



October 2022 Newsletter

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

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

On **Thursday 20 October** we look forward to welcoming human remains specialist [Dr Angela Boyle](#) to speak on the topic of 'Cowboys and Indians? A biocultural study of violence and conflict in south-east Scotland c. AD 400 to c. AD 850'.



3-D skull prints formed an integral part of Angela's display at the Research Showcase hosted by the Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities in June 2019. They were used alongside images on display panels and an innovative hologram showing the impact of an axe injury on a skull (© Polyphonic Murders Project)

Dr Angela Boyle has worked as a professional archaeologist and osteoarchaeologist for over thirty years, both in Britain and abroad. After graduating from Glasgow University, she went on to work for Oxford Archaeology where she first developed her expertise in burial archaeology and osteoarchaeology (the study of skeletal remains). After returning to Scotland in 2005, Angela worked for Glasgow-based GUARD



Archaeology for several years, before going on to combine freelance work with doctoral research at Edinburgh University, for which she was awarded her PhD in December 2021.

The information recovered from the study of human remains can allow us to challenge many of the traditionally held perceptions of past societies. Current multi-faceted research into the evidence for violence in early medieval Scotland will be used to demonstrate this proposition. During the period in question, south-east Scotland experienced several dramatic events including the end of Roman rule, the Anglian invasion and the commencement of Viking attacks.

Osteological analysis of more than 300 skeletons, many of which were excavated in the 19th and first half of the 20th century has demonstrated a high prevalence of violence with particular concentrations on the Pictish frontier on and around the Firth of Forth. What does this tell us about the relationships between Angles, Britons and Picts and the nature of conflict in the area? Incorporating much material which had not hitherto been examined, Angela's research was complemented by new radiocarbon dates, isotope and ancient DNA analysis and X-Ray techniques to investigate injuries.

Venue: St Joseph's Neighbourhood Centre, Rosetta Road, Peebles, EH45 8JU

Date: Thursday 20 October

Time: 7.30pm

Refreshments will be provided following the talk.

2) Conclusion of fieldwork at Shootinglee

After over 10 years our fieldwork operations at Shootinglee have finally come to a conclusion. With photographing and drawing completed and the process of backfilling concluded the excavation officially ended on Saturday 10 September.



Trench 7 during final cleaning & recording (left) and after backfilling (right)



Piers Dixon and Joyce Durham want to thank all those who have worked so hard at the site since the excavation started in 2012 and who made the work at Shootinglee



Last day at Shootinglee. From l-r: David Drury, Brenda Dreghorn, Piers Dixon and Joyce Durham

so enjoyable. The efforts have been magnificent and we have had some great results.

Piers is now focusing on post-excavation with Joyce and other members of the team.

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

Between August and November this year, upper Tweeddale is the focus for an exciting new research project being masterminded by the [Arthur Trail Association](#) in collaboration with [GUARD Archaeology Ltd](#). The aim of [Investigating Drumelzier's Hidden Heritage](#) is to undertake fieldwork at several sites in the Drumelzier/Broughton area in the hope of shedding light on Tweeddale's early medieval past.

The project comprises three main stages which began with excavations at the spectacular site of **Tinnis Castle Hillfort** between 8 and 19 August. Please see last month's newsletter for a report update.



Thirlestane Barrows cropmarks (© HES)

October sees the focus of the project shift to the **Thirlestane Barrows** near Broughton - cropmarks only discovered in 2018. These appear 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 has removed all surface traces of the mounds, the ditches were visible from the air during the dry conditions of summer 2018. The excavators here plan to undertake geophysical surveys and limited excavation between 17 and 28 October to confirm if these are indeed barrow graves and to investigate the nature of the archaeological evidence they contain. And whether these graves date to the same period as Tinnis Castle Hillfort.



Thirlestane Barrows from the east (GUARD Archaeology Ltd)

The project is funded by the SSE Renewables Clyde Borders Community Fund, Fallago Environment Fund, Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Dr Euan MacKie Legacy Fund, Glenkerie Community Fund and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Tinnis Castle and Hillfort is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The excavations are being undertaken with consent from Historic Environment Scotland and the Scottish Government.

Several Peeblesshire Archaeological Society members will be participating in the survey and excavations so we look forward to hearing about ongoing work in due course.

With thanks to PAS member [Dr Ronan Toolis \(GUARD Archaeology Ltd\)](#) for supplying details of the project.



4) 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.



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 Shingleton 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.



5) Reminder: Renewal of annual subscriptions

As reported in last month's newsletter the arrival of September means that we are now inviting you to renew your annual subscription. Subscriptions are due for the year beginning 1st September. Please find attached a renewal form with instructions. There is a Word and a PDF version. Please use whichever is easiest. If you do not wish to renew your subscription, I would be grateful if you could let Brian Tait know (brikath16@hotmail.com) as soon as possible to avoid troubling you with further reminders.

In coming to a decision, please bear in mind that as well as supporting our programme of talks, your subscription also helps to fund other essential expenditure such as our public liability insurance, Council for British Archaeology affiliation fees and printing costs.

We are very grateful to everyone who has already renewed.

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

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