

NEWSLETTER 36

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November 2012

25th Anniversary Edition



Well, the anniversary field trip is over amidst much merriment, reminiscing, eating and drinking and even some warm sunshine (at least that's my memory of it). The 25th Annual General Meeting has happened too and now we're battenning down for the winter. This month's anniversary newsletter concentrates on the history of ACFA and the CFA. Some interesting facts have emerged. And we're venturing on a new tack in the spring with our short beginner's course on surveying for Glasgow University Centre for Open Studies. See the message from the chair.

And lastly, let me be first to wish you all a Happy Christmas and a Good New Year

PS Is the next field trip to be Mull? – see Ian's article.

WR

Proposed ACFA Committee 2012 – 2013

Chair: Carol Primrose

Secretary : Janie Munro

Treasurer : Ewen Smith

Members : Susan Hunter, Libby King, Dugie MacInnes, Stewart MacKey, Alan Thomson.

Coopted : Dr Angela Macdonald , Glasgow Centre for Open Studies

Newsletter : Wendy Raine/Elizabeth Bryson

Publications : Elizabeth Bryson

2012 AGM In Brief

The AGM started off quietly but subsequently became one of the more “lively” meetings for many a year. Suffice to say that the proposed amendments to the Constitution (sent out before the AGM) were passed but voting was required. Other proposals will be brought for further discussion to the February bash.

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It was noted that Lionel Masters has stepped down from the Committee but Dr Angela McDonald, from the Glasgow University Centre for Open Studies (GUCOS) has agreed to join the Committee. Libby King and Stuart Mackey (from the CFA course just ended) have also joined the Committee. Several new members, from the last CFA course and elsewhere, were approved and welcomed aboard.

* *

The Treasurer calmed members' feverish excitement at the size of our bank balance by pointing out that it is largely due to the bequest from Bruce Henry for publishing. Grants for surveys have been sought and obtained. Of course, many survey costs are met by members themselves who generously give of their time, skills and petrol.

Be warned.... our Treasurer and Secretary are on the trail of those with outstanding subs - and they really do know where you live.

* *

The Certificate in Field Archaeology is sadly mourned and we will have to wait to see what develops. Let's hope it is only a hiatus. ACFA is currently looking into a short course on archaeological field survey which could be offered through the Centre for Open Studies. There was some concern about who will be responsible for academic standards in Centre for Open Studies, now that it is not an academic department.

* *

Re 25th Anniversary sweatshirts ordered during the sojourn at Lunga House – a slight ordering “error”, completely unrelated to the amount of refreshment partaken, will be rectified in due course so contain your disappointment, those affected.

* *

And finally, to the annual Photographic Competition which had an excellent response. ACFA has its very own David Bailey, or possibly Anselm Adams, as Fred Hay lifted the trophy for the third consecutive year (sorry Fred you don't get to keep it, at least not during the hours of the AGM).



* *

After dinner, a gift was presented to Lionel Masters with flowers to Margaret on behalf of ACFA. A neolithic anniversary cake (courtesy Primrose Archaeological Bakeries), was ceremonially cut and consumed.

Then Lionel took us on a trip down memory lane. He was a precocious 14 year old schoolboy..... skip ahead to the mid 1970s and he is starting the first year of the CFA course. (In that first group were Donald Mackay, Norman Newton, Roland and Sheila Golightly among others). A few years later, 25 years ago in fact, he is acting as “midwife “ to the infant Association of Certificated Field Archaeologists. (See the full article later in the Newsletter)

The rest is history and to prove it he produced slides from his archive. These elicited a range of emotional responses from his audience: some highs, some lows, some bafflement (Where's that? Who's that? Is it me? Was I there?). Memory faculties creaked and groaned and were challenged to their limits, but (to the surprise of all) members rose to the challenge and acquitted themselves with some credit.

Approximate final score: audience: 9 Lionel: 7 (he had a crib sheet), the slides: 2 (the crib sheet did not always help). Exhausted, members departed into the night.

EB

The Original Certificate in Field Archaeology:

Some Rambling Thoughts

As ACFA is celebrating its 25th anniversary, I thought this would be a good opportunity to reflect on how the Certificate in Field Archaeology made its appearance into the former Department of Extra-Mural and Adult Education. Its origin goes back to 1975 when we had two archaeologists on the staff, Eddie Peltenburg in Argyll and me in Dumfries. Some pressure was being exerted to organise more rigorous courses as a balance to the “liberal” programme. I was particularly concerned that any course should not be purely academic, but should involve an element of practical fieldwork, which students could continue with when the course was concluded. At that stage, ACFA wasn't part of the forward planning.

My reasons for wanting a practical element to form a major part of the course was based on my own experiences. After appointment to Dumfries in 1966 I soon found myself, as the only archaeologist in the area, fairly busy. This was the time when there was rapid expansion of threats to the archaeological heritage through large-scale developments, and the realisation that there were insufficient archaeological resources to cope with the problem, hence the foundation of "Rescue: A Trust for British Archaeology". In my area the major threats were pipelines and, particularly, afforestation. I was fortunate to have in my "liberal" classes not only the Managers of Tilhill and Fountain Forestry but also the Conservator South for the Forestry Commission. I soon found myself being invited to walk over new acquisition areas and to suggest where areas should be left unploughed to safeguard the archaeological heritage. In some of these surveys I was accompanied by students in my classes, and they seemed to like the idea of discovering cairnfields (they were all the rage in the 1970's) in the usual wet and windy fieldwork weather.

The academic part of the CFA was fairly easy. We wanted to give students a good background in the prehistory and history of Scotland, particularly as it reflected the sort of remains they would be likely to find, and to set this within a context so that they would not be just "humps and bumps in a field", as I overheard one committee member of my then local archaeological society remark when I proposed a visit to the cairnfields above Beattock (1st and 2nd cohorts take note!).

We reckoned that the course should last for 3 years, comprising 20 evening meetings, 2 weekend field visits and a residential fieldwork week each year. And the fee - a bargain at £20 per year! Students would be expected to write 4 essays and sit a 3 hour exam each year. Assessment was to be based on essays (25%), exam (25%) and a fieldwork portfolio (50%), the latter showing the importance we placed on the fieldwork. Incidentally, the CFA was followed by other Certificate courses; Geology (with Jim MacDonald) and Scottish History (with Innes Macleod). Part of the teaching was to be split between Eddie and myself; I would cover the mesolithic (not that there was much of that back in the 1970's, but how splendid that that should change with the work of CFA student Tam Ward working in Lanarkshire), neolithic and bronze ages, and Eddie covering the iron age. We would have to seek outside help for the Romans and the succeeding Historic periods.

We managed to get the course through the academic hurdles and started advertising, with very little idea what the response would be. It was, to say the least, somewhat overwhelming. We had about 60 applications and had previously decided to limit the course to 15. Following interviews with the majority of the applicants, we made our final selection and in October, 1976 the first course began.

We were all "guinea pigs" at that stage and I suppose that my lasting impression is of the horrendous fieldwork week at the end of Year 1. We were seduced into going to the Kindrogan Field Studies Centre, near Blairgowrie, by the promise of the use of a Land Rover, but the accommodation was dreadful, the food (such as it was) inedible and the weather appalling. It could have been our first and last fieldwork week but we stuck it out and two years later 11 students received their Certificate, among them stalwarts of ACFA including Denis Topen, Betty Rennie, Norman Newton, Donald McKay and Roland Golightly.

With two members of staff we decided to start the 2nd course in 1979, overlapping with the 3rd year of the 1st course; big mistake - try organising two fieldwork weeks around Easter - and with the departure of Eddie to the Department of Archaeology at Edinburgh University, never repeated. Thereafter the course settled down to its 3 year routine and, in all, I was responsible for 8 of them, and the 1st year of the 1999/2002 group. Sometimes

statistics can be interesting: of those that completed the course and were awarded the Certificate, there were 8 (1978-81), 11 (1981/84), 9 (1984/87), 11 (1987/90), 24 (1990/93), 21 (1993/96), 17 (1996/99) and 13 (1999/2002). The large increase in the 1990's was due to two factors; my letting the numbers go up from 15 to, I think, a maximum of 28 in 1990, and to the formation of ACFA, of which more later.

Our fieldwork week took us to many parts of Scotland. Peebles and Moffat figured largely in the early years and were followed by locations further afield such as Dalcrombie (who could forget The Grouse and Trout - we certainly improved in our accommodation and food), Burg (Mull), River Sand (Gairloch, our furthest site and longest baseline), Skye, Raasay (where we didn't get to survey all we wanted to do), Tighnabruaich, Argyll, (where we survey sites on behalf of Betty Rennie's Platform Project), Carnwath (oh what a lovely hotel some of us stayed in) and, of course, Dalmally which became the training centre for Year 1 fieldwork. Many of you should remember the "complex" sheepfold and the dog kennels. Was the weather always as bad as I remember?

And now, a little confession: my reluctance to teach plane table survey and preference for tape offset. My first encounter with the plane table was surveying sites in Northumberland with George Jobey. All that carrying of heavy equipment, the fiddle to set it up and reset it after I'd kicked a tripod leg, the tape constantly snagging a tripod leg, needing to squint through an alidade with the rain pouring down, a plan covered with lines, the need to change stations if the plan wasn't by radiation and remoteness from what I was drawing. Need I say more? When I arrived in Dumfries I was fortunate enough to meet up with the surveyors of the now defunct Ordnance Survey Archaeological Division. I went out to help them on a number of surveys around Beattock and they taught me the tape offset method, complete with the use of an optical prism (remember them?). To me this seemed to be a far more direct method, and the equipment was relatively cheap. So that's why you were all taught tape offset.

The fieldwork weekends tended to follow a set pattern. Year 1 first excursion to Galloway, which got rid of the waverers and second excursion to Kilmartin and Benderloch. For the Iron Age we varied between the Borders and Argyll and for the Romans we generally headed for Ardoch and the Gask Ridge. Year 3 excursions tended to be to Angus and Perthshire, mainly for the Pictish symbol stones.

Teaching the later periods of the course was certainly aided by some of my colleagues. Euan Mackie usually covered the Iron Age but, if he wasn't available, I had to cover it. There wasn't much of a problem with the Romans as Bill Hanson, but mainly Lawrence Keppie, were on hand; the latter always seemed willing to do his five lectures and mark your essays. Yes, I've heard the stories. For the Early Historic period, as the Dark Ages came to be called, but now the Early Medieval period, Elizabeth Alcock was the guiding force in the early years and, in later years, our CFA graduate Irene Hughson took charge. Nice to have a graduate coming back to do the teaching. The later Medieval period was always a problem and various people helped out including Eric Talbot and Alistair Gordon in the early days, followed by Colleen Batey, Chris Morris, Geoffrey Stell, Sally Foster, Jeremy Huggett, Bill Kilbride and Innes Macleod. For the post-Medieval period Alex Morrison was a tower of strength, a keen supporter of both the CFA and ACFA and an expert on early maps, as was Andy Gibb, who died recently, and strongly supported the CFA in its early days.

We had rather a distinguished series of External Examiners for the CFA. It was very appropriate that one of the first was Professor George Jobey, who had been my tutor in the Extra-Mural class at Newcastle University, a course I "joined" whilst still at school. Others included Kevin Greene, Sir Paul Mellars, Pat Phillips, David Coombs, Ian Ralston

and last, but by no means least, Andrew Fleming, an old friend and contemporary from my University days and best man at my wedding. All were clearly supportive of your examination/fieldwork efforts. Indeed, the comment was sometimes made that the work was well above first year undergraduate level.

It was in the mid 1980s, after the first 3 cohorts had graduated that we began to think what we could do next. The idea of some form of club or association was proposed and I undertook to write to all the previous students. We held a meeting in our old base of Oakfield Avenue and, as far as I can recall, elected a subcommittee and drafted a Constitution, which was strongly supported by our then Head of Department, Professor Lalage Bown. It's not really my place to write a history of ACFA because it is very much your organisation. What I will say is that, following its inception, ACFA made an enormous contribution to the success of the CFA. Some of you will remember sitting with me interviewing candidates, and how I wish I had taken your advice on a couple of occasions.

Again, the support I received with the fieldwork was really the reason we could increase numbers in the CFA from 1990 onwards. And I think we improved recruitment by inviting potential students to visit Oakfield Avenue and see the 3rd Year students writing and drawing up their fieldwork, ask them questions about the course and their experiences and discuss any concerns with me. That the CFA course worked is amply demonstrated by the 115 ACFA Occasional Papers, your recognition by the Establishment, particularly the RCAHMS, and by your continuing commitment to go out and survey. Long may it continue, and we can only hope that the present "difficulties" within Glasgow University, which prevented a 2 Year course starting this year (for the first time in 36 years) will be resolved, so that ACFA can prosper and continue its work.

Lionel Masters

ACFA Goes Silver

Incredibly enough, ACFA has been strutting its stuff for 25 years and there was a general feeling that this anniversary should be marked in some special way. After some dithering by the committee, Sue Bryson, who has a remarkable knowledge of interesting places, suggested Lunga House near Craobh Haven in Argyll, an ideal venue given its proximity to Kilmartin Valley which of course featured in the Certificate experience of so many members. Twenty nine people sallied forth, including several spouses, one of whom to our great pleasure was Margaret Masters.

Lunga House is a wonderful example of how the Victorians managed to prefigure the wilder excesses of Walt Disney – a weird aggregation of towers, crowsteps, windows of all shapes and sizes and extensions *ad lib*. Rather like a Tardis, the interior seems much bigger than the outside with corridors and stairs leading off in several directions. No two bedrooms were alike in size, shape or furnishing. One contained a dining table and chairs with a bureau filled with ancient theatre bills, but no wardrobe; one had a piano; there were 4-poster beds and beds with elaborate canopies over the head; some rooms had modern *en-suite* bathrooms with shower units, while others were rather more unusual – in mine the bath disappeared into a hole in the wall and the shower unit, fitted to the middle of the long side of the bath, looked like a very old-fashioned telephone. Each room, and indeed every



space in hall and staircases too, was furnished with an amazingly eclectic collection of knickknacks, watches, powder flasks, glove stretchers, souvenirs of colonial adventures, assegais, drums, headdresses and books on every subject under the sun; on the walls, drawings, paintings, some horrendously sentimental Victorian subjects, others family portraits of the previous owner and some interesting documents such as a proclamation anent the aftermath of Culloden.

The introduction to these delights was the drive up to the house, in itself like stepping back in history, largely unsurfaced and patterned with potholes in such a way that it was impossible to avoid all of them. As far as I know none of the cars suffered structural damage but some drivers had a few more grey hairs when they got home.

ACFA seems to feel honour bound to offer some kind of archaeological justification for its jaunts and in this case it was of course Kilmartin Valley although the first port of call was a little further east – the Auchendrain Museum. This was rather an unstructured tour since people were coming from a' the airts at slightly different times. Those who had been before were much impressed by the improvement in the café, latecomers being taunted by tales of wonderful scones, but everyone agreed more time was needed to get a proper understanding of the old village, though Wendy was thrilled to find an explanation of something which puzzled her on Rona, namely why the gable-end of a house had a cruck slot. This indicates that the gable end supported a hipped roof. Next stop Achnabreck carved stones. Some of the party got slightly lost on the way and others were side-tracked by a mysterious feature close to the car park (turned out to be the remnant of some kind of *son-et-lumiere* project) but those who did toil up the hill found it hard going but worth it.

Off to Kilmartin Hotel for lunch passing Dunadd on the way. Strangely it was covered with tiny figures walking round the summit. Ghosts of Pictish warriors? Some kind of re-enactment? No – they turned out to be half of a Glasgow University archaeology undergraduates field trip. The other half was at Kilmartin village in two enormous coaches causing us some parking problems. We all got into the hotel eventually and had a very nice lunch of soup and sandwiches.

The final visit of the day was to Carnasserie Castle. One or two of the longer established members were dubious about the steep ascent but in fact just about everyone got there. The more intrepid climbed all the way up to the ramparts from where, according to Lionel, they could see the depredations caused by quarrying at the head of the valley. There was a feeling that the castle would not have been all that fit for purpose as a strong defence given higher ground close by and that its purpose was really to be a superior holiday home for the local bishop.

And so to Lunga with time to look round the beautiful landscaped gardens and enjoy the view down to the little harbour with its flotilla of pleasure boats and out over the Western islands. Once everyone had found their rooms and settled in, we foregathered in the drawing room in front of a roaring log fire where old times and absent friends were brought to mind with the aid of a CD of photographs collected by Sue and projected on a wall.

From there we progressed to the dining room whose single long table sparkling with glassware and cutlery elicited some oohs and aahs from the company. We made a leisurely 3-course meal of wonderful food and finally coffee was served at the table and the celebration cake brought in. As chair I made a very short speech thanking Lionel as our “onlie begetter” for the interest, pleasure and friendship which ACFA has given us all and presented him with the only possible gift in the circumstances – a bottle of the Macallan.



The cake came accompanied by a claymore to cut it with. If you ever wondered if there might be something of the buccaneer about Lionel you would have seen it confirmed in the zest with which he wielded the sword.

The cake was duly cut up, eaten and approved and the party retired replete back to the drawing room where reminiscences and drinks were exchanged until the small hours though given the next morning's early start no-one made a long night of it.

Sunday morning, reasonably early if not necessarily all that bright, we had breakfast after which Lionel discoursed on Kilmartin Valley and how new developments had affected it. Then we retraced our steps to Kilmartin Village where we followed the footpath which now connects many of the sites. The going was so easy it hardly seemed like archaeology at all. At the Glebe Cairn, we looked north to the site of the quarrying where evidence for a wood circle had been found and discussed the possible significance of wood circles in relation to stone circles; wood, a living substance, connecting the circle with the living while inanimate stone circles reflect the dead. Lionel fulminated a little about Canon William Greenwell who excavated the cairn in 1864 with the help of a platoon of navvies so that it is now impossible to be certain of its original shape although there is a suggestion of a platform at its base.

At Nether Largie North some of the group in threes and fours clambered up the cairn and then disappeared down the internal ladder to inspect the cist with its capstone incised with axe heads as well as cupmarks, a clear indication of Bronze Age reuse of Neolithic monuments. On to the Mid-Bronze Age cairn where we tried (again, in many cases) to identify where the cists were. One of them is very obvious of course with its capstone held semi-recumbent with iron bars where you could enjoy the interesting sight of a “chair” extricating itself from the hollow space below.

Back to the museum, this time, for soup and sandwiches and the rest of the cake from the previous evening. The final part of the programme was to be a walk from the new car park to the Nether Largie standing stones, Temple Wood stone circle and Nether Largie chambered cairn. However, a number of people dropped out at this point (including your correspondent) on the grounds of having a long journey, or difficulties with night driving. Nonetheless, everyone who made the journey to Argyll thoroughly enjoyed the celebrations for which thanks are due to Sue Bryson for organising the accommodation and to Anne Macdonald and Lionel for devising the itinerary.

Now for the next 25 years.....

Carol Primrose.

Certificate of Field Archaeology: 2010 – 2012



Two years ago, eighteen hopefuls sat down in the Lecture Theatre in the St Andrew's Building to begin what turned out to be a two-year adventure. This September, the surviving thirteen finally achieved the Certificate in Field Archaeology.

During that time we learned about phenomenology, hermeneutics and post-processualism, what the Romans did for us and how to read a landscape. We had the opportunity to go on some amazing field trips and we had a huge amount of fun.

One of our first assignments was to take ourselves off to Kelvingrove armed only with a worksheet. In the course of filling it in it slowly dawned on us why we were there. A later visit some of us made to Nitshill Archives confirmed our feelings. There was hardly anything to see in Kelvingrove because most of Scotland's prehistory was hidden away. A lot of the teaching was like that – we were guided to find things out for ourselves, not told what to think.

All the class feel the same way about our tutors. We were privileged to be taught by the best there are. It would be lengthy to name them all, but Alan Leslie and Gavin McGregor must have a mention. Their dedication and enthusiasm, especially given the background of what was going on in GUARD at the time, were inspiring to us all.

Fascinating Field Trips and practical exercises punctuated the course. Our favourite was Kilmartin Glen with its museum a model of the type. Others included Antonine's Wall, medieval Glasgow, and our projects at Bar Hill and Provan Hall.

It wasn't all work. We won't forget the sight of Mike sliding down the snow-covered ditch at Rough Castle on a binder; experimental archaeology at its best, or Kenneth tripping over a small wall because he was so occupied looking out for the emperor's.

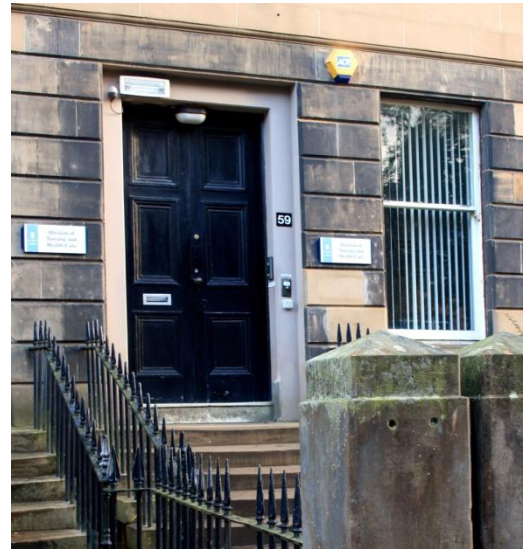
One measure of the success of the course is that four of the thirteen are now in second year at Glasgow, studying archaeology. Another is the memories we have. It would not be too much of an exaggeration to say, for some of us, it changed our lives.

Richard Pugh

The Lost Survey: Early Memories of ACFA.

In the Beginning there was a door. Here it is| and we all passed through it – 59 Oakfield Avenue.

On that first Tuesday evening in 1981, I went down the stairs to the basement to Lionel's room, a stranger among strangers. I thought that dunny room absolutely magical; so this is where archaeologists worked. It was like a place I was looking for before I even knew about it – mostly taken up by a huge table top covered in plans, surveys, and piles of notes, the walls groaning under books, posters and images of archaeological sites. A small window always dark when we were there but even in daylight dim with dust. A desk in one corner, a tiny pantry in another



and a projector firing an image of two monoliths onto a screen – Cairnholy 1. The first lectures were in here with us all perched around the table top and the screen.

My companions, I found a fascinating cross-section of the city, completely unknown to me but all avid for our secret vice – archaeology. Two teachers, an accountant, a librarian, a printer and ex- paratrooper, a lab technician, a distillery worker, a chain-smoking witch and a palmist and astrologist. Nothing out of the ordinary then, just the usual Lionel class mix of madmen, monsters and feisty minxes!

The first two classes of 1976 – 1981 I think of as the seedbed, the bedrock, the ancients of the tribe and far too few of them still with us. Our years and that which followed, 1981- 1987 were the lift-off, talented, energetic and unquenchable, but then in the immortal words of Mandy Rice Davies: “Well he would say that, wouldn't he?”

The seminal survey for me was the one that disappeared. In our last year, Lionel announced that he wanted us to find, arrange and manage a survey on a site of our choosing. The site we picked was Burg, on the north shores of Loch Tuath in North Mull. Burg had been roughly sketched by the Allcocks during a summer holiday while visiting the broch of Dun Aisgean in their search for possible Viking settlement in the Southern Inner Hebrides.

It is a spectacular site with probably 50+ structures running down for about a mile, from a last occupied house beside the road through a thousand years of history and extensive cultivation terraces to a sheer cliff. Professor Allcock had surmised that some of the smaller bow ended opposed door structures around the broch might be early medieval.

We surveyed the site for three years, but the key event was that in the final year, we overlapped with the 1984 – 87 class, the final year team leaders supervising the first year of the new class. I think that this was the first time that two classes actively interacted with each other, on an unsurveyed site, and formed close relationships with other than a single class. It was a working preview for all the projects we did and are working on.

The final plan was a huge sheet about a metre long – Leslie Allcock's 'Viking houses' did appear to be just small winnowing barns – but the footings of two very large apparently bow

ended longhouses were found. Plus another small dun on a rocky knoll – named by the late dear Harry Bell (“Hilarity Bill”) as ‘Dun Pifco’ in memory of his beer mat arrangements of ‘aligned sites’ which enlivened many a merry pub lunch, usually viewed through the fag screen procreated by dear old “Concordia Millerity”. Burg has never been published for a variety of reasons, but mainly because there was no umbrella organisation under which it might have flourished. However, it would be fascinating to return for a look – perhaps in an ACFA field trip to Mull?

The 1981-84 were so mustard keen that we actually set up a grandly named “Strathclyde Field Survey Group” on completion of the class and began to survey sites around the great lost Bronze Age Cairn of Raahead south of Auldhouse – I still have musty plans of enclosures and cairns mouldering away somewhere at the back of a cupboard, but fear the sites are probably whacked by the monstrous Whitelee Wind Factory now. I keep meaning to drag the Hunters over to have a look at them, just across their ‘frontier’.

However, we enthusiastically dropped all that when we heard of the proposed new Association from Lionel – I think I actually gave a talk at the first meeting about the Auldhouse Survey complete with what looks like some very ropey and faded slides.

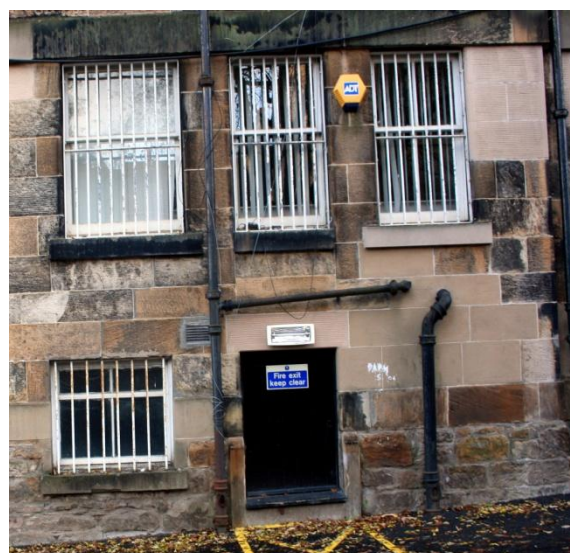
I was also, if memory is correct, chosen to be the first Chairman with Leslie Gray as Secretary from 1987 – early 1989, when pressures of work and a little health scare forced me to move back and allow the much more able Leslie to take the lead, to my eternal gratitude. I certainly have a slide of a cake my Dorothy baked for the first annual meeting, with a chocolate flake dolmen, not quite up to Carol’s productions perhaps, but worth a nomination.

Memory embedded in places and friends involves more than one personal story and the door I walked through in 1981 was truly a portal which allowed me to see the world in a different way.

In the end there is another door ... and here it is:

It is a very much smaller door, at the rear of 59 Oakfield Avenue. It led from the subterranean corridor below out into the car park at the back and it was from here that we loaded up the University vans from the old equipment cupboard, a relay chain of ranging rods, boards, theodolite and rucksacks.

Then off to so many memorable places and company – like the door in Alice with its little table and a glass marked “Drink Me” except that it always enlarged everywhere and everyone.



“The Past being over and done with now falls prey to our invention”.

Ian Marshall

The Origin of our Species : Book Review - A Postscript

(See May Newsletter, no. 34)

Just when I thought that, having read Stringer's book (I would hesitate to claim that I had "digested" it), it was relatively safe to raise my head from the primordial soup for a short while at least, along comes a report of new discoveries!

First, some context ... 40 years ago, a good fossil was discovered in East Africa that was likened to, but different from *Homo habilis*. Perhaps. A debate began as to whether there were two *Homo* species living contemporaneously, or just one, and the new fossil was simply a demonstration of physical variation within that species. Those who believed in two species named the 1972 discovery *Homo rudolfensis*, after Lake Rudolf as was, near where the fossil was discovered. However, there really wasn't enough evidence to support their assertion ... until now. In the August edition of *Nature*, the discovery of three more fossils appear to confirm that *H. rudolfensis* did indeed exist, and apparently at the same time as *H. habilis*, some 2 million years ago.

So, contemporaneous, but now the debate must be over which came first, because if *H. rudolfensis* pre-dates *H. habilis*, then the former would become *H. habilis*, as the type species, and the species we now call *H. habilis* would need a new name. Why do the species cats and pigeons also come to mind now?

Other tricky questions emerge; did *H. erectus* descend from one of these species, and if so which one, or from a currently unknown further species of *Homo*?

A couple of references for those who wish to pursue this further:

From *Nature*: <http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v488/n7410/full/nature11322.html>

From the Smithsonian: <http://www.blogs.smithsonianmag.com/hominids/2012/08/multiple-species-of-early-homo-lived-in-africa/>

Ewen Smith

Website Review

ScARF :Scottish Archaeological Research Framework : www.scottishheritagehub.com

Typing ScARF into your search engine of choice leads to a long list of articles about scarves and opportunities to buy such items but persevere and you will find, via the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland site, a link which finally takes you to this outstanding source of information on the state of archaeology in Scotland.

The site is divided into sections covering the main periods from Palaeolithic to Modern plus Marine and Maritime, and the Science of Archaeology. The site is intended to be "an updateable framework highlighting current research strengths and areas for future exploration....to ensure that future research is relevant, represents greater value and contributes to our understanding of the past." It is envisaged as providing "both a structure to build upon and a set of research goals to aspire to."

Each section has one or two editors, a panel of experts and contributors, and the lists of names are a fairly comprehensive round-up of anyone who is anyone in Scottish archaeology.

It is a nicely designed site, with a simple easily navigated lay-out. A panel down the left of the screen lists the contents which expand as you go deeper into the various layers of information. The benefit of this is that you never have to hit the back button to return to where you started and thus you never feel lost in the depths of what is an immense amount of information. You can skip straight from stone artefact traditions in the *Material Culture and Use of Resources* area of the Bronze Age section to exploring the Medieval in one click. Within the body of the text are embedded links to bibliographies, the CANMORE record, distribution maps and associated articles. All sections follow a similar model but have distinctive characters.

I decided to pick two areas to look at in depth and within them to examine something of interest to ACFA. The Bronze Age section is edited by Jane Downes. After an introduction the subsections cover: Bronze Age Studies and Chronology in Scotland, Material Culture, Lifestyles, Material Culture, Case Studies, Bibliography, Downloads and Overall Research Recommendations. Contained within these is a comprehensive account of everything there is currently to know about the Bronze Age in Scotland and ideas of where further research could be directed. Three layers down via *Lifestyles*, subsection *Settlement, Land use and Resources* lies an article on burnt mounds. The history of the study of burnt mounds in Scotland is followed by a discussion of the recorded distribution versus the possible; an incentive for ACFA to get out and look for more.

The Modern section is much more philosophical and conceptual. Many of the articles could be read for an insight into the current arguments around independence dealing as they do with such headings as *The Modern Person*, and *Nation and State*. The panel responsible for this section defines 'modern' as covering the last five centuries or so stretching back into the medieval and forward into the present. They further define archaeology as "not simply a study of the past but a study of humanity in the past."

The Case Studies provide the most direct application of archaeology. In this area you can find discussion of miners' housing, New Lanark, grave robbing, the economy of St Kilda and much more. *Archaeology and the persistent myth of aboriginal Scotland* debates the mythology that portrays the Highlands and Islands as having preserved an authentic form that could be traced back to prehistoric times. *Transhumance and Sheilings* gives an account of the use of and the archaeology of sheilings, a subject close to the heart of ACFA. *Archaeologies of Tax Evasion* is an intriguing title that leads to an examination of illicit stills. I'm not sure if one has turned up in Glen Lochay yet, but they are said not to be remote or lonely locations, but rather 20 to 30 minutes walk from settlements served by well-used paths yet hidden in ravines, under outcrops or on islands, so perhaps that's the explanation for that un-interpretable feature.

Visit this site and you may find you've lost several hours exploring, but it will have been worth it.

Janie Munro

Dates for the Diary

ACFA February Bash : One Saturday in February, 2013 yet to be decided

ACFA /Glasgow University Centre for Open Studies Weekend Course in Field Archaeology : Saturday-Sunday , 25-26th May, 2013

Scotland in Early Medieval Europe Conference: Friday, Saturday, Sunday 22-24th February 2013 Royal Society of Edinburgh, George St., Edinburgh. (Contact SAS)

Weekend Taster Course in Field Archaeology

In the absence of a full CFA course this year, Glasgow University Centre for Open Studies (the successor to DACE) and ACFA have agreed that we will offer a weekend taster course on field survey "An introduction to archaeology in the Field" to take place on 25-26th May 2013 in Pollok Park. ACFA as an institution will be considered to be the tutor for the benefit of the University's documentation although 4 or 5 ACFA members will do the actual teaching.

The aims of the course are

- *to act as a taster course for those interesting in undertaking the Certificate in Field Archaeology at Glasgow University*
- *give participants practical experience of the methods behind conducting archaeological field survey in a typical Scottish landscape, from the first step of learning how to recognise archaeological features in the landscape right through to the final preparations for publishing the results of a survey*
- *allow participants to gain hands-on experience of some of the basic tools and techniques of field survey, from tape-offset to the use of GPS.*

Although primarily aimed at potential CFA students, others are welcome to apply. The number will be limited to 15 but if it is oversubscribed we could run it again.

Carol Primrose



ACFA at Kilmartin October 2012

Title page photo : Lionel and Carol, ACFA Anniversary Dinner, Lunga House. Photo by Peter Raine

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Submissions - It would be appreciated if submissions were sent in Word format. Please note that the Editor reserves the right to shorten and generally edit articles, as required.

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