


A TOUCH OF GAS

The Newsletter of Glasgow Archaeological Society




Issue 90 – Autumn 2022

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

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 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

Lecture Programme 2022-3

20th October **Maureen Kilpatrick**, GUARD Archaeology Ltd - An early Historic Metalworking site from Coultorsay, Islay, Argyll and Bute

Dalrymple Lectures

14th-17th November **Professor Lin Foxhall**, University of Liverpool - Polity to polis? The development of Greek communities, c.1450-c.500 BCE

15th December **Members Night – Paul Murtagh** - The archaeology of Glasgow's football heritage
PG student: TBC

19th January **Professor Gordon Noble**, University of Aberdeen – Discovering the Northern Picts

16th February **Dr. Susanna Harris**, University of Glasgow - Textiles of the Galloway Hoard

16th March **Dr. Adrian Maldonado**, National Museums Scotland - What we still don't know about Iona: an early monastic landscape

20th April **Kenneth McElroy & Iain Maclean**, Caithness Broch Project - Tall Towers & Grass Roots

The October lecture will be at 7:30pm in the Molema Building, Room 109 (with book stall & tea and coffee beforehand) and the Dalrymple lectures will be in the Sir Charles Wilson building at 6:30 pm on 14th-16th & 7:30 pm on 17th. The remaining lectures will be in the Boyd Orr, A at 7:30 pm. Lectures will not be shown live this year but will be recorded and made available online later in the season.

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.

A Supplementary Volume of the Scottish Archaeological Journal will be published at the end of October/early November and will be posted out to members at that time. It contains the final report on excavations of Medieval Partick carried out by GUARD in 2016. This adds to the report previously published in SAJ 41 in 2019. The Supplementary volume also contains two reports from the earliest volume of Transactions of our Society in 1858 by James Napier. These reproduced reports relate both to the history and superstitions in Partick and are interesting both for their subject matter and what they tell us about the interests of GAS members in the early years of the Society's existence.

The production of Volume 45 of SAJ, due in March 2023 is proceeding well with a full volume of material being prepared. Articles have already been received for SAJ 46 but more are always welcome! Jim Mearns

GAS Excursion 22nd October 2022

Our first Winter excursion is on Saturday 22nd October. This will be Walk and Talk led by Jim Mearns who will talk on Glasgow Green and its environs. We will start at Glasgow Cross at 10:00 a.m. and finish at the People's Palace.

If you wish to attend please email helend57@hotmail.com or call 07765 927645.

Helen Maxwell

West End Highlights

Earlier this year Jim Mearns also lead a very interesting, informative and amusing tour of the West End.

It began at Kelvinbridge on Great Western Road and finished at Pearce Lodge (Glasgow University), in the interim taking in the Kelvin walkway (recent filing location for Cat Woman!), the Botanic Gardens and the Lion & Unicorn staircase, a survival from the original Glasgow University (pictured).



Romans & Tapestry

On Saturday 30th July a motley band of GAS members foregathered at Glasgow University with a view to journeying to Melrose to visit the newly refurbished Trimontium Museum on the first anniversary of its reopening.

Dr John Reid, one of the Trustees and who had lectured to the society in the past about Trimontium, gave us an illuminating talk on Roman methods of warfare and the evidence for attacks on roman forts in the form of lead slingshot bullets. These were typically oval and pointed but slight variations in design indicated different origins and possibly different legions. Analysis of the lead showed that some was mined in Britain but others were continental in origin. Along the way we learned just how lethal they could be, very fast and capable of easily penetrating human flesh. He asked if anyone had read Caesar's Gaelic wars and was a bit surprised to have the opening sentence quoted to him verbatim.

Lecture over, we went to see the museum, rubbing shoulders with a couple of Roman soldiers in full dress.

One large cabinet contains armour for both men and horses on loan from a collector; several weapons, including the slingshots we had just heard about, are displayed but there are also personal items, shoes, brooches, beads and native materials too. Static displays are supported by videos and very knowledgeable and helpful staff moving among the visitors. The shop is well stocked with books and souvenirs including lots of interesting things for children. I found a terrific cheese shop which included in its wares Eildon cheddar and Glenlivet Brie - the Auld Alliance lives yet.



A fairly short hop in the bus took us to Galashiels and the purpose-built home of the Great Tapestry of Scotland. Visitors are first shown a video describing the genesis of the project, when Alexander McCall-Smith, inspired by the Prestonpans Tapestry of 2019, recruited designer Andrew Crummy and author Alistair Moffat. Some of the 1000 or so stitchers are interviewed, the vast majority being women but there were some men plying a needle too. Visitors then go upstairs to view the 160 panels covering Scottish history from the earliest times to the present with some also touching on culture, heritage and scenery.

Most people had a chance to visit both towns briefly. The sun came out and we had a very pleasant run back to Glasgow arriving at 5:45. It was good to see everyone enjoying a step back to normality.

Carol Primrose & Helen Maxwell

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.

Anglo Saxon burial ground unearthed at Wendover

Like it or loathe it, the HS2 Rail Project continues on its journey northwards. Whatever you may think of it, its route has consistently thrown up archaeological discoveries in its wake, bringing to light new information of people and artefacts from Anglo Saxon times to the present day.

During the construction of the line at Wendover in Buckinghamshire, workmen uncovered the site of an Anglo Saxon burial ground. Early indications are, highlighted by the quality of the grave goods found, that this was a community of wealthy, high status people, living at or nearby the site during the 5th and 6th Century.

Investigated by a team of 30 field Archaeologists from INFRA JV, evidence of Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman activity were all discovered but the star find, and perhaps the most intriguing find was the Anglo Saxon cemetery with its 138 graves, including 141 inhumation and 5 cremation burials, one of the largest such sites found in the UK.

The discoveries found at the site have shone a light on the activities of our ancestors living and working 1500 years ago at a time we label as the Dark Ages, due to the paucity of reliable information about that time.

Many of the burials were found with brooches around their collarbones. This suggests that these items, used to hold up pieces of clothing such as a cloak, or a long garment principally worn by women, and known as a Peplos. Some of the brooches, called Disk brooches, were made with gilt whilst Coin brooches were made with silver. A pair of small square headed brooches, and resembling in miniature the famous Cresswell Down Brooch, were also found.

The personal aspect of the inhumations finds were revealed by the individual grooming items found in many of the graves. Toiletry sets consisting of ear wax removers, toothpicks, tweezers and combs were located, together with a cosmetic glass tube which may have contained eyeliner.

One of the graves, apparently that of a high status Lady, contained a large quantity of funereal goods. Amongst rings of copper alloy, there was a silver zoomorphic ring, some ivory objects and an ornate glass bowl of pale green glass. Possibly made in the 5th century, it could have been inherited from the Roman era.

Many of the items found appear to have been imported from across Europe. Two glass cone beakers, appear similar in design to those made in Northern France. These undamaged beakers, possibly used as drinking vessels for the consumption of wine suggesting the owners had access to fine wines and other beverages from the Continent.

The two beakers also have decorative trails in the glass and are comparable to the "Kempston" type of cone beaker, found in Bedfordshire in 1891 and currently displayed in the British Museum.

For one individual, the cause of death could be readily imagined. The skeleton, thought to be of a male, aged between 17 to 24 at the time of death, was found with a sharp iron object embedded in his spine. Specialist Osteologists who examined his remains, estimated that the unfortunate young man was stabbed from the front, the weapon exiting after the tip was snapped off, leaving it forever preserved in his spine.

Speaking about the excavations, Mike Court, lead Archaeologist for HS2 Ltd is quoted as saying, "The archaeological finds made at this site in Wendover will not only be of interest to the local community, but are of national importance, providing valuable insight into life in Anglo Saxon Britain."

These discoveries have been featured in the programme "Dan Snows' History Hit" and are available as a podcast.

"Trackman"

Were you there?

This year, Butser Ancient Farm marks its 50th birthday. In its early years, work at Butser Farm formed an integral part of the Archaeology curriculum for Glasgow University undergraduates. As one of these undergraduates, after 45 years, I felt a return visit was long overdue.

I found three remarkable changes. First, the farm has moved from its isolated site on Little Butser hill to a spacious and easily accessible site in the valley below. Second, the range of buildings has expanded beyond the original and iconic Iron Age round houses. The farm now includes reconstructed houses from the Neolithic period through to the Anglo Saxon period. Two of the most recently built houses have a special story to tell. The Bronze Age roundhouse was the work of Operation Nightingale, a pioneering MOD initiative which involves military veterans in archaeological fieldwork. The Roman house includes a touching mosaic, picturing Peter Reynolds, the founding director of Butser. The third change at Butser was the level of immediate engagement with visitors. While the farm still serves research purposes, it also felt that each house had its own special welcome mat for visitors, complete with guide (and in the case of the Bronze Age house, army veteran) with stories to tell.

And so some stories to tell of the Glasgow University involvement in the 1970s.

Animal husbandry: the farm had a herd of Dexter cattle. A popular TV programme of the time, Animal Magic, came to film the cattle. We were given the task of herding the cattle from the field they were in, to the place of filming, along with the suggestion that we first fetch a stick to assist with herding. Taking the stick suggestion as a danger signal, we duly arrived at the field armed with the biggest tree branches we could carry as protective clubs. Much hilarity from Butser management resulted as Dexters are small cattle and no trouble. A light swish stick was all that was required.

Round House building: having completed the construction of one of the round houses, we asked about plans to add a porch. Much discussion ensued, involving a number of theories from Peter Reynolds. "That might be something we

will have figured out in a couple of years time” was the conclusion. I asked the same question about porches on my return visit. “Aha!” came the reply. “That might be something we will have figured out in a couple of years time...”

As record of this time, two photographs (taken on a vintage box brownie camera) that reflect respectively, the hard work undertaken



and the team spirit generated.

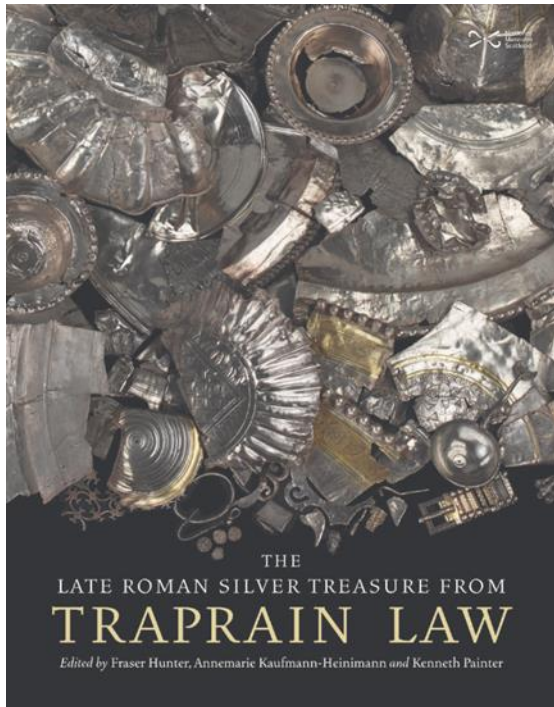


N.B. Lest any anyone want to swap stories or photos of time at Butser please email sjfraser8@gmail.com

Stewart Fraser

Member's offer

Members may be interested to hear of a recent publication on the late Roman silver hoard from Traprain Law in East Lothian. After over a decade of analysis by an international team of scholars, the hoard has been thoroughly reassessed in the context of other late Roman silver finds, its production technology has been studied, and the thorny question of where, how and why it was cut to pieces has been investigated, with intriguing results. Wider papers consider the site itself, the uses of silver in Scotland after Traprain, and comparative studies of silver in other areas beyond the frontier. The intriguing story of the replicas made by the silversmiths who restored it is discussed, while there is in-depth appraisal of every find from the hoard, accompanied by a comprehensive catalogue and drawings to show their original forms. The book is lavishly illustrated.



Available from the online shop of National Museums Scotland; enter the special offer code LRSAGGS to get a 30% discount (£63 + p&p rather than £89.99). Members who are passing the museum can arrange to click and collect, and save the hefty postage. The offer is available until 31 December 2022 – and only online!

[The Late Roman Silver Treasure from Traprain Law – National Museums Scotland Shop \(nms.ac.uk\)](https://nms.ac.uk)

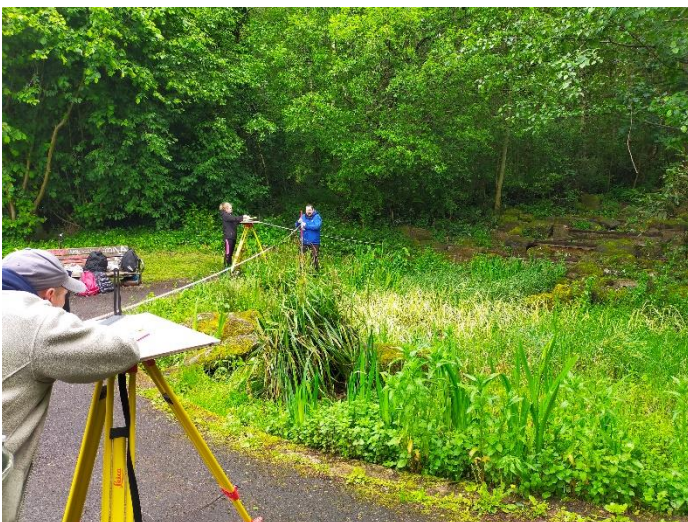
Fraser Hunter

Were you here?

Digging the Festival

After the Garden Festival is a project exploring the physical and material legacy of the Glasgow Garden Festival. This 1988 event, which I am sure most GAS members remember with fondness, was a turning point in the modern history of the city. Despite this, very little of the Festival site remains undeveloped. However, if you go to Festival Park, just south of the Clyde, the BBC HQ, and the Science Centre, you can still see earthworks and structures from the Festival including a grand waterfall (sadly no longer operational), a network of streams and a depression that once held the lochan.

As part of the After the Garden Festival Project, excavations were carried out in Festival Park in May 2022, funded by Glasgow City Heritage Trust, with a team of staff and students from the University of Glasgow Archaeology Department.



Plane table survey of the Glasgow Garden Festival waterfall

Geophysical survey in grassy areas identified the route of the mini-train and the location of a reconstruction of the Bearsden Roman bathhouse. Excavations in and around the lochan (now dry) identified surviving elements of this feature including the lining at the bottom of the loch and ornamental pebbles. Artefacts recovered included four coins dating from before 1988; is it possible these were thrown into the lochan during the Festival?

There was a huge amount of media coverage at the time showing the interest that remains in this 1980s event. At an open day we were privileged to speak to many people who brought their memories, photos, and memorabilia to share with us. The broader aim of the Project is to track down every building, structure, and artwork from the Festival to its current location. There

are over 250 items on our website, the majority of which still need to be tracked down. If you think you can help,

you can find out more at our website (<https://www.glasgowgardenfestival.org/>). Contact the website directly if you can help update our records or have photos to share with us.

Gordon Barr, Kenny Brophy and Lex Lamb

HS2 finds go on display

The “Discover Bucks” Museum in Aylesbury is the recipient of two of the three Roman stone heads unearthed in the continuing archaeological investigation of this new railway line.

The three heads were found by archaeologists of L-P Archaeology, working for the Site Contractor FUSIONJV, in October of 2021, from excavations surrounding St Marys Church in Stoke Mandeville.

As archaeologists explored a circular ditch around what is thought to be the foundations of a Roman Mausoleum, they found a bust of a female adult, one of a male adult, and a further bust of a child. Interestingly, the adult male and female busts had been disfigured, removed from their torsos, and flung into the ditch.

St Marys Church had been demolished in 1966, and the present excavation revealed the site may well have been in use in Anglo Saxon times, as well as a Mausoleum in the Roman era.

Now, two of the heads, cleaned and renovated, are to go on display at the Museum in Aylesbury. Helen Wass, head of heritage at HS2 Ltd, is quoted as saying, “The excavation of the old St Marys Church has expanded our understanding of the site. These incredible stone busts are some of the standout objects revealed during investigation programme so far”

The heads will be displayed at the “Discover Bucks” Museum, Church Street Aylesbury, HP20 2QP, from 16th July, 2022 until the 29th October, 2022. The Museum is open from 10:00 to 17:00, Monday to Saturday. Phone no. 01296 331441, www.discoverbucksmuseum.org/.

“Trackman”

History of the International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies

It will be of interest to GAS members to know that fellow members David Breeze & Rebecca Jones have recently worked with two colleagues on a History of the International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies (Limes) which has been published by Archaeopress and is also available as an Open Access ebook:

<https://www.archaeopress.com/Archaeopress/download/9781803273020>

David has also edited/organised a further four books in the Frontiers of the Roman Empire series published by Archaeopress.

Provan Hall set to reopen

Nestling in Auchinlea Park and adjacent to the Fort shopping centre, is Provan Hall, a hidden historical and architectural gem dating from the late 15th century. The building was originally part of the Prebendal estate of Barlanark which extended from Springburn to Bishop Loch and Shettleston to Garthamlock covering over 5000 acres.

The pre-reformation house was the residence of the Canon of Barlanark until 1570 when Canon Thomas transferred the lands to his brother William Baillie. William’s daughter Elizabeth inherited the house and lands after her father’s death. She married Sir Robert Hamilton of Goslington and their elder son Francis inherited the estate. He ran up large debts and in 1667 Glasgow Town Council became the owners of the estate.

In 1767 the Town Council sold Provan Hall to Andrew MacDowall of Castle Semple and in the late 1700s the estate was purchased by Dr John Buchanan who had returned to Scotland from Jamaica. His son, John passed the property on to his eldest daughter Elizabeth who married Reston Mather of Budhill. The Mathers had a long association with Provan Hall until 1934 when the last of the family died penniless, leaving no children and Provan Hall in disrepair.

In 1938 Provan Hall was donated to the National Trust for Scotland and was opened to the public.

Now, as a £2.5m two-year restoration nears completion it is set to reopen later this year under the management of Provan Hall Community Management Trust.

Peter Mortimer & 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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