

A TOUCH OF GAS

The Newsletter of the Glasgow Archaeological Society




Issue 75 – Spring 2015

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

 <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Glasgow-Archaeological-Society/106126069499502> click "like" to receive Society updates

 @GlasgowArchSoc

 There is now a Flickr account for members to download their photographs of Society events, moderated by Adrian Maldonado - <http://www.flickr.com/groups/gasmembers/>

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

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Members are reminded that the AGM will take place on

**Thursday 16 April 2015
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.

The meeting will be followed by:

**Retiring Presidential Address
Susan Hothersall – Archaeology and the Artist**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the Meeting of the AGM on Thursday 17th April 2014
3. Annual Report from the President, Susan Hothersall
4. Annual Report from the Treasurer, Stephen Stockdale
5. Constitutional Amendments
6. Presentation of the President's Award 2015
7. Election of Office Bearers and Council Members
8. AOCB

Saturday, 30th May 2015 – Walk around Glasgow's West End

Members should meet outside the entrance to Kelvinbridge Underground Station, Great Western Road at 10.30am. Jim Mearns, former president of GAS, will be our guide on a tour of Glasgow's West End, highlighting some of the historical and archaeological landmarks in the area. The walk will end at the Kelvingrove Museum at approximately 12 noon.

Please contact the Excursions Convenor if you wish to attend.

Lecture Programme 15/16

Work is well in hand for next year's Lecture Programme. We can confirm the Dalrymple Lectures 2015 as follows.

John C Barrett, Emeritus Professor of Archaeology, University of Sheffield

Social Evolution

- 16 November 6.30 - The definition of the evolutionary process and the rise of human society
- 17 November 6.30 - From hunter-gatherers to agriculturalists: economic evolution?
- 18 November 6.30 - From Stone Age to Bronze Age: the evolution of the political economy?
- 19 November 7.30 - The Iron Age and the evolution of social diversity

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 Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, Professor Mike Parker Pearson and Professor William Hanson.

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 – please see the GAS website for more details. Applications require to be submitted before October in any year in which the awards are made.



Glasgow Archaeological Society is supporting **DigIt!2015 Discover Scotland's Stories**
A year-long Programme of events celebrating Scottish Archaeology

<http://digit2015.com/>



European Association of Archaeologists Annual Meeting

Wednesday 2nd – Saturday 5th September University of Glasgow

The European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) represents archaeologists and heritage professionals from across Europe. The Annual Meeting has become established as the premier archaeological conference in Europe and the 21st Annual Meeting will be hosted at the University of Glasgow with around 2,500 delegates expected to attend.



The EAA Glasgow 2015 will be a marketplace for ideas and is an excellent opportunity to share Scotland's rich, diverse and unique cultural heritage with an international audience. Seven key themes define the framework for the meeting: archaeology and mobility, reconfiguring identities, science and archaeology, communicating archaeology, legacies and visions, Celtic connections and Interpreting the Archaeological Record. There will be a number of pre- and post-meeting excursions conducted by leading archaeologists including trips to some of Scotland's World Heritage Sites, lowland castles, museums, Pictish stones and prehistoric landscapes as well as historic buildings, battlefields and distilleries.

For more information visit www.eaaglasgow2015.com
contact Dr Louisa Campbell by email louisa.campbell@glasgow.ac.uk
or phone 0141 330 2809.

The 15th International Congress of Celtic Studies



13-17 July 2015 – University of Glasgow

The International Congress of Celtic Studies is the foremost international gathering of scholars researching the languages, literatures and cultural traditions of the Celtic-speaking peoples. Held once every four years, the Congress provides a forum in which experts from across the full range of Celtic Studies— including linguistics, literature, history, archaeology and art history— come together to share the fruits of their work.

<http://www.celticstudiescongress.org/index.php>

Runes, Monuments and Memorial Carvings International Research Network

Carved Stones as Objects of Worship and Symbols of Power – Glasgow, 13-16 April 2015

The third RMMC meeting will take place this year. The first two days are reserved for paper and poster presentations and on the last two days you can join the fieldtrip to Angus and Perthshire, featuring stops to see the collections of stones in Meigle and St Vigeans.

www.monumentsnetwork.org

Glasgow's Gilded Age 1864-1914: Glamour & Grit

8th May 2015 – Cottiers Theatre, Hyndland, Glasgow

The conference will highlight those Glasgow designers who originally established the city's reputation at the time of the Aesthetic Movement and Mark Twain's so called Gilded Age. Glasgow's international reputation for design and manufacture sprang forth from the city's industries, as well as its educational institutions, and its influence spread across the globe through trade. This laid the foundation for Glasgow's inimitable 'style'.



<http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/glasgows-gilded-age-1864-1914-glamour-grit-conference-tickets-16051396158?aff=es2>

Archaeological Research in Progress

Saturday 30th May 2015 – Royal Society of Edinburgh, George Street, Edinburgh

Their annual conference examining recent and ongoing archaeological projects in collaboration with Archaeology Scotland

<http://www.socantscot.org/article.asp?aid=2350>

Kilmartin and North Knapdale, North Argyll – 15th–18th May 2015

info@archaeologyscotland.org.uk

SUMMER EXCURSIONS 2015

First Summer Excursion – Weekend Trip – Perthshire Saturday, 9th May – Sunday, 10th May 2015

David Strachan, Regional Archaeologist for Perth & Kinross, will be our guide during the weekend trip in May, when we shall visit a number of Pictish sites in the area.

The itinerary will include visits to Dunning, Abernethy, Scone, Lair (Glenshee) and Meikle. We shall be spending Saturday night at the Hilton Hotel, Dunkeld, where we shall have dinner, bed & breakfast.

The cost of the weekend, which includes the entrance fee to Scone Palace and transport throughout the trip, will be £110 per person.

There are a few places still available. Members who are interested and would like more information please get in touch as soon as possible.

Second Summer Excursion – Dumfriesshire – Saturday, 12th September 2015

Our coach will leave from outside the Boyd Orr Building at 8.30 am. The first stop in our day will be Strathclyde Park, where, Jim Walker, former GAS president, will discuss Bothwellhaugh Roman Bathhouse. The external bathhouse of Bothwellhaugh Roman Fort was discovered during the creation of Strathclyde Park. The site was completely excavated by Professor Lawrence Keppie of the Hunterian Museum, along with a team of volunteers in 1975-76.

We shall then make our way to the Lead Mining Museum, set in the picturesque village of Wanlockhead, the highest village in Scotland. We shall have the opportunity to venture down a disused 18th lead mine; visit three miners' cottages, demonstrating the living conditions through the 18th to early 20th centuries; look around the second oldest Subscription Library in Europe and enjoy the interesting exhibits in the Visitor Centre.

After lunch (own arrangements) our coach will make its way to Drumlanrig Castle, which is one of the finest examples of late 17th century Renaissance architecture in Scotland. During our tour of the castle we shall be able to appreciate some of the jewels of the internationally recognised Buccleuch Collection.

There will be an opportunity to enjoy afternoon tea and take a stroll around the gardens before we leave.

Aerial photographs taken during the hot summer of 1984 revealed some spectacular cropmarks that suggested a previously unknown Roman fort. The fort covers just over 3 acres and is located close to Drumlanrig. After learning more about Ladyward Roman Fort our coach will begin its return journey. We should arrive back at University Avenue between 7pm and 7.30pm.

Ticket prices include coach journey and tours of both Museum of Mining and Drumlanrig Castle.

Note – Members should wear appropriate footwear and clothing for entering the mine.

✂

To: [Redacted]

Saturday, 12th September – Dumfriesshire

Please reserve meseat(s) on this excursion at £32.00 each

Please reserve meseat(s) on this excursion at £30.00 each (concession)

I enclose a cheque payable to **Glasgow Archaeological Society** for £.....

From Name Phone No.
Address

Please return by Sunday 23rd August 2015, and enclose a return stamped addressed envelope.

The Wrecks of Newshot Island – Stephen Stockdale

I thought I knew the Clyde estuary; I mean I had sailed down the river from the Broomielaw all the way to Ireland and up and down the upper reaches several times, but Newshot Island? Never heard of it! In fact, Newshot Island didn't start out as an island at all, but, more of that later.

What's all your interest in it anyway, I hear you say! Well, it does exist, it is in the river Clyde, and it contains remains of considerable Nautical Archaeological interest.

The Newshot Island boat graveyard has three main groups of wooden boat wrecks. All of them date from the late 19th century when the river was undergoing the change from accessible river to deep water port; a change which required the removal of tons of silt from the river bottom to deepen and widen it, facilitated by a fleet of 350 mud punts, and the first of a series of Steam Dredgers.

Round about the 1900s, a new flotilla of dredgers and hopper barges came into use, and the once ubiquitous mud punts were gradually disposed of, though some remained in use until the 1960s. The punts were built in various shipyards on the Clyde. They were rectangular, wooden flat-bottomed punts with a carrying capacity of about ten tons. In operational use they were used in conjunction with dredgers and diving bells to take spoil and mud further up the Clyde where it could be safely dumped, although since the punts had no mechanical means for releasing their cargo, it all had to be done by pick and shovel.

With the decline in the river's use the punts became redundant, and the four dozen remnants lying in and around Newshot Island are all that is left. There are no other examples left anywhere, as they were unique to the Clyde. As they were built by local shipwrights to their own design, there are no plans either, so if the boats are not to vanish from history altogether, they will have to be mapped and recorded.

The punts lie in three groups on the foreshore, and are only completely visible, and approachable at low tide. They lie, just off the foreshore at Erskine, near Park Quay, and for about 300 yards towards Glasgow. There is a group of four punts, together with a schooner, two dredgers, and a diving boat, lying within the bay of the island.

Newshot Island, incidentally, is completely man made. When large quantities of silt began to be removed from the river bed, it had to be taken somewhere, so it was dumped by the mud punts near Erskine where the river widened. Gradually, over time, the residue built up into a bank, and then, the grass covered peninsula which it is today.

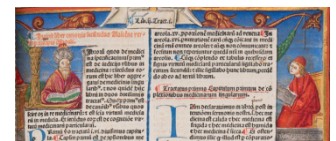
Back in the summer of 2014, I saw an invitation by the Scottish Coastal Heritage at Risk Project (<http://www.scharp.co.uk/>) for assistance in recording and mapping the mud punts before they disappear into the river forever. Accordingly, on a windy, wet Saturday in September, 2014, I found myself standing on the muddy shoreline, clipboard and tape measure in hand, and wondering which part of the wooden hulk was the bow, and which was the stern!

To be continued ...

EXHIBITION – Ingenious Impressions: The Coming of the Book

27 February - 21 June 2015 – Hunterian Art Gallery – Admission free

Showcasing the University's rich collections and the results of new research from the Glasgow Incunabula Project, this major exhibition charts the development of the early printed book in Europe, exploring the transition from manuscript to print and its impact on late medieval society. *Ingenious Impressions* features a number of key themes, including the transition from scribal to print culture, the design, decoration and illustration of the earliest printed books, the technology and challenges of printing, and finally 500 years of book ownership and collecting.



Excursion Booking Form Overleaf

A useful Antiquarian Text

In Hugh MacDonald's "Rambles Round Glasgow" the author describes a number of places and areas that both give direct information on sites lost to us today and entice us with hints of potential further research possibilities. In his references to the history of Pollok House, for example, MacDonald reports a ramble to Pollokshaws in a way that provides additional interest to those members of GAS who excavated there recently and who continue to survey the area:

"Pollok House

"Retracing our steps to Pollokshaws, we now proceed to visit the seat of Sir John Maxwell, Bart., of Pollok, which is situated in a delightful position, on the north bank of the Cart, a little to the south-west of the town. The house is a spacious edifice, four stories in height, and of the plainest architectural appearance, comfort and commodiousness, rather than ornamentation and glamour, having been obviously attended to in its construction. It was erected in 1753 by the great-grandfather of the present possessor, who died a few weeks after its completion. The castle previously occupied by the family, which stood a little to the eastward, was shortly afterwards entirely demolished, with the exception of a small portion, apparently the remains of a massive tower, which were pointed out to us, embedded in the garden wall. The offices of the present mansion now occupy the site of its more warlike predecessor.

On an eminence in the vicinity, which commands a magnificent prospect of the country for many miles around, a still older castle formerly stood. Not a vestige of this ancient structure now remains to mark its whereabouts. Desolation as complete has fallen upon it as that predicted for his own mansion by Thomas the Rhymer, when he said in bitterness of spirit, "The hare shall kittle on my hearth-stane".

While we stand musing on the spot, the redbreast is piping his dreary autumnal song on a spreading beech which has been planted on the site of the vanished towers and we see the glossy plumage of the pheasant glancing in the sunbeam, as, disturbed by our presence, it glides away in the shade of the tangled underwood. Crawford, who wrote in 1710, mentions in his minute and curious 'History of

Renfrewshire', that in his day the remains of the drawbridge and fosse were still visible."

MacDonald's information confirms the situation uncovered in GAS's researches in the area in recent years. Of course, we should always be careful with antiquarian material. The writers may be less than scrupulous in their reporting of others' works or may be reporting from a similar shared source but selecting different pieces to highlight. Sometimes our sources may also simply be in the wrong place at the wrong time and make judgements which in the light of later knowledge seem rash as MacDonald's advice to visitors to Govan demonstrates:

"Govan's Antiquarian past

"The antiquary or the relic-hunter will find but little to attract his attention in Govan. Formerly there was an ancient green tumulus called 'the Doomster's Knowe' near the bank, a short distance east of the ferry; but within the past few years, to the chagrin of the local Oldbucks, this interesting memorial of the pre-historic past has been levelled to permit the extension of a neighbouring dyework. Sic Transit Gloria Mundi"

Sometimes we are left wondering about throw away remarks or hints at further knowledge that may have been very interesting if it survived. In an essay on a trip to Balmore, MacDonald relates that he came across three serious looking gentlemen who were scrutinising a square stone in the Kelvin. They are described as antiquaries who think they have found a Roman slab related to the nearby Cadder Fort and one of them is said to refer to the need to report the find to the 'Antiquarian Society'. This begs the question of which society? Perhaps these gentlemen were simply referring to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland?

Alternatively it may be a more local group. MacDonald is writing a couple of years before GAS was formed but several years after the Antiquarian Society of Glasgow was created in the mid/late 1840's. Very little is known of this Antiquarian Society. A letter survives in the Society of Antiquaries Archives requesting information on how to set up an Antiquarian Society which dates to 1844 and a couple of meetings were reported in newspapers in 1845. This is perhaps one of the most potent legacies of antiquarian sources -the hints of further information to be found!

Jim Mearns

VOLUNTEERS WANTED – If anyone is interested please contact me – Dale Bilisland

We are always looking for volunteers to help run the Society, particularly to serve on Council. In addition – **NEWSLETTER EDITOR** – While I am happy to continue, there is a certain "shelf life" and the time is right for a fresh approach.

Membership Notes

Scottish Archaeological Journal Online – Previous issues are available online at EUP to Society Members. To obtain the Access Token contact the Membership Secretary via the website.

There are a few unidentified Bank Standing Orders; if you are in doubt that you are fully registered as a member please check with the Membership Secretary via the website.

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

CONTRIBUTIONS

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

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