



NEWSLETTER 40



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November 2013

Well, it feels like winter's here, the AGM's over, the geese have arrived, the temperature's dropped and ACFA's November newsletter is ready. Thanks go to Gerry for a classic contribution and to Carol for a thorough resume of our East Lothian field trip. Any suggestions for the next trip? It's time to get planning. And hopeful news on the CFA front – fingers crossed there.

As usual articles for the February newsletter will be gratefully received from now on till end January.

WR

2013 AGM - In Brief

The breadth of work in which ACFA members are engaged was highlighted throughout the AGM, from the various ongoing surveys to the field survey training course for the Centre for Open Studies. ACFA's support is being sought by others in the archaeological world to assist at various projects for example at Rouken Glen; coastal surveys under the auspices of SCHARP (more of which later); and assisting at an Open Studies course on identifying medieval churches.

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There was further news of completed surveys venturing into print again. John Macdonald and Scott Woods are starting to put together a monograph which would be a guide to Raasay archaeology, of interest to general visitors to the island. Susan and Robin Hunter are also proposing to collate their work on Eaglesham Moor into a single publication.

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A letter from Angela McDonald was read out and it is looking quite promising that the CFA course will start up again in 2014. There is already a list of interested people. It could even expand to a diploma course with the possibility of existing members being able to

undertake a further period of study to qualify for the diploma. Watch this space.

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Rona News: Ian Marshall, Libby King and Margaret Gardiner have taken up the baton from Wendy Raine to complete (most of) the rest of the island. Potential volunteers for 19-26 April were enticed by beautiful photographs of Rona where the sun always shines, apparently. Places for (*ahem*) “reasonably active” members are limited and may be all gone by the time of this Newsletter.

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A group of ACFA members attended a training day by SCHARP which is looking at coastal sites at risk of erosion. A very good app, with its own in-built GPS, has been created whereby you can create or update existing site reports regarding the condition of the sites. If you have an all-singing all-dancing iPad, iPhone or equivalent, you can email your report there and then or you can save it and email it later from your home computer. Further training days are planned. See Scharp.co.uk.

* * *

Janie Munro is stepping down from the position of Secretary and was thanked for her years of work on behalf of ACFA. Stuart McKey has agreed to be the new Secretary. The full committee will be on the website. There are still 2 vacancies so don't be shy about coming forward.

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The Treasurer presented his financial report which went unchallenged, possibly a first. Some people with seriously lapsed membership have come off the list of members but a number of new associate members have joined, including Derek Hunter, present at the AGM, who was welcomed with his wife. A number of other associate members joined following the Open Studies training day.

It was agreed unanimously that ACFA should remain a charity but the nature of the charitable status will be discussed in detail at the February Bash.

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ACFA has a new website and Janie Munro demonstrated some of the pages. It will be (should be/ may be) live by the time this Newsletter is received. All members will have their own user name and password. Janie will continue to update the website.

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Ever wondered how to describe yourself and your skills? The recommended description is “trained amateur archaeologist”. So now you know.

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Susan Hunter was able to avoid the technical problems which cropped up last year and so was able to give her report on the final Eaglesham survey, The Orry, which is an area of common ground in Eaglesham Village. “Orry” derives from an old Scots word meaning “area”.

Susan also presented an after-dinner talk on her recent visit to Bulgaria, which has long been a crossroads for civilisations, including Africans, Thracians, Romans and last on the scene, the Slavs. Archaeology is found everywhere due to development regulations. Susan showed photographs of 14,000 year old tumuli, Thracian tombs, spectacular temple tombs with wonderful gold artefacts. Basically something for archaeologists of all periods. Such rave reviews, Susan, would surely be worth something to the Bulgarian Tourist Board.

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Donald McKay is now 90! Happy Birthday to you, Donald!

And finally, hold the front page, (or Page 3). We have a new winner of the photographic competition! Janie Munro beat off stiff competition, not least from Fred Hay, to win the ACFA Quaich with her photo of Stones of Stenness, Orkney.

EB



Alpes Maritimes – an archaeological tour by Northlight Heritage

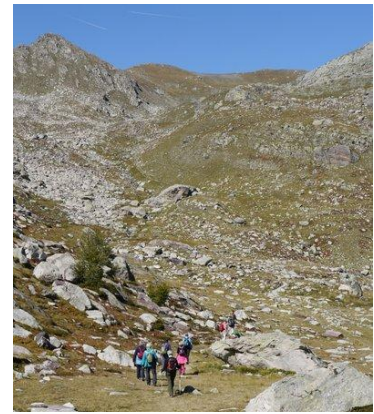
A new archaeological tour initiative was launched this autumn, by Northlight Heritage (formerly part of GUARD). Their first tour was to the Alpes Maritimes region, straddling south east France and coastal north west Italy, led by Olivia Lelong and Gavin Macgregor, doubtless known to many members. This was not a money-making venture, but could be described as both a trial run to establish tour procedures and a form of community engagement through education.



And what a tour it was! The period covered extended from the 230,000 year-old occupation of the Balzi Rossi caves in Ventimiglia (Italy) to the Maginot line fortress near Menton (France). And most chronological points between. Selfishly, I would highlight those caves as the high point of the tour ... though the highest point, at least in terms of altitude, was certainly the rock art in the Vallee des Merveilles, by Mont Bego, at 2,600 metres.

Entrance to some of the Upper Palaeolithic caves at Balzi Rossi

The latter took some physical effort to reach though the former required every bit as much effort, albeit on the part of our imaginations. It was truly mind-stretching to see where 230,000 year-old *Homo erectus* feet had walked, to stand and look across a sea that, back then, was perhaps a couple of kilometres further distant, with islands clearly visible, showing the route from which their ancestors had “hopped” across the Mediterranean. There would not have been continuous occupation of the caves, but late *Homo neanderthalensis* and early *Homo sapiens* also left their marks and their fantastic artefacts, many displayed in the local museum ... [photo. 3]



Intrepid archaeologists set off to climb to the rock art near Mont Bego



Close-up study of the rock art in the Vallee des Merveilles

As to the Mont Bego excursion ... this involved an invigorating 1.5 hour trip up a mountain slope in two 4 x 4 vehicles, followed by a lengthy round-trip hike of 4 hours, where we climbed to an altitude of c. 2,500 metres. However, the reward was viewing hundreds of carvings and drawings in the rock face. Some 37,000 of these carvings are known, so we were merely scratching the surface, so to speak. Horned animals are popular, as well as knives, axes and halberds and while a few may be described as geometric, many others are unidentifiably abstract.

What possessed those Bronze Age artists to make that climb, and to what purpose, remains a mystery, but some kind of ritual is hypothesised. The debate continues.

What else? Well, the *Trophee des Alpes* was another not to be missed. On the highest point of the Via Julia Augusta (the road linking Italia with Southern Gaul), the Roman Senate authorised the construction of a monument celebrating the victories of Augustus over the Ligurian tribes ... 44 of them, all listed on the Trophee. Of course, it did rather more than that, being an unambiguous statement to all who saw it (and it can be seen from many miles distance) about the power of Rome. And it wouldn't do Caesar Augustus's profile any harm either. A monumental statement.



Trophee des Alpes

There is not room enough here to describe in detail all the sites we visited, but I will note the *villages perchees* on the old salt route; some beautiful mediaeval villages; convents; and, of course, one for all the militarist members of ACFA, the Maginot fort. (I missed it.) Oh, yes, and great land- and sea-scapes, a lot of good food and even better company, and a little wine.

Northlight are still considering if there is a future for this type of activity, and are already considering the potential for tours in Sweden, Catalonia, and Scotland. More detail will doubtless be available, in due course, on their web-site at <http://www.northlight-heritage.co.uk/> .

Ewen Smith

Beaked skewputts and exploding trousers: ACFA goes East

After an abortive attempt at a trip to Mull foiled by a lack of suitable accommodation, we did an about turn and headed to East Lothian instead. Some 18 members gathered at the Open Arms in Dirleton on Friday 18th October, clearly an appropriate place for a gathering of archaeologists since it was opposite a huge 18th c doocot. This accommodation was more than suitable with the menu placing a considerable strain on one's powers of decision making. We had a very attractive sitting room/dining room all to ourselves and the bedrooms were uniformly comfortable and well-equipped.

After dinner on Friday, we had a talk about Dirleton and Gullane from a local expert Bill Nimmo. (Is it pronounced 'Gullan' or 'Gillan'? Apparently it depends upon your social aspirations.) Although there is evidence for prehistoric occupation, in such an intensively farmed area visible archaeology tends to start in the mediaeval period. Elbottle (lit. the old place) was settled from the 12th c. The Anglo-Norman Devaux family were given land by David I. There is no evidence of a motte and bailey as one would expect at this period but a castle was built on Fidra island (lit. feathery, from a colony of puffins), where there was also a colony of monks. The Devauxs built a church at Gullane; there is slight evidence of an earlier church and possibly pre-Christian activity. Dirleton castle was built in 1240 a little earlier than the church.

The Devaux line died out in the 17th c and the estate was bought by John Nisbet, an Edinburgh lawyer, who built Archerfield House and cleared the locals off the land so that Elbottle ceased to exist. The house was neglected latterly and used as a grain store, until WW2 when it was further damaged by the rude soldiery billeted there. Eight years ago it was refurbished and suffered the further indignity of becoming a conference centre.

Farming was and remains the most important industry. The land was boggy and prone to inundation by sand. It was cultivated by rig and furrow as shown in Roy's map of c1750, but in 1770 it was restructured into 12 farms with long leases which encouraged improvement. George Hope, the tenant at Fenton Barns, was an enthusiastic improver who introduced the steam plough – at one time there were more of these in this parish than in the whole of the rest of Scotland. However they seem to have been less than successful, trouble on wheels you might say, which possibly accounts for the grim expression in his photograph. Another tenant introduced a new crop – turkeys. Ancillary to improvement, a number of industries developed: for example quarrying for limestone and whinstone, and clay working to produce bricks, drainage tiles etc. Latterly however, farming has faced powerful competition. Take Gullane Hill; it started as a rabbit warren, then was used for training racehorses, but they were driven out by a more formidable animal – the golfer. There are now 10 golf courses in the parish.

World wars left their mark on the area. Two mini submarines were sunk in Aberlady Bay to be test targets for air munitions. They can still be seen so perhaps the target practice wasn't all that accurate. Drem airfield operated in both wars. Some of the buildings are still operational – one used for treating metal including that for the Forth Road Bridge. Gullane beach was used in the training for the Normandy landings in WWII; a radar station, tank blocks and glider poles are still visible there.

In Dirleton itself Bill was involved in an excavation on the green. Geophysics had indicated two possible structures, one aligned E – W which might have been an early chapel. The dig was developed as a workshop involving 70, mainly amateur, diggers over 5 days and 300 or so visitors. One of the features implied by geophysics failed to reveal anything when dug, the other had been thoroughly demolished but was recognisable as a building and had white gritty ware contemporary with the castle and green glazed pottery of c1630 together with a lot of iron slag. Also found 4 inches below the turf was a plastic golf tee – a reminder of the hazards of interpretation of artefacts.

On Saturday morning the group went to Haddington where we visited the museum, tried on bonnets and got involved with another visitor who had brought along his own stone axe. Then we met up with local archaeologist David Connolly who took us on a walk round the old town showing how the houses on the street had a hinterland of vennels and other houses with the vennels each the same width of about 8 paces as demonstrated by an impersonation of John Cleese of the Ministry of Funny Walks. A rather grander house was perfectly plain to the street but had a round tower and formal garden behind. Under its tulip tree David gave us a long disquisition on his approach to community archaeology which rather diverged from the official IfA line. Moving on, we came to the Nunsgate, the bridge over the Tyne, and a run down of the siege of Haddington, which was very long and largely indecisive with French, German, English and Scottish troops all involved. The English garrison built a massive fortification with buttresses which has now disappeared without trace.

John Knox was born nearby; originally trained as a Catholic priest, he found himself a galley slave of the French. No wonder he wasn't too fond of Mary who was the widow of the Dauphin who put him there. About this point we heard about the lady who swam up the river singing an Ivor Cutler song – a somewhat belated protest about the burning of witches which took place beside the bridge, some 600 of whom were executed in the 17th c. Then Robert joined us. He was a friendly alky who wanted to know what we were up to; then he posed one of these "think of a number" puzzles, accepted a few donations and wandered off again. Under the bridge we saw the masonry variations from 14th c on which told the tale of the oldest bridge in Scotland in continuous use. Underneath was a large hook apparently designed to serve as a gibbet although not very convenient. One hangman was fined for declining to run the risk of drowning himself in the course of his duty.

St Mary's Church was the next port of call; the numerous pock marks of bullets from the siege generated lively discussion as to who was shooting at whom and where from. St Mary's is also noteworthy for its beautifully restored stone ceiling which is actually made of fibreglass but very cunningly disguised.

After lunch in a local hostelry with soup no-one could identify and –shock! horror! – sandwiches of white bread, we travelled in convoy to Amisfield walled garden, only relic of Amisfield House, magnificently Palladian but demolished in 1928. The garden is just being reclaimed from neglect, in particular the 18th c glasshouses in which pineapples were persuaded to grow in a manure of tanning bark. The first pineapple was grown by John Justice (an ancestor of the actor James Robertson Justice); David enthused about how 18th c Scotland thrived in the Enlightenment, adopting new ideas and developing

the industries necessary to develop them - coal, brick, salt, chemicals, potteries, glass. And gunpowder. In 1794, Scotland's first *Gunpowder* Mill started operations on the banks of the Gore Water with workers imported from Devon. Given their incomprehensible language and soot covered faces the locals thought they had come from Africa. They were also covered in gunpowder which had the interesting effect of being rather combustible when heated, hence a tendency when they sat down in front of the fire at home for their trousers to explode.

We moved on to Chesters Hill Fort which is not on a hill and very doubtfully a fort. David demonstrated how the ramparts would be ineffective and argued that the first really defensive elements were the WWII gunsites. Removal of the gorse cover had increased erosion without stopping it from regenerating. Discussion of how to keep it down came to the conclusion that what were needed were camels. Well it had been very wet. Only 5 roundhouses were visible and 2 rectangular platforms were noticed very recently. David fell foul of Historic Scotland for putting a nail in the centre of a roundhouse to assist measurement (interfering with a scheduled monument, you know); thereafter he continued to use nails but hid them under cowpats.

Parting with great regret from David here, we moved on to Athelstaneford Doocot which has been converted to tell the story of the eponymous battle where the Saltire appeared to the leader of the Scots army and gave them victory. Unpatriotic persons who doubt the veracity of the story can consult Ian Marshall for more details. In the churchyard is buried the author of "Hey Johnnie Cope". A former minister was John Home, who wrote the most successful drama of its day, "The Douglas", in 1757.

Saturday's travels ended at Gullane, where Bill Nimmo joined us again to guide us round St Andrew's Church. Originally Norman, it had been renovated by a local family, the Congletons, and had very considerable alterations over 300 years. Some consolidation of the ruins took place in the early 19th c. Local people are active now in research and conservation.

Back at the Open Arms, after time to clean up and change we dined and then Gerry got out his mandolin and we embarked on a musical evening although not many of the company could remember the words to the songs. However, Janie, and our newby Val, revealed unsuspected talents in this line. Finally we called it a night only to find that the Portuguese waiter wasn't hovering just to get rid of us but fancied a turn on the mandolin too.

On Sunday morning we first pulled in to Pencraig Hill layby to see Traprain Law without actually having to climb up it; we also found ourselves close to a spigot mortar mounting from WWII – well you wouldn't want to miss that. On to Hailes Castle, thought to contain some of the oldest standing stonework in Scotland. There is not a great deal standing since this is one of the ruins that Cromwell knocked about a bit and it was used as a granary and doocot by a 17th c farmer. An interesting depression in the floor generated discussion as to its purpose – collecting blood for black pudding was one suggestion. Rather more cloacal speculations were triggered by the pit prison.

From the 12th c we travelled in time to the 19th c agricultural improvements exemplified by the B-listed Sunnyside farm steading, dating from 1865, now used as an equestrian

centre. It is a very large square set of buildings round a central courtyard with cart sheds, granaries, cattle courts etc. The façade was embellished with crowstepped gables, beak skewputts, moulded skews to the dormers, corbelling at the southwest corner and chamfered arrises to major openings. The latest machinery was powered by steam with a tall brick chimney still standing outside the original boiler house. Originally the farmhouse was part of the steading but as the farmer grew richer and more concerned with status a new house complete with round turret was built to one side, actually a drastic reconstruction of the old farmhouse.



Sunnyside Chimney Stalk

Next stop, Phantassie Limekiln, a massive stone structure with 2 draw holes and an access tunnel at ground level. We could not get to the top to ascertain how many bowls it had. Huge buttresses on each side suggest that the structure tended to be unstable even early in its life and the stonework showed serious cracks. More than one member of the party was reminded of the limekiln in Arran surveyed by Scott and Ann Wood



Preston Mill

A quick stop at Preston to see the mill. It reminded many of something out of the Lord of the Rings, it is so peculiarly constructed. The wall beside the mill race had inscriptions showing flood levels at various times; it was hard to believe there could have been so much water flooding over this flat land.

Lunch, more soup and sandwiches but rather tastier than Saturday, was at a little garden centre in the grounds of yet another demolished house. Thereafter Wendy had promised us a terrific site at Auldham where however there wasn't much to see. Sadly, at this point most of the party folded their tents like the arabs and silently stole away, drawn by the superior

attractions of Tantallon Castle or the chance to beat the rush hour on the Edinburgh by-pass. (Some of us stayed, Carol, and it was an interesting and confusing multiperiod site with a beautiful sea view. Ed.)

Despite this late desertion, however, everyone agreed that Wendy and the advance party of Sue Bryson and Ian Marshall did a first rate job of finding interesting sites, guides and watering holes and designing a programme which packed a lot into a short time. Wendy even managed to get everyone up and out at the right time and keep the convoy together so no-one got lost without losing her cool. We owe her our grateful thanks.

Carol Primrose

Sports flash: Forteviot 2013. (from a former correspondent).

West Coast side turns on the style but suffers narrow defeat at annual Strathearn Sevens

Coach Wendy Raine benched an ACFA line up for the annual Strathearn Sevens from the 2nd – 5th July 2013. Going for youth and experience she front lined the powerful pairing of Margaret Gardiner and Libby King as strikers; flat backed Alison Blackwood, Kath Kane, Ewen Smith and Ian Marshall with Gerry Hearn as Keeper (out of contract).

Opening training session: Monday 1st July.

Raine decided to hone her team on an informal survey of Law of Dumbills hillfort just above the team's digs. This fort – excavated in 2010 by the League Champions G.U. SERF team – overlooks an ancient hill track from St Serf's at Dunning to Abernethy and her challenge to her team was to informally study it for evidence of re-use of a putatively I.A. feature. The ditches would have to be examined closely. They were.

Raine pushed King and Gardiner well forward, with Hearn as gatekeeper. At this point it was discovered that the rival Dunning team had re-occupied the fort with a herd of young Frisians, and while Gardiner and King were setting out ranging poles in the inner ditch, the Frisians went into a huddle and charged. The ACFA back line ignominiously collapsed in a flash and was back over the gate – Marshall doing an abject header against the cross bar, leaving the gallant strikers out to dry.

Raine, from the team box, waved Blackwood and Kane back upfield, skilfully hurling OS Map 369 between them to mesmerise the Frisians, crying to the strikers: 'Cut and run!'. Back came the girls, back came the Frisians.

Umpire Steve Drisco carded it two sets and game to Dunning: 6:2, 6:2. Back at ACFA's luxurious HQ at Horselea Cottages, Raine conceded defeat.

'I felt that we played well enough to take something from the game' she said 'In the circumstances it was perhaps a mistake to use tape-offset, perhaps a plane table might have offered a better defence, but GPS and Google Earth would have been the answer.

The team played well together but individually we have to look at ourselves. We gave up ground too quickly – a defensive lapse.

We were expecting Dunning to interpret the rules more widely and to turn on a charm offensive – at times this village produces more history than local consumption warrants.'

The bin man next day confirmed that the only substances consumed that night appeared to be pasta, liniments and Kleenex tissues.

Tuesday 2nd July:

The annual old firm match between Dunning and G.U. SERF teams was played out this year in the extensive back garden of Castle Cottage in Dunning – here some seasons previously a possible ditch had been noted in the corner of the garden and in the playground of the adjacent primary school. Could this be a vallum associated with St Serf's church and monastery?

Meanwhile Dunning lounged on the sidelines with attempts to demoralise the opposition:

'If there is a ditch it must belong to the 'castle'. You'll only be disturbing blue china, son'.

G.U. had already dug two trial pits and an exploratory trench when Dunning switched to their legendary charm strategy: *'Have some tea and cake, it's an awffy nice day, enjoy it'.*

Suddenly G.U.were away - their flamboyant new Central American signing Adrianado had had enough and went off looking for a better game. Umpire Drisco nodded – a technical knockout – Dunning moved up the Leader Board.

The match between ACFA and local Crieff Casuals was quickly brought forward. ACFA swept confidently onto the park, a quick warm up with the hoes and set to work. Taped offsets were thrown out, Gardiner was on the wing down a test pit, the trench line was extended and Manager of the Month Raine opened her attack with Smith and Kane on mattock and hoe, Blackwood on buckets, Hearn in reserve.

By now Crieff had arrived on the morning bus with the redoubtable Lawrence and his three sons, two post-graduates and a well known volunteer Ann, who was marked by Marshall in the second trial pit.

Crieff started de-turfing opposite Smith and Kane, who shifted to spades and kept up such a rate that the Crieffs were soon in a very tight corner. Boulders undisturbed for at least 12000 years were tossed aside in seconds. King and Gardiner took over, Marshall on buckets and Hearn in reserve for everyone's peace. Crieff narrowed their trench, *'Howzat'* demanded Raine – *'Length before width!'*

Umpire Drisco upheld the claim, Crieff fell back to trim.

ACFA pushed forward and found the ditch cut – *'3.0m wide by 1.2m deep'* cried Gardiner. Carefully Drisco inspected the results. Was it man made, was the fill re- deposit, was it geological, when should I call lunch?

The surveyors said the excavators could tell; the excavators said the laboratory would tell. The laboratory said perhaps.

Ann of Crieff had been busily working on the wall trial pit and claimed a possible path or foundation following the interior of the vallum – Drisco agreed and called the game in Crieff's favour: 0:6; 7:5, 7:5.

'It's all just like a gigantic jigsaw puzzle', he was heard to mutter.

ACFA was gutted, *'All that training for nothing against a lucky digger'* cried King and Blackwood was sent to the SPAR for pies and Bovril. She returned with startling news. G.U. SERF had opened up an extensive trench against the west wall of St Serf's grave yard and exposed a paved working area and perhaps a return of the vallum – too late Dunning rushed around with claims that the graves of their grannies were about to be desecrated – Adrianado's brilliant bluff left everyone stunned – *'Ah well, at least we were gubbed with a little panache this time'*, said Raine.

Wednesday 3rd July:

More astounding news reached us that top G.U. striker Cammy MacCallein Mhor from the Gaelic league had excavated 2.0m down the side of St Serf's Tower in the churchyard, demonstrating that though it was fully bonded and contemporary with the Norman church, it was clearly erected (with accompanying dateable skeletal material) on an earlier slightly different alignment. Could this be the Pictish Church? This now required backfilling and a small perfectly formed ACFA team was up for it. *'Marshall and Hearn – step up to the plate'* cried Raine.

'Time' called Drisco.

Cammy Mhor started in 6/8 time (6 shovels to an 8 shovel capacity barrow), Marshall matched him barrow for barrow – first set went to tie break, with Marshall narrowly ahead 7:9. Cammy Mhor changed his rhythm to 5/4 completely throwing Marshall and took the second set 6:2.

'Get a grip Marshall, you can do this' cried Raine. Cammy Mhor now continued in 5/4 time but Marshall switched to 4/4 time but using a Number 8 shovel (at 5' 2" almost twice his height) and a larger barrow.

Sue Hothersall arrived as ACFA cheer leader and twirling a pom - pom distracted Marshall who emptied his barrow over Umpire Drisco's foot. *'Out'* said Drisco quietly. *'You cannot be serious'* cried Marshall. Taking advantage of the distraction, Cammy Mhor rattled in two extra barrows. *'Game set and match to G.U'* called Drisco. G.U. students cheered, Dunning leered, Crieff jeered, ACFA wept.

While the crowds had swarmed around the tower backfill however, G.U had left the wall trench unattended and a local farmer passing by on his JCB whipped aside the plastic hazard fencing and swiftly backfilled their entire trench, arrows, find markers and most of the context sheets. Adrianado stormed back too late – *'Fair game'* said Umpire Drisco and limped off. *'Asesinato! Crime! Cerdol!'* cried Adrianado, threatening to move to the English Premium Division next year.

Back at Horselea, a frustrated Raine threw the contents of the fridge in the bin and marched her troops off to Perth for a night on the town - three times down but still a winner to her loyal team. Would they sign off with a victory tomorrow in the Final Test?

Thursday 4th July: The Weaver's Cottage: The Final Reckoning.

The ACFA team's challenge was a small shell of a cottage in Thimble Street, Dunning, abandoned for 40 years and awaiting development. Surveyed by G.U. team SERF in 2012 and subject to two community test pit 'Big Digs'. We were granted full control over trench location, survey, excavation, sampling and recording.

Raine appealed to her team. *"We must rise above our recent setbacks as stepping stones to rise above our outlooks."* Team ACFA's brows furrowed, Smith's eyes closed in agony.

Dunning was playing a full strength spoiling team of locals who leaned in at window and doors with 'helpful' comments: *"This was my coal shed"* would say one, *"my bike shed"* another, *"My auntie's washhouse"* a third.

Excavation commenced – fitments, slots and hollows emerged. *"Hmm"* said Kath *"Thimble Lane, something to do with.."* *"Crown and Anchor operators?"* said Marshall.

Nine substantial loom weights were revealed: *"Those were curling stones"* shouted a Dunning loon at the window.

Drisco carded ACFA at 2:6 for the first set. *"We're on our way"* dreamed Raine.

Dunning ran a quick charm offensive: *'Would you like some coffee and cakes'* said the lady from No.20, a confident Raine nodded agreement and thanks.

Umpire Drisco looked anxiously at his watch and the darkening afternoon.

'What does ACFA think about this proposed merger of Historic Scotland and the RCAHMS' asked Dunning's Captain innocently. Ewen sprung up, trowel in hand, *'Oh no!'* muttered Wendy. *'I think there are 14 questions one might ask in that connection'* he said. Drisco was fascinated, Raine was furious. Work stopped. Smith gathered momentum. Hearn's interrupted: *'Inter Alia would be hard to beat'*.

In conclusion Smith offered *'It really depends where smaller teams like Dunning and ACFA would enter this new super – league'* Umpire Drisco woke up and looked at his watch: *'Time and second set to Dunning 6:0 – just time for two final games'*. A woman from No.13 flung a low shot over the window sill: *'In social diffusion theory do ceramic distributions represent fossilised cultural memes?'* *'Ignore it'* shouted Alison too late, Kath stood up: *'It depends on what you mean by social diffusion'*. *'Fifteen love to Dunning'* said Drisco.

Marshall got ready to receive with all the alertness of a wee Wally Dug: *'Will Bayesian analysis rationalise the content of context sheets?'* came from the door. Enjoying the moment, Marshall rose to the occasion: *'Of course in a strictly statistical sense we will all soon be features.'*

'Thirty love to Dunning' said Drisco.

Blackwood was still trowelling: *'My grandfather had a fish trap here'* was lobbed in, Alison wilted: *'Well in Oban fish traps are on the coastline'*.

'Forty love to Dunning and match point' said Drisco. Raine held on, King and Gardiner were still intent on the last unexcavated pit, these girls were strong. In it came, very low. *'See that – that was ma Granny's cludgie pit'* Swaying slightly, King rose to her feet and held up a sherd of ceramic: *'Early Medieval White Gritty Ware I believe?'*. In the stunned silence and in the evening light everyone could see the inscription – *'SHANKS OF BARRHEAD'*.

'Game, set and match to Dunning' announced Drisco.

A tearful Raine faced the media and admitted defeat, her dream of a high end finish was over, but she knew that she retained the full support of the ACFA team to the end and thanked them for their efforts. She was heard to mutter: *'It was more spot the ball than on the ball at times'*.

The Strathearn Trophy was presented by Umpire Drisco to Dunning in the Kirkstyle Inn that evening, when a resigned Raine was heard to corner Drisco later.

'You were ridiculously generous in giving marks to Dunning' she said.

The laconic answer came back: *'We all wanna come back, don't we?'*

Gerry Hearn

CALLING ACFA MEMBERS!

Surveys

ACFA members are encouraged to undertake field survey, not just at a landscape level but also on a smaller scale for perhaps just one building or feature. These can be sent to RCAMHS and kept as a collection of ACFA Site Reports in addition to the Occasional Papers.

Contact the Committee if you are thinking of proceeding. There are many people who will be happy to advise if required. So, if you have come across an old farmstead or a kiln or a WW2 air raid shelter or any unusual feature in your walks, consider rallying a few of the members, drawing it up and writing a short report.

ACFA does of course promote the larger scale survey where a team of volunteers labour over many weeks / months / years. The costs of printing can be considerable depending on the size of the final report but the Committee will assist survey directors in applying for grants and also advise on a combination of in-house printing and electronic publishing.

Dates for the Diary

ACFA February Bash – Saturday 22nd February 2014

Thursday 10am 13th February 2014 The Ferguson Room, 1 A The Square Coffee morning Retired Staff Association of Glasgow University. Talk: Dr. Susan Kruse of ARCH (Archaeology for Communities in the Highlands). *Community Archaeology: Examination to Excavation*. Anyone interested contact Carol Primrose.



Blacksmiths Trade Banner : John Gray Centre, Haddington

Title page photo: East Lothian Field Trip Photo by Dugie MacInnes

Disclaimer - The views and opinions of authors published in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of ACFA.

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

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