

A TOUCH OF GAS

The Newsletter of Glasgow Archaeological Society



Issue 89 – Spring 2022

Glasgow Archaeological Society, c/o Tho. & J.W. Barty, Solicitors, 61 High Street, Dunblane, FK15 0EH

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@GlasgowArchSoc

We have a Flickr account for members to download their photographs of Society events - <http://www.flickr.com/groups/gasmembers/>

Keep up to date with Society Activities on our website – www.glasarchsoc.org.uk

Annual General Meeting 2022

Members are reminded that the AGM will take place on

**Thursday 21st April 2022
At 7:15pm (Note earlier time)**

This is your Society and your AGM gives you the opportunity to raise points that concern you or which you think will be of interest to the Society.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the AGM on Thursday 15th April 2021
3. Annual Report from the President, Kenny Brophy
4. Annual Report from the Treasurer, Stephen Stockdale
5. Election of Office Bearers and Council Members
6. A.O.C.B.

The Dalrymple Lecture Fund

Jointly with Glasgow University the Society administers The Dalrymple Lecture Fund, a generous bequest by James Dalrymple to finance a series of free public Lectures on European topics of historic and archaeological interest.

The first Lecture Series was delivered in 1907, and recent speakers have included, Dr Chris Stringer, Professor Sir Barry Cunliffe, Ian Hodder, Professor Mike Parker Pearson, Professor William Hanson and Professor Roger Stalley.

The Fund also generously supports the publication of the Scottish Archaeological Journal.

The Dalrymple/Donaldson Fund

In addition to the Dalrymple Lecture Fund, James Dalrymple left money in trust, later greatly augmented by Professor Gordon Donaldson, formerly Historiographer Royal, to provide funds to assist with the renovation and repair of buildings of historic or architectural importance.

Further details may be obtained from the Fund Secretary – Dr Anthony Lewis - bletherer@hotmail.com.

Applications require to be submitted prior to commencement of works by 31 October in any year in which the awards are made.

Presidential Dinner



Late last year, before social activity was once more curtailed, this time by the Omicron variant, President Kenny Brophy hosted a dinner for all Past Presidents (Left to right and in festive mood are – Jim Mearns, Dorothy Lunt, Jim Walker, Dale Bilsland, Sue Hothersall, Lawrence Keppie and Ian Marshall).

GAS excursion - 9th April 2022

Our next excursion will be a Walk and Talk tour of the West End lead by Jim Mearns.

We will be starting on Great Western Road at Kelvinbridge Subway Station at 10:15 a.m. The walk should finish at Pearce Lodge on Kelvin Way at approximately 12 noon. If you wish to go please contact Helen Maxwell at helend57@hotmail.com or 0141 942 8937.

Looking forward to seeing you all.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Edinburgh University Press (EUP), publishers of our Journal, have gathered eight Journals to provide articles for a Special Joint Publication on 'Race and Racism in Scotland'. After consulting with the Editorial Board and our President, I was able to confirm with EUP that we will be one of the Journals involved in this project.

A set of criteria for the articles to be considered for the publication has been agreed and four Guest Editors with expertise in this area have been selected to publish the Special Joint Journal. The process agreed is that authors will select one of the eight contributing journals and submit an expression of interest to produce a paper to the relevant editor. That editor will determine whether or not the proposed paper meets their own Journal's field of interest and will then either send it forward to the Guest Editor panel for consideration to be turned into a full paper or offered to the other seven Journal editors to see if it would meet their criteria. Clearly not all papers will be accepted as space is going to be limited but there is scope for papers that are considered appropriate for individual journals that for whatever reason can't be included in the Joint Journal to be published in a relevant contributing Journal. All articles for publication will be peer reviewed.

The call for papers for the cross-journal special feature is now live and can be found at:

<https://www.euppublishing.com/doi/story/10.3366/news.2021.12.16.500417>

The call can also be found on our own Journal's page on the EUP website.

The criteria given are broad and I hope there will be sufficient papers from the archaeological perspective to provide some of the content to the special Journal. There is, for example, considerable scope in relation to museum collections and past methods of collecting as well as, say, archaeological impact on colonial communities in terms of working conditions, reporting, training and recognition of indigenous archaeologists. The title is Race and Racism in Scotland which includes all minority ethnic groups. More detail can be found in the calling notice and members are encouraged to visit the site to get an insight into what is proposed and perhaps generate ideas for papers.

Jim Mearns

The latest edition of the Scottish Archaeological Journal, Volume 44, has now completed its proof stage and will be issued to members on schedule in early March. The lead article is by Prof William Hanson about Crannogs on the Clyde at Erskine and Old Kilpatrick. Other articles include a report on excavations at Lochrin Basin, Tollcross Edinburgh and a summary of his four Dalrymple Lectures on "The Civilization Machine" by Prof Alan T Smith. There is a good selection of Book reviews and a Museum review by one of our members. Jim Mearns

Membership Renewals – Subscriptions are now due and early renewal helps the Society. Please return your Renewal Form to Margaret Gardiner from whom Gift Aid Forms are also available.

'Digging' the railway

As the HS2 Rail Project climbs inexorably towards its Birmingham destination, it leaves behind it in its wake a large series of Roman and Medieval sites, giving Archaeologists an incredible fund of new information and exciting finds.

Amongst the latest, unearthed last month, is a rare, early Roman carved wooden figure.

Working alongside Railway Track Workers, a team from Fusion JV, uncovered a well-preserved wooden figure from a rain filled Roman drainage ditch in a field in an area known as Three mile bridge, Twyford, in Buckinghamshire.

Cut from a single piece of wood the, at first glance, unremarkable object, soon proved to be a figure standing 67cm tall and 18cm wide. Together with some pieces of pottery, which were dated to 43 to 79AD, the figure has a clearly defined Roman style hair and tunic. The head appears rotated to the left and the front of the tunic appears to be tucked in at the waist with the top of the legs and calf muscles clearly visible. Despite its excellent overall condition though, its arms below its elbows and feet have been degraded by its long immersion in the ditch.

Although the discovery of carved Roman figures in the UK are rare, similar examples have been recovered in France and a wooden figure called the 'Dagenham Idol', dated to Neolithic times, was found in the north bank of the River Thames in 1922.

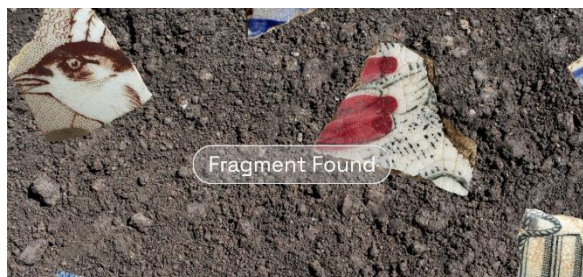
It may be impossible at this distance in time, to find out why the artefact was found where it was. Rather than being thrown in the ditch, it could have been intended as a votive offering to the Gods and deliberately placed there.

Helen Wass, head of heritage at HS2, said, our unprecedented Archaeology programme on Phase one of the HS2 project has provided us with a great wealth of information about our past, and has enabled us to build a much greater understanding of how the landscape was used by our ancestors, especially through the Roman period.

"Trackman"

*The figure features in the current BBC 'Digging for Britain' Series, presented by Professor Alice Roberts

Fragment Found



Fragment Found, is a new online archive of printed pottery sherds that invites people to submit images of their finds and share knowledge, as well as the joy of collecting!

This is a digital museum of lost, broken, unwanted and discarded artefacts, rediscovered centuries later in fields, on beaches, in rivers, etc. The archive connects people, places, craft, local heritage and the natural environment. The aim is to build a community which centres around collating, identifying and categorising mysterious pieces of history, which would

otherwise remain undocumented. Selected fragments will become part of a series of ceramic artworks called 'Imaginary Artefacts.'

The project is led by Eva Jack (artist), alongside Becky Sparks (web designer) and Kevin Andrew Morris (ceramicist) with the assistance of Claire Blakey (curator at the National Museum of Scotland) and supported by Creative Scotland.

They are looking for contributors to the archive and any GAS member interested in contributing or just finding out more about the project can visit <https://fragmentfound.com>. They can also be found on Instagram - @fragmentfound and Facebook – fragmentfound.

What lies beneath...digging HS2

As the new railway tracks ever onward, another discovery is the site of a Roman town in Fleet Marston near Aylesbury, where a team from Copa JV, working on behalf of HS2 enabling works contractor Fusion JV, have uncovered large parts of a Roman settlement situated next to Akeman Street, a major Roman Road.

Akeman Street connected Verulamium (St Albans) with Corinium Dobunorum (Cirencester) and the excavations traced the line of the road revealing the remains of its well-built limestone surface and accompanying drainage ditches. Also uncovered, was evidence of what must have been an important township, containing both domestic and industrial activity.

Equally fascinating has been the amount and quality of the finds associated with the dig. Apart from nearly 1,200 coins, there were lead weights which were associated with a widened area of road and inferred the presence of a marketplace allowing trade and commerce.

There were domestic items found too. Spoons, pins and brooches, gaming dice and bells, suggesting gambling and religious activity may all have taken place there. The proximity to the main road indicating that as well as the town residents, there was a substantial through flow of travellers and soldiers perhaps heading for the fort at Alchester.

The site also contained one more important find. A mid to Late Roman cemetery containing approximately 425 burials, including both inhumations and cremations. This could indicate a sudden population increase during that time, which might have been due to increased agriculture production. The burials were concentrated into two separate areas, which could mean they were organised by tribe, family and ethnic groups.

Intriguingly, the cemetery also held over 40 decapitated burials, with the head placed between the legs or feet. Interpretations of this practice vary, but could either indicate the execution of criminals or a normal burial rite during the Late Roman period.

Outside the town, on a low hill some distance from Akeman Street, the Archaeologists found what appears to be a number of Early Iron Age enclosures with wide deep ditches. This appears to show the early inhabitants used the area for agriculture before the Roman incursion.

Overall excavation of the site and its continuing investigation gives a snapshot of the lives and beliefs of the town's inhabitants during the Roman period. Over the next few years a programme of post excavation assessments will add to the sum of knowledge about the town, and perhaps answer wider questions about the people who lived, worked and died in this almost forgotten area of Roman Buckinghamshire.

"Trackman"

James Kinnoch Thomson

Sadly, James Kinnoch Thomson passed away on 29th October 2021 after going into hospital for a minor operation. His funeral took place on 23rd November 2021 at New Kilpatrick Cemetery attended by family and friends.

James was known as Jimmy to his friends. After being a member of GAS for 60 years he received an Honorary Life Membership. Brought up in Glasgow his lifelong interest in Ancient Egypt took him to Liverpool to study Egyptology. After leaving Liverpool he held posts in museums at Doncaster, Stirling and Glasgow (The Burrell Collection), and

became curator of Ancient Civilizations in Glasgow Museums in 1981. Jimmy worked hard to encourage enthusiasm for Ancient Egypt – lecturing to schools, societies and groups and teaching Egyptology including hieroglyphs for the Department of Adult and Continuing Education in Glasgow. He also led study tours to Egypt for Glasgow University. Jimmy contributed over the years to Archaeological and Egyptology Journals including the Scottish Archaeological Journal.



(Jimmy visiting the Egyptian Museum, Berlin in 2011, he is standing in front of an Egyptian reassembled limestone offering chapel of the 5th Dynasty Nefer-bau-Ptah from Giza. Photograph courtesy of Campbell Proven)

Jimmy brought Egyptology to Glasgow with his teachings at the Museum and the University. Jimmy was a quiet, kind man always eager to help students and the public at large. I had the honour to be a friend of his. A full obituary to Jimmy will appear in a forthcoming Scottish Archaeological Journal.

Susan Hunter

Two castles in one visit

A short half hour car or bus (X85 from Buchanan Bus Station) journey north of Glasgow will bring you to Lennoxtown at the foot of the Campsie Fells and just on the west of the town on the road to Campsie Glen and very close to the Celtic training ground are two ruinous castle very close to each other. If you follow the old driveway uphill to Lennox Castle you very shortly come to Woodhead Castle (pictured) just off the driveway on your right.

It is a 16th century L plan three story tower and stands right on the edge of a very steep slope from where it must, before the trees grew up, have had great views north to the Campsies and both east and west along the valley. It is in a rather poor state, so much so that I didn't go inside it. If you then follow the old driveway for a very short distance you will come to Lennox Castle. Much grander and built much more recently (in 1840 by David Hamilton) the castle is in very poor condition and in fact is fenced in having caught fire in 2008 following its closure. Clearly little or nothing has happened since then. These two ruins in amongst the trees might be thought to engender a rather gloomy atmosphere but the approach from the West is lightened greatly (at least when I was there) by carpets of snowdrops which were just about in full bloom.

Those that want a longer more energetic walk can start from the road next to the Glazert Country House Hotel, which is on the left hand side as you enter Lennoxtown from the east. This road leads up to Bar Hill Farm, and you then follow the signed route, along the ridge from which you have great views to the North & South. After a mile or so and at a small car park, you turn right onto a path heading north (there is also an option to go to Balmore at this point). This will take you down, first to Lennox Castle, leading to what was once been a fairly elegant walled driveway with gates. Just slightly beyond Lennox Castle and to the left of the driveway is Woodhead Castle.



Alan Gifford

CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions to future issues should be sent to the Newsletter Editor – Alan Gifford, 33 Crawford Avenue, Lenzie, G66 5HW (0141 578 1285) alangifford@ntlworld.com

Contributions are published in good faith. Views expressed by individual contributors are not necessarily those of Glasgow Archaeological Society or its Council. It is assumed that Contributors have obtained all necessary consent from other parties or Organisations to whom reference is made.

Material can be supplied by "hard copy" but email attachment is preferred (Word) to save retyping! Photographs and drawings are welcome (png or jpg format).

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Data Protection Act

Members are reminded of the Society's Policy under this Act.

Members' details are held electronically in computer and are used solely for administrative purposes of the Society. Details are not provided to any outside body other than Edinburgh University Press for the purpose of distribution of the Scottish Archaeological Journal.

Any member who wishes to exercise the right to have his or her name excluded from the database should contact Margaret Gardiner, the Membership Secretary

Electronic Communication

It is our Policy to use E-mail communication where possible reminding members of the forthcoming lecture, other events of interest and to distribute *A Touch of GAS* and inform members of events that arise between issues.

We would urge members if possible, to subscribe which can be done through the website. Council accepts that members may be either unable or unwilling to receive *E-Bulletins* (it is astonishing how quickly one's "Inbox" fills up!) and that is their right. We can assure members that they will not be disadvantaged by not subscribing inasmuch as they will continue to receive twice-yearly Newsletters.

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