOUSIE MIDLOTHIAN Rachel Frame (CFA Archaeology)
1230-1240	Discussion		SHOOTINGLEE POST-EXCAVATION AND LOCKDOWN EXCAVATIONS 2020-22 Piers Dixon (Peeblesshire Archaeological Society)
1240-1340	LUNCH	1635-1645	Discussion
1340-1405	UNBOTTLED: EXCAVATIONS AT THE FORMER EDINBURGH & LEITH GLASSWORKS, SALAMANDER STREET, LEITH Katie O'Connell (AOC Archaeology Group)	1645	CLOSE

This year sees the conference celebrate its 20th anniversary and will take place on **Saturday 19 November** at the [Queen Margaret University, Musselburgh](#).

Our very own [Piers Dixon](#) will present an update on the conclusion of the excavations at Shootinglee and will be looking ahead to the post-excavation stage of the project.

Ticket prices and booking details can be found in the attached programme leaflet.

Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to seeing you soon.

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