

PAS Newsletter

Peeblesshire Archaeological Society

November 2024

Peebles Bronze Age Hoard saved for the nation

Member Profile: Colin Bell

Drumadoon - A Neolithic Cursus on Arran

What Are Cursus Monuments? - Trevor Cowie explains

Robert Wales - an 18th Century Gravestone at Lyne Kirk

El Infiernito, Colombia

Piers Dixon reflects on the David I Conference at Stirling

November 21 Lecture: Peter Yeoman on Medieval Pilgrimage
Events



Welcome

Colin McLean, Newsletter Editor

Welcome to your November Newsletter. It's not often that a local story hits the headlines, but the acquisition of the Peebles Hoard certainly did that and we make no apology for running that story here. But we're not only looking for major blockbusters. Where have you been over the summer? Did you see anything interesting? Write a few words and send it in.

We hope to see you at the monthly lectures now that the new season is up and running. For more information see the Events page at the end of the Newsletter.

Peebles Bronze Age Hoard Saved for the Nation

One of the most significant hoards ever found in Scotland has been saved for the nation, having been acquired by National Museums Scotland. The Bronze Age Peebles Hoard was discovered in the Scottish Borders by a metal detectorist in 2020. It has since been painstakingly excavated, analysed and catalogued, revealing dozens of rare objects for the first time. Efforts are now underway to secure funding for the continued research and conservation of the hoard and to uncover the secrets of this one-of-a-kind discovery.

Dating to 1000–800 BCE, the Peebles Hoard comprises over 500 unusual bronze and organic pieces and components that had lain undisturbed for 3000 years.

It was allocated to National Museums Scotland under the Treasure Trove process, with an ex-gratia payment made to the detectorist who discovered it. The hoard represents a complex set of material, some of which has no archaeological parallel anywhere in western Europe. This includes many unique artefacts, the use of which is yet to be discovered and could transform our understanding of life in Bronze Age Scotland.

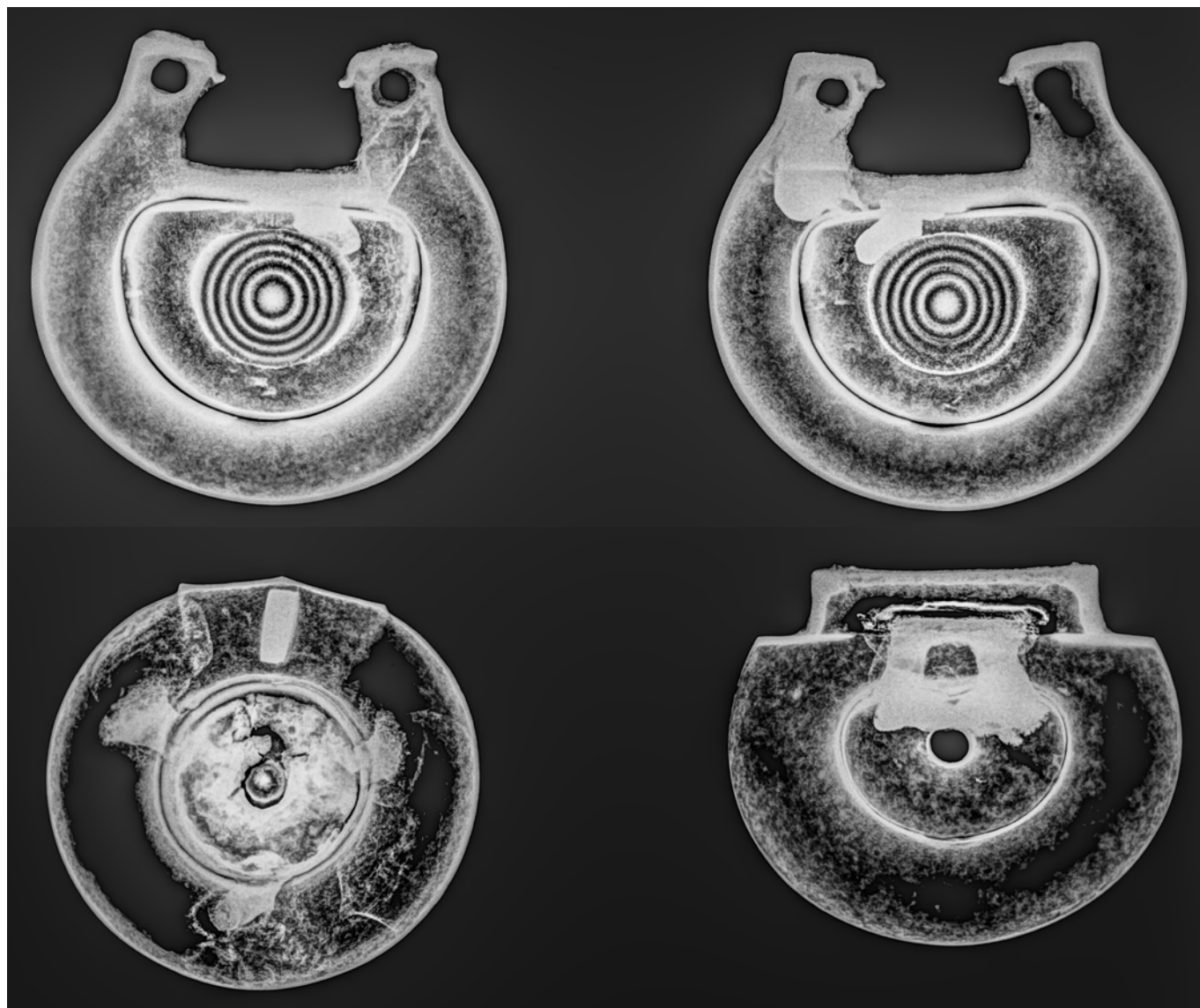
Larger and more recognisable objects within the hoard highlight Bronze Age Scotland's position as part of an international network of communities across the North Sea. Two rattle pendants, the first ever found in Scotland, are more commonly found in Denmark, northern Germany and northern Poland. These remarkable objects are created from interlinked bronze rings and pendant plates that would have hung from a horse or wooden vehicle and rattled as they moved.

Other exceptional survivals include a sword still in its wooden scabbard, as well as an array of small bronze buttons looped onto cords. The hoard also contains rare survivals of minute bronze pins, studs and bosses embedded in wood or leather. The remains of complex decorative straps, the purpose of which remains to be investigated, are preserved still mostly articulated after more than three millennia in the ground. This preservation offers a level of detail and insight not usually glimpsed for the Bronze Age.

The hoard was found by metal-detectorist Mariusz Stępień in 2020, after he initially identified unusual bronze objects and reported the find to the Treasure Trove Unit. This allowed experts from National Museums Scotland and the Treasure Trove Unit to coordinate a complex retrieval process that involved



PEEBLES HOARD DURING EXCAVATION © NATIONAL MUSEUMS SCOTLAND



X-RAY OF FOUR BRONZE AGE OBJECTS © NATIONAL MUSEUMS SCOTLAND

removing the hoard from the ground in a single block and continued excavation and analysis of the find under laboratory conditions.

The entire block of earth and Bronze Age material was CT scanned by the μ -VIS X-ray Imaging Centre, University of Southampton, a partner institution of the National Research Facility for Lab-based X-ray Computed Tomography (NXCT). This captured crucial details of the internal structure and relationships between materials in their original context. CT scanning also revealed that some of these objects were produced using ‘lost-wax casting’, a rare technique in Bronze Age Britain. This represents some of the earliest evidence of its use in Scotland. A meticulous excavation by archaeologists and conservators followed at the National Museums Collection Centre in Edinburgh, finally unearthing the fragile components of the hoard after more than 3,000 years hidden underground.

Dr Matthew Knight, Senior Curator of Prehistory at National Museums Scotland, said:

“The Peebles Hoard is exceptional, an utterly unique discovery that rewrites our understanding of both Bronze Age communities in Scotland and our prehistoric international connections.

Thanks to the diligence of the finder, expertise of

colleagues at the Treasure Trove Unit and National Museums Scotland, and the generosity of the team at the μ -VIS X-ray Imaging Centre, University of Southampton, we have made significant progress. However, more funding is critical to continue our conservation and research, to preserve the hoard for future generations and uncover the stories of Scotland’s ancient past.”

Professor Ian Sinclair, founder of the μ -VIS X-ray Imaging Centre, commented:

“We are pleased and excited to have worked as part of this multidisciplinary project. CT scanning the hoard was certainly a big challenge due to the scale of the hoard block, but we relished the opportunity to bring our engineering skills to successfully support this research on such an exceptional historical find.”

The many unique survivals in the Peebles Hoard, most notably fragments of fragile organic material, require essential conservation to prevent further deterioration and to carry out critical research. To this end, National Museums Scotland is launching a fundraising campaign to support the urgent costs of conserving the hoard and unlocking its enormous research potential.

This article is taken from the press release issued by National Museums Scotland. ■

Member Profile: Colin Bell

Interviewed by Colin McLean

We moved from Pencaitland to Peebles in 2006, and we've really loved it here: if you're an outdoors sort of person, there are hills right on your doorstep.

I took an honours degree in maths from the University of Strathclyde, and joined Scottish Equitable, which was taken over by Aegon, and then I qualified as an actuary. I got the chance of early retirement at age 57 and grabbed it. I've enjoyed it - I've never looked back.

How did you get interested in archaeology?

I've got a whole bunch of eclectic interests, which span hill-walking, cycling, family history, photography and astronomy. All sorts of things, none of which are really related to archaeology. But when I was younger, I was always fascinated by Ordnance Survey maps, and that linked into my hill-walking. I would pour over OS maps, especially for the areas that I lived in or was going to visit, seeing what features were on the ground. I noticed things like Iron Age forts and settlements appearing on the Ordnance Survey maps, and at that age they were things your eyes just skated over, but never really settled on. I was always more interested in the hills beyond. But moving to Peebles actually brought a lot of the features close to home - literally. Features such as Wallace's Trench.

It's a really deep trench that cuts across the Southern Upland Way between Traquair and the Three Brethren, and you wonder "What on earth was that built for; it's in the middle of nowhere?" When you see these things on the ground it does make you wonder about what was happening in those days. Walking past the Iron Age hill forts and settlements near Cademuir and the surrounding hills, seeing the chevaux-de-frise, you wonder that these people were reasonably sophisticated and could create such impressive structures. Getting into my fifties, I started looking for things that would interest me in retirement, and I was investigating local societies I might go along to, and I found PAS. I started going along to meetings about six years ago, and I was amazed by the range of talks and the quality of the speakers. It was all very interesting and I've been attending the

Edinburgh, Lothian & Borders Conference at Queen Margaret University for about five years. Again, there was a wide range of topics and speakers covering the local area, and I became more and more interested.

In PAS we are very fortunate in having people like Trevor Cowie, Strat Halliday and Piers Dixon. It's fantastic to have such experts in their field who are so willing to share their expertise with a keen amateurs like me. I went on on some of the field trips, such as to White Meldon with Strat Halliday. Walking around the features on the ground with everything being explained to you, and allowing you to see it in real life, was just great.

I really liked the White Meldons trip, and Burnswark Hill this year was tremendous. There are not many places you can go and see Roman features that still exist. There is Lyne of course, but there are not that many, and it was great to have such experienced guides as John Reid and his brother. They had surveyed the site with metal detectors and found all that lead shot. Those two visits in particular were absolutely fantastic and I hope to go on many more.

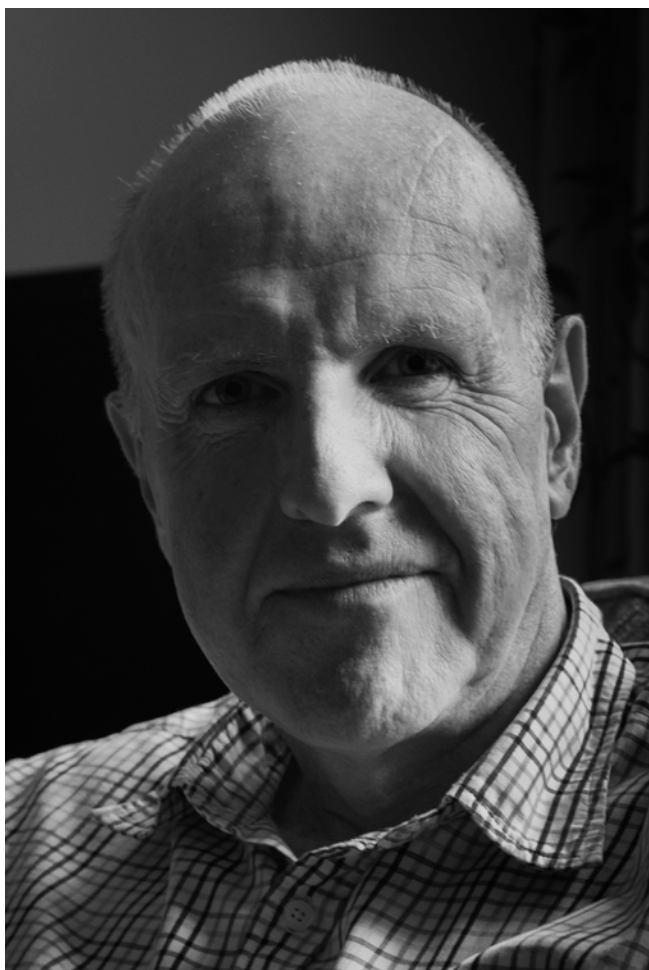
I got some exposure to LiDAR when investigating the Whiteadder Reservoir and Valley, and the surrounding areas. They had LiDAR data for that, and they asked people to identify features. I was able to identify a couple of ring settlements on river tributaries. If you looked at a promontory that sat between a tributary and the main river,

then looked for the same type of topography elsewhere, the same settlement pattern was repeated, so I flagged that up on the map. The LiDAR was revealing things that hadn't been seen before. It's satisfying to find something and as an amateur you never really know exactly what it is, but you can flag it up and maybe it will be something.

I'm looking forward to getting involved with the *Uncovering the Tweed* project, not just with the LiDAR but also being involved in local digs, and I would like to gain some experience in that.

Tell us about your discovery in Manor Valley.

What got me interested was the lack of carved stones from the distant past in the Peeblesshire area. If you look at the Royal Commission's *Inventory for Peeblesshire*,



COLIN McLEAN



MANORHEAD # COLIN McLEAN

there are maybe three - certainly less than a handful - carved stones in Peeblesshire, mainly because the local Greywacke stone is not ideal for carving as it's so hard. There was one found by Lyne, which is now in a museum, and there was one indicated behind the Peebles Hydro Hotel, but that has disappeared. And there was one at the south end of Manor Valley. It is identified on Canmore and on the Scottish Rock Art site, and there is a map reference for it. When I looked on Canmore I noticed there were no photographs, and wondered if I could find it and take some. The map reference on Canmore is far up a very steep hillside, and there was nothing to be seen there. This seemed strange, so I looked at the PAS booklet on Manor Valley and it contains a photograph of the late John Stoakley. The caption said he was standing beside a carved rock at Manorhead. I visited the site and was pretty sure I was at the location of the photograph as there were sufficient features to identify it, though it was taken 30 years ago, and it is possible that the track has been regraded since then, and perhaps the rock has been buried; it's no longer visible. It is certainly not where the Canmore map reference located it, and it is possible that two figures in the reference had been transposed. I would like to get this resolved, with the stone located and photographed as one of the very few carved stones in Peeblesshire.

Is there a particular object that has really fired your imagination?

In terms of museum objects, some of the Galloway Hoard items, which I saw in Chambers Street, are stunning. There was a particular pin - a bird on a gold pin - that was amazing. I'm a fan too of Alice Roberts' programmes "Digging For Britain". This has now been going for about ten years, and she summarises digs in regions all around the UK, explaining what has happened over the past year. She presents in an archaeological tent, and gets individuals to discuss their work. She gives people cameras to photograph what they find so they can record on the actual day of discovery. She then uses that film in her summary programme at the end of the year, which wraps everything up, and with participants demonstrating and talking about their findings. It is a fascinating series, and there is a particular object she came across in the last series which looked like a series of pentagons joined together to form a dodecahedron. She didn't know what this represented and neither did any of her experts; apparently only one other of its type has been found. It remains a mystery.

What do you think about PAS?

I think we're incredibly fortunate to have a society in Peebles which has so many experts in it. I would find it hard to believe there are many societies like it. I am really impressed by the knowledge of the people who attend the meetings, and of those who present. Not only about archaeology; but the archaeology is certainly impressive! ■

Drumadoon: investigating a Neolithic cursus on the Isle of Arran

Lecture by Dr Gavin MacGregor

As our speaker in October, we were delighted to welcome Dr Gavin MacGregor, to speak on the topic of 'Investigating a Neolithic cursus on the Isle of Arran'. Now Director of Archaeology Scotland, Gavin has worked in Scottish archaeology since graduating in 1992, with experience in academic, commercial and community archaeology. In his talk, he charted the background to and sketched out the results of the ongoing multi-partner research project set up to investigate the presumed Neolithic cursus monument at Drumadoon on the west coast of Arran (see Canmore ID 360276). As well as acknowledging support from Archaeology Scotland itself, HES and several UK universities (Birkbeck, Birmingham, Bournemouth, Coventry, Glasgow, Reading and Southampton), Gavin paid tribute to the co-operation and breadth of vision the landowner, David Bennett, and his work to promote the archaeological and natural heritage of the Drumadoon Farm Estate (for more details see <https://www.drumadoon.scot/>).

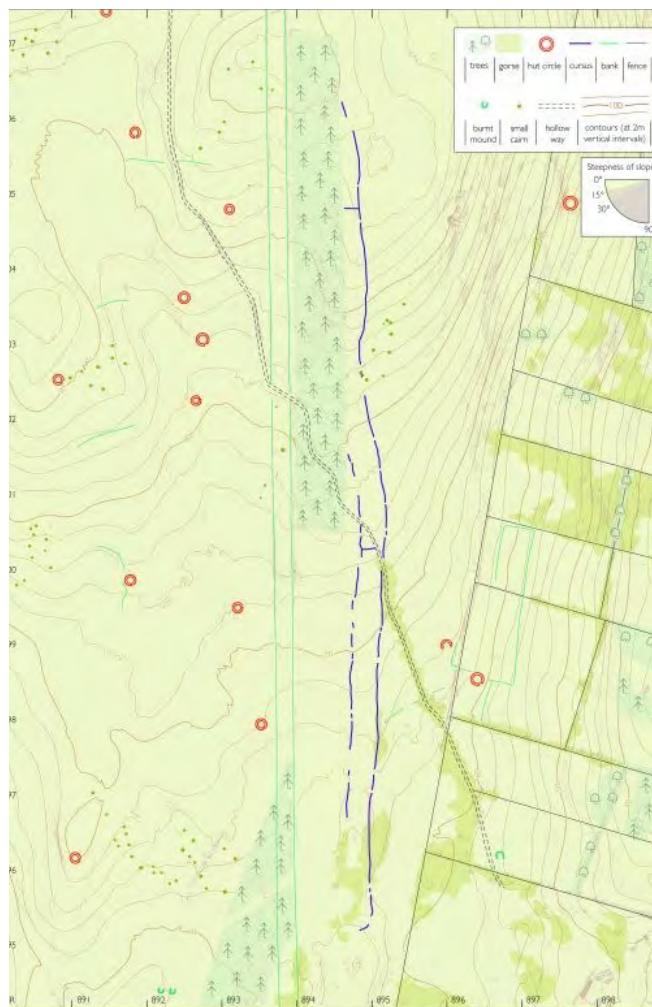
Reflecting his own particular interest in the development and delivery of public engagement in archaeology, and indeed his own passion for art and photography, Gavin then explained how this aspect of the project had evolved. Over ten years earlier and then working with Northlight Heritage, he and colleagues in Glasgow University had begun to explore how archaeologists could engage with the public using Arran's rich prehistory and this had led to the delivery of several events delivered in partnership with the National Trust for Scotland team at Brodick Castle. Under the heading of 'Burning the Circle', these events combined experimental archaeology and performance to highlight the significance of Arran's prehistory. In 2017, for example, following the construction of a timber post-avenue and timber circles inspired by archaeological remains at the well-known complex of sites on Machrie Moor, an audience of several hundred attended a night-time processional performance.

Continuing this successful track record of promotion of the island's archaeology to the public, the most recent

working on site and an open day to a multi-day arts and archaeology workshop which encouraged artists to visit the site and engage with the excavation team and the local archaeology.

On this occasion it was unfortunately not possible for us to record the presentation. However PAS members wishing to find out more about the interim results of the excavation and the associated environmental sampling strategy, or who were unable to attend the meeting, may be interested to know that a talk by Gavin's co-director Dr Kenny Brophy (Senior Lecturer in Archaeology, University of Glasgow) is available via the ACFA Field Archaeology for All YouTube channel (ACFA = formerly the Association of Certificated Field Archaeologists). The link is as follows: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhWsnimFsA>

In his talk entitled 'Drumadoon, Arran: a cursus monument and Neolithic farming landscape' (delivered



CURSUS AT DRUMADOON © CANMORE



BURNING THE CIRCLE EVENT AT BRODICK CASTLE IN 2017 © GAVIN MACGREGOR

fieldwork season at Drumadoon was complemented by an imaginative programme of community participation and involvement ranging from local volunteers

in April 2024), Kenny reports on the 2021-2023 excavation seasons. The excavations suggest this was a massive monument some 1.1km in length, involving a complex construction process combining turf and stone, and that elements of the cursus may have been deliberately damaged at the end of its life. As well as describing the excavation results, Kenny reports on the environmental science work and geophysical surveys that the project has carried out. The site is set in the wider context of the rich Neolithic archaeology of the island and within the broader cursus tradition on northern Britain. ■

Trevor Cowie

What are Cursus Monuments?

Trevor Cowie explains

Cursus monuments are elongated rectilinear earthwork enclosures. Their most distinctive feature is the perimeter earthwork. This almost always comprises a simple bank and external ditch, but in Scotland a number of cursus are defined by a row of closely-set pits or postholes. The recognition of cursus as field monuments usually relies heavily on the results of aerial reconnaissance because most are heavily denuded and no longer survive as upstanding earthworks (eg Holywood South, Dumfries: see illustration). With its surviving bank, it is the relative completeness of the Drumadoon cursus that makes it such a significant discovery – owing to its identification as a result of an extensive LiDAR survey carried out on Arran by Historic Environment Scotland.

Cursus vary enormously in size. The shorter examples range from about 250m to about 900m in length, whereas the larger examples may be anything up to 5.6km long. The massive Dorset cursus is often cited as being about 10km in length, but this monument is in fact two cursus joined together, one of 5.6km and the other of 4.3km. The width varies roughly proportionally with length in the sense that the longest cursus are also the widest, but in no cases does the width of a cursus exceed 130m and

evidence suggests the construction and use of the earthwork cursus monuments mostly took place during the middle Neolithic period, with radiocarbon dates ranging from about 3600 cal BC to 3000 cal BC. The lifespan of individual cursus is hard to gauge, but there is some evidence that they were used over considerable periods of time and that their longevity was achieved either by re-cutting the ditch, or by digging new sections of ditch. Cursus sometimes incorporate earlier monuments of other classes.

What were cursus for? The name ‘cursus’ was first used in an archaeological context by the antiquary William Stukeley in the early 18th century to describe a linear enclosure to the north of Stonehenge, Wiltshire, which he likened to a racecourse (cursus being the Latin term for a race-track). While we can now confidently rule out Stukeley’s suggestion, the precise function of cursus is not known. However, their scale and the investment of resources involved in their construction suggest a ritual rather than a mundane purpose, with current interpretations favouring their use as ceremonial monuments for significant community gatherings, perhaps involving processions through the landscape.

They have no common orientation, and while it has been claimed that they were built as celestial observatories there is no firm evidence for this, and any correspondence with major risings or settings of the sun or moon may simply be coincidental. Cursus often run across valleys, and their setting and scale can only be fully appreciated by standing at the terminals, which are usually intervisible. A number of cursus have their terminals close to water courses or run across the higher ground between adjacent river valleys – but whether the activities undertaken at cursus were directly connected with water or water-courses is not known.

Further reading:

Brophy, K 2019 *Reading Between the Lines. The Neolithic Cursus Monuments of Scotland*. London: Routledge
Historic England 2018 *Prehistoric Avenues and Alignments: Introductions to Heritage Assets*. Historic England. Swindon. Downloadable [here](#).

Loveday, R 2019 *Introduction to Prehistory. Neolithic Factsheet 8. Neolithic Cursus Monuments*. The Prehistoric Society. Downloadable [here](#)

Loveday, R 2006 *Inscribed across the Landscape. The cursus enigma*. Stroud: Tempus.

Holywood South Cursus, to the NW of Dumfries. Nothing can now be seen of this cursus monument, which was discovered from the air in the 1970s and partially excavated in 1998. However, the aerial photo conveys very well the elongated rectangular outline of such enclosures, defined in this case by a broad ditch broken by causeways at several points along the sides. It measures 285m in length by approximately 35m in width, narrowing at the northern end (after Canmore ID 65652; image © HES <http://canmore.org.uk/collection/1758185>) ■

most are in the range 20-60m. Access to the interiors of cursus was generally restricted. Entrances occur most often near one end of the long sides but may also be found in the centre of the long sides or at the ends. Larger cursus tend to cut across the natural grain of the countryside, whereas shorter cursus are often set out on a single gently sloping block of land. Cursus set on higher ground tend to run along the spring-line, while those on lower ground frequently lie at right-angles to a river or stream.

What is the date of cursus monuments? Present



Robert Wales: Investigating an 18th Century Gravestone at Lyne Kirk

Iain & Enid Macleod

Lyne Kirk is situated in an idyllic setting on a knoll overlooking the A72 trunk road around four miles west of Peebles. The immediate area has a rich history. There appears to have been a chapel here by the 12th century while the discovery of long cist graves on nearby Abbey Knowe suggests the presence of an early Christian community as early as the 5th or 6th century AD. Only a few hundred metres further to the west, the earthworks of the 2nd century AD Roman fort are still visible on a broad terrace overlooking the Lyne Water.

Built between 1640 and 1645 by John Hay of Yester (later 1st Earl of Tweeddale), the fabric of the present church is still largely of 17th century date, despite

various repairs and thorough restoration in the late 19th century which saw the addition of a porch. Internally, features of particular interest include the Dutch pulpit, canopied pews dated 1644 and a Pre-Reformation font.

The kirkyard is well known to the Peeblesshire Archaeological Society on account of the remarkable 'Adam and Eve' gravestone, conserved, displayed and now cared for by the society as a project undertaken under the auspices of Archaeology Scotland's nationwide Adopt-a-Monument scheme. Dated 1712, the stone memorialises Jannet Veitch, a local girl who died at the age of just 16 years.

However, it was one of the later 18th century monuments in the churchyard that caught our eye!

The Robert Wales memorial - At the east gable end of the church several memorials have been incorporated into the wall face, possibly in the course of repairs or restoration work during the 19th century. The most striking of these is an imposing memorial for a Robert Wales; although the sandstone has laminated quite badly and in parts the inscription is only just decipherable, it reads:

*Here Lies
Mr Robert Wales
Surgeon of the 68th
Regiment of Foot, Son
of the Late Mr Lancelot
Wales, Rector of The
Grammar School of [or at]
Kello, who died on
9th Day of February 1793
aged [29]*

Who was this Robert Wales?

The inscription was peculiar in that there did not appear to be any apparent connection with Lyne. Why was a military surgeon buried there? Once our curiosity had been piqued, this became a quest to find out more about the man and his family!

A surgeon of the 68th Regiment of Foot - The 68th Regiment of Foot was an infantry regiment of the British Army. Following the outbreak of the Seven Years War (1756-63) various regiments were ordered to raise a second battalion. In August 1756, the 23rd Regiment of Foot raised a 2nd Battalion while stationed in Leicester but two years later, in April 1758, this was turned into



THE ROBERT WALES MEMORIAL, LYNE KIRK © COLIN MCLEAN



LYNE KIRK COLIN MCLEAN

a new and separate regiment in its own right. Ranked as the 68th, the new regiment's first colonel was John Lambton and its early recruiting took place in his home county of Durham. It became the county regiment of Durham in 1782, formalising its links with that region, and ultimately went on to become part of the Durham Light Infantry (DLI).

A query was therefore raised with the DLI Museum. From their archives, they were able to tell us that Robert Wales was born c.1764 in Scotland. He was commissioned as a surgeon on 15th June 1785. He then served in Gibraltar from 1788 and died there in 1793. Prior to serving in Gibraltar, where the 68th was to stay for nine years, Robert would, according to the regimental timeline have served on Jersey and/or Guernsey where the regiment had been stationed since 29th September 1784.

His surgical training - What can we say about his surgical training? The hierarchical structure of licensed medical practitioners in the 18th century and the competition and animosity between the “regulars” (licensed, educated practitioners) and the “irregulars” (untrained practitioners) created a great deal of tension. At the top were the licensed physicians, tasked with diagnosing illness and prescribing treatment. These men were university-educated and licensed under a guild or college of physicians. They belonged to institutions, such as the London or Edinburgh College of Physicians, which dominated medical practices and sought to subordinate irregulars. Physicians saw themselves as above other practitioners, as it was under their guidance that patients then went to visit the two underling professions. Surgeons, who achieved their position by means of a seven-year apprenticeship, dealt with external

injuries, setting bones, purging, and internal surgery. This last, however, was extremely risky and painful during the early modern period, so it was much less common. At the top of the Surgical profession would be those who had obtained the Fellowship (FRCS) of one of the Surgical Colleges (London, Edinburgh, Glasgow or Dublin). Many surgeons began as barbers, as both professions required knife skills. Parallel in status with surgeons were the apothecaries, who mixed remedies as prescribed by the physician. As with the surgeon, apothecaries learned their trade through apprenticeship. Many apothecaries attempted to subvert physicians by prescribing medicine themselves, leading to a great deal of animosity.

A search through the archives of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, Edinburgh and Glasgow revealed he was not a Fellow of any of these institutions and consequently was not a fully qualified Surgeon. However, from the archives of Edinburgh Medical School we find that he matriculated for the years 1781-84 studying Anatomy, Surgery and Chemistry but did not graduate with what would have been MD (Doctor of Medicine). This was not unusual as to do so was expensive and not necessary to pursue a medical career, hence his being able to get a commission as an army surgeon in June 1785. During the time from him finishing medical school and gaining his commission, he may have served as an assistant to an existing surgeon but as yet we have no details about this.

His birth and death - A publicly accessible family tree on the Ancestry website lists a 'Robert Whales'. It states that Robert Whales' father was 'Lancilott Whales [sic]', corresponding to the name given on the gravestone. The family tree states that Robert was born at West Linton, Peeblesshire, that he was baptised on 10th July 1763 and that he died on 9th February 1793 (which matches the date on the gravestone). Despite the different spellings of the surname, the records are clearly referring to the same man. During his life and at the time of Robert's death, his name was spelled Wales on Army records and by family members, who presumably arranged for his body to be brought back from Gibraltar and buried at Lyne Kirk with a memorial stone, under the name Wales.

It may have been that Robert requested that his body be returned home for burial. He probably had time to do that as the likelihood is he died of an infection e.g. cholera, or a genetic life-shortening condition rather than in combat. Bodies were sometimes shipped home, like Nelson's body after Trafalgar, in a cask of alcoholic content. The family probably would have had to pay for that service. But why at Lyne and what are the family connections there?

His family background – and a connection to a famous name! We decided to look into the second name on the gravestone, Lancelot Wales, who had predeceased his son and was described as a rector of a

grammar school in Kello. In view of the 68th Regiment's connection with the county, it looked as if the Durham parish and village of Kelloe might be a suitable place to start. However neither this nor a former Kelloe estate in Berwickshire fitted the bill; instead the solution to the place-name problem turned out to be Kelso, where it transpired that a Lancelot Whale was rector from 1780-1788. Indeed, he has a literary claim to fame as his pupils included the young Walter Scott who lived in Kelso for a time in 1783. Scott clearly found Lancelot to be a great tutor and inspiration, and in later life he was to describe him as an "excellent classical scholar, a humourist and a worthy man".

It has proved possible to reconstruct Lancelot's teaching career from Kirk Session records. These indicate that before moving to Kelso, Lancelot worked from c1766 to 1780 as a schoolmaster in Hamilton (presumably at the Grammar School). Prior to that he was schoolmaster in West Linton (1760-1766), having started his teaching career at Channelkirk in Berwickshire (1757-1760).

In August 1762 while teaching in West Linton, Lancelot married a Marion Paterson, daughter of Robert Paterson, late tenant, Slipperfield, West Linton. Their only son, Robert was born in 1763 and baptised in West Linton in the same year. Sadly, we know nothing more about Marion or what happened to her; although the Patersons were a large and well-known West Linton farming family, she disappears into the mists of time and there is no known grave for her. Intriguingly, a Gray/Paterson gravestone adjacent to Robert's at Lyne Kirk appears to have links to the same family.

By contrast, the connections of the Whale family lie further east in Roxburghshire and Berwickshire. Lancelot himself was born in Earlstoun in 27th February 1737, his own father being the schoolmaster there after moving from Stichill near Kelso, while previous generations had farmed in the Yetholm area.

Where next? - None of this fully explains why Robert should be buried at Lyne. There is much more scope for seeing if any further light can be shed on his early years; in particular for looking into his maternal family tree to try to determine what happened to Marion Paterson, and for investigating the possible links to the Gray/Paterson gravestone alongside that of Robert's at Lyne Kirk. As always with this sort of research there are almost as many questions as answers!

Acknowledgements - We are grateful to the following individuals or organisations for their help during our research: Kirsty Archer-Thompson, Collections and Interpretation Manager, Abbotsford House; Durham Light Infantry Archives; Trevor Cowie, PAS; Jaqueline Cahill, Archivist Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh and Edinburgh University Archives. Thanks also to Tony Gemmell for his help with photographs and imaging. ■

El Infiernito - The Monquirá Archaeological Park, Colombia

Jim Ness

At 2,240 metres, in the middle of a semi-arid landscape, with high temperatures during the day and low at night, the Monquirá Archaeological Park known also as El Infiernito (Little Hell) is located west



of Villa de Leyva, in the Zanquenzipa Valley in central Colombia.

Evidence of various pre-Hispanic cultures can be found in the park. One culture was responsible for massive lithic structures identified as a solar observatory, but recent excavations also indicate a sacred place. There are reports of findings of 25 half-buried stone columns since the mid-nineteenth century described as 'a series of indigenous columns that would have been part of a temple or a palace', as referenced by Manuel Velez in 1846.

Carbon-14 tests affirm that the structures date from a period long before the arrival of the Spaniards, around 2,500BP, and support the hypothesis of Silva Celisin in 1983, of the existence in this place of an observatory that was also used as a ceremonial and sun worship centre. Carbon dates were collected from a variety of animal



and vegetable remains including what were thought to be maize oblations or offerings.

The Phallus, a symbol of fertility. The sacredness of human sexuality and concern for the soil fertility of the fields are revealed in these colossal carved monoliths. They were the object of religious and magical cults and rites by the Muisca, an indigenous group contemporary with but independent of the Incas. The arrival of the sun at its zenith at this latitude (50° 31' 15" N) occurs twice a year. The Muisca thought that the instantaneous disappearance of the sun's shadow on these columns due to the sun being directly overhead was a sign that the star was anthropomorphized and through the stones descended to Earth to fertilize it. Such an extraordinary cosmic marriage was regularly fulfilled in the March and September equinoxes and was the object of great



religious and magical festivals that with great pomp were directed by the Muisca astronomer priests.

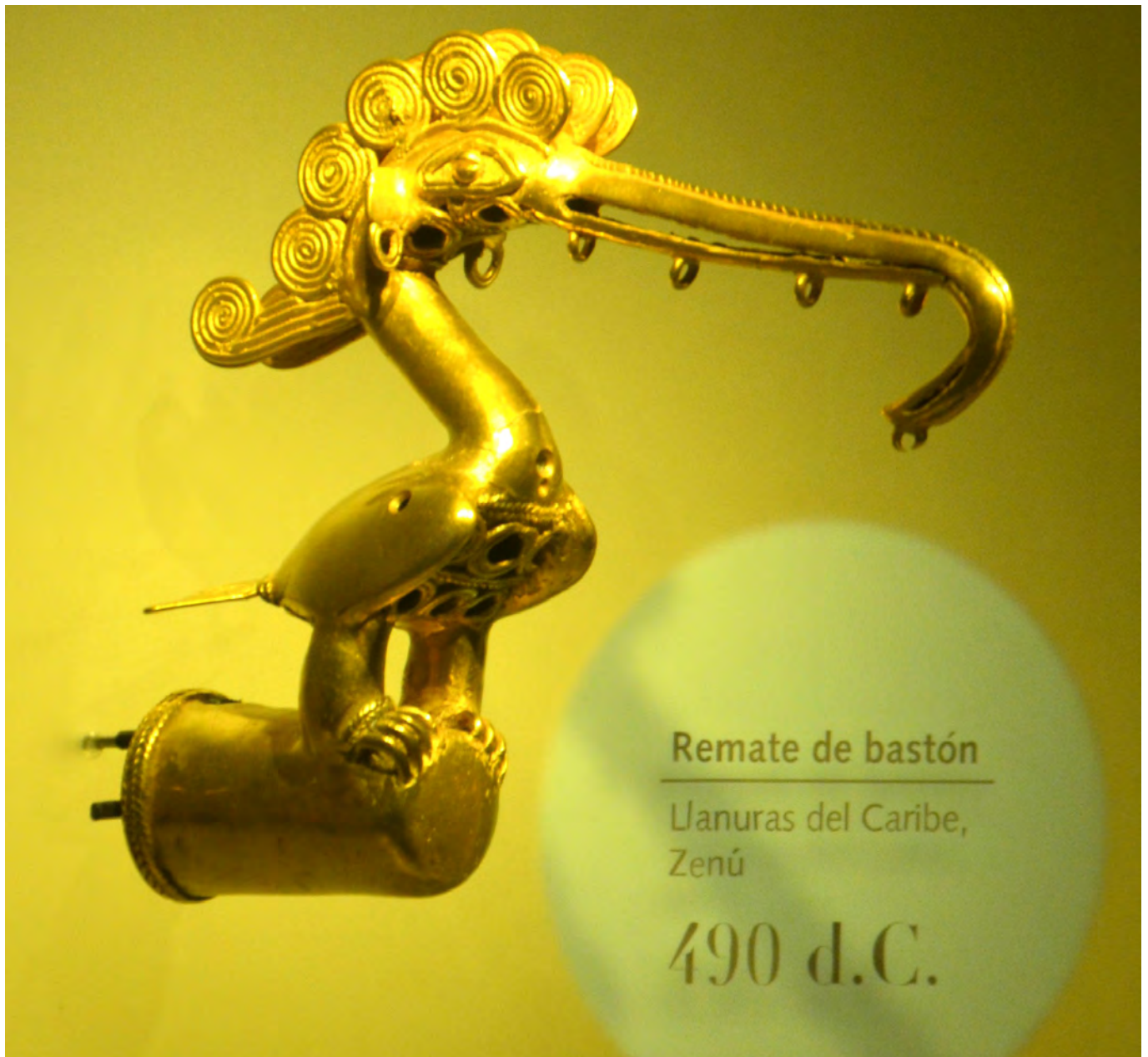
Solar Observatory - A rectangle enclosed by two rows of columns, aligned east-west, possibly constituted a sacred field intended both to receive the sun when it appears on the horizon, and to follow it and observe it in its movement until it reaches its zenith position, a phenomenon that the Muisca sages determined by means of pillars erected to record the shadows that marked the solstices and equinoxes on the ground. The lithic pieces are carved in sandstone, many of them in columnar shapes with an incised ring. A total of 109 monoliths have been excavated to date: 54 in the north stone row and 55 in the south.

Astronomical events are thought to have been celebrated with spiritual rituals related to fertility.

Dolmenic Tomb structure. This funerary stone structure was exclusively used to house the mortal remains of high social and spiritual ranking figures.

A collective tomb, located in such an important place, suggests that the human bone remains found inside are those of ancestral scholars dedicated to the observation and contemplation of astronomical phenomena - nature and human life as a whole, conceiving and giving life.

Museo del Oro. The glories of the Muisca civilisation can be seen in the Museo del Oro (Gold Museum) in Bogota, Colombia's capital. The museum contains 32,000 pieces – the largest collection in the world. Many pieces depict mixed animals – jaguar/frog,



human/eagle etc. and lots of figurines depicting social life dating from c.200 to 1500CE. The most famous piece, the Balsa Muisca, is a model of a raft dredged from the floor of the Laguna de Guatavita. Whereas the sun was seen as the source of life, lakes were deemed to represent the end of life so golden objects were thrown into deep mountain lakes as offerings to the dead – the source of the myth of El Dorado. ■

All photographs by Jim Ness





THE MONOLITHIC PHALLUS: A SYMBOL OF FERTILITY

Piers Dixon Reflects on the David I 900 Conference

The conference was held at the University of Stirling on November 1-3 with about 50 or 60 people present, of whom the core were members of the Forth Naturalist and History Society. The first paper by Professor Dauvit



Broun outlined contemporary descriptions in written sources of David I that portrayed his pious Christianity alongside his kingly mien. This was followed by Neil McGuigan on how his reputation has evolved. His armies at the Battle of Standard were described as barbaric and wild, yet he was brought up at the court of the King of England and introduced Norman knights

to Scotland, and the very things that in England were considered civilised. After tea break, John Harrison used documents to show how the landscape of Stirling and its hinterland was rich farmland and not an oasis in a boggy land. Landscape was part of the theme of Duncan Wright in his sketch of the anarchy of King Stephen's reign and the ringwork castles that were built by the warring armies, and showed that there were some likely examples of these documented on the Tweed around Norham Castle. This after all was the backdrop to David's opportunistic takeover of northern England. Carl Savage from the Treasure Trove Unit gave a masterly account of the new fangled silver coinage that David introduced to Scotland. He also distributed it in northern England, projecting his kingly power to regional powers like Somerled in the west, and to his Moray rivals in the north.

The afternoon saw Derek Alexander, who many will remember for his talk about *Stills*, cover medieval grave slabs in Renfrewshire with his usual enthusiasm, and Alex Wolff the relatively benign politics of the Irish Sea that David was able to take advantage of during his kingship. Frances Bickerstaff argued that he consolidated the developing church parochial structure in the southwest, another instrument of his power. This expression of power was brought sharply into focus by John Barrett's account of his painstaking research on the planned burghs of Moray showing how they were a conscious colonisation by incomers under his patronage, cementing the Canmore dynasty's hold on a rebellious area.

After tea Murray Cook showed us how the crossings of the Forth had been used by Romans, Dark Age regional powers and then by David at Stirling finishing with another look at the landscape from the place names of the area as evidence of the exploitation of peat resources.

I came away enthused and full of thoughts and queries from a very stimulating day courtesy of the Forth Naturalists. ■



HISTORIC STIRLING TODAY COLIN MCLEAN

November 21 Lecture: Peter Yeoman

Richard Welander

There can't be many medieval pilgrimage sites in Scotland that our speaker this month hasn't visited. An expert on the archaeology of pilgrimage, Peter Yeoman has written several books and guides on the subject and, with a career spanning more than 40 years, he continues to pursue his research interests leading archaeological tours at home and abroad.

During his time as Regional Archaeologist for Fife in the 1990s, he undertook major excavations on the Isle of May and in St Andrews and then latterly, as Head of Cultural Resources at Historic Scotland, he led a series of research programmes focussed on presenting new interpretations to visitors to some of Scotland's key pilgrimage sites.

In his talk *'To be a Pilgrim: an image of popular faith in Medieval Scotland'*, Peter will give us an archaeological insight into the who, what and why of medieval pilgrimage drawing on his decades of experience working on sites across Scotland including the Isle of May, St Andrews Cathedral, Whithorn Priory and, most recently, Iona Abbey as part of the University of Glasgow Iona Research Project team.

Peter will be speaking at St Joseph's Neighbourhood Centre, Rosetta Road, Peebles on Thursday November 21 at 7.30pm.

As always, non-members are very welcome to come to any of our monthly talks (£5 at the door; free if you're under 18) - or why not think of joining us? See the **Events** page in this Newsletter or visit our website Peeblesshire Archaeological Society for lecture programme details and to see what else is on offer!



PETER YEOMAN WITH THE KILDALTON CROSS



FIRST VIEW OF ST ANDREWS FOR PILGRIMS FROM THE SOUTH
FROM PETER YEOMAN'S BOOK ON MEDIEVAL PILGRIMAGE

Preliminary Reports on Bowden Moor

Piers Dixon

The preliminary Reports on Bowden Moor and the previous PAS Survey have been posted on the PAS website [here](#). Dr Tim Kinnaird of St Andrews University has confirmed that the results of the OSL dating of the earthworks are expected shortly.

The interim reports on the 2012-22 excavations at Shootinglee have also been posted on the same page as above.

Events

PAS Programme 2024-25

Richard Welander

Our programme for the 2024-25 session is off to a good start and here are the dates of our forthcoming meetings for you to get into your diary. All the talks are at our usual venue in St Joseph's Neighbourhood Centre, apart from December's which is in the Eastgate Theatre. You can watch the recording of Mairi Davies' September talk on *Women in Archaeology* [here](#).

November 21 2024 Pilgrimage in Medieval Scotland
Peter Yeoman, former HES Head of Cultural Resources - see feature elsewhere in this Newsletter

December 10 2024 The Twelve Towers of Rule - Life and Strife in the Valley of Rulewater in the Late Medieval Period

Professor Jane Bower FRSE. Jointly with the Tweeddale Society. Note that a limited number of free tickets will be held for PAS members until November 25th, but do apply promptly. *NB in the Eastgate Theatre*

January 16 2025 Holyrood Park, Edinburgh: Recent Excavations at Dunsapie Fort

Jamie Humble, AOC Archaeology

February 20 2025 Rediscovering Cromarty Medieval Burgh

Steven Birch, University of Aberdeen

March 20 2025 Tim Kinnaird, School of Earth & Environmental Sciences at St Andrews University

April 17 2025 AGM

Edinburgh, Lothians & Borders Archaeology Conference 2024

Saturday November 16 2024, Queen Margaret University

This event has long been a favourite with PAS members. A packed programme combines with opportunities to meet friends old and new. Topics include: Dalhousie Quarry; Edmonstone Estate, Edinburgh; Treasure Trove - What's New?; Roman Inveresk; Rosslyn Castle; Using Heritage with the Dementia Community; New SCARF Dendrochronology



Framework; Mossburn Distillery; The Halter Burn Story; Developing a Conservation Plan for a Vessel; Cowan's Close; Medieval Roslin; Site of the Former Edinburgh & Leith Glass Company; Ancrum Old Bridge; Edinburgh Playhouse. The full programme and booking details can be found [here](#).

The archaeology of medieval hunting and hunting forests. A talk by Piers Dixon to Hermitage History Group, at **7.00pm on November 28** at Hermitage Community Hall.



HERMITAGE CASTLE © COLIN MCLEAN

PAS Subscription Renewals Due

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