

NEWSLETTER 50

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Summer 2018.

Welcome to the summer issue of the Newsletter – with another fascinating update from Ewen Smith on human origins, reports from the teams in the field and in the trench, some appeals and an update from our Chair, Janie Munro on some ideas that arose at the spring meet and during the recent Tiree field work. More reflections on new museums seen, exhibitions visited and new books encountered or old ones remembered.

We also have from the Newsletters Past slot including a most appropriate one from the late Jean Aitken on our *fons et origo*, Lionel, to celebrate his return to the fray and with plans afoot to catch up with his postponed lectures on trying to understand the meanings of Rapa Nui.

Happy summer roaming, rootling and tootling as always,

Ian Marshall, editor.



Baldernock Mill - ACFA - May 2018

As those who were at the spring social recently will know, there are a couple of issues which the committee would like to consult members about. Currently our funds are looking very healthy and, though always mindful of the need to be canny, we are looking at the best ways of spending some money. Ideas have already been put forward but the committee is keen for members to suggest ways of making use of our funds, for example replacing and updating our equipment or paying for professional expertise when appropriate.

ACFA is currently very busy, with ongoing surveys in the Borders, the islands of Luing and Tiree, participation in the Scottish Rock Art Project and a number of other activities. This comes at a time when it looks increasingly likely that the certificate course will not continue, thereby cutting off a source of qualified certificated field archaeologists, while we have been attracting an increasing number of enthusiastic associate members. The committee would like to hear from members as to how they see the future of ACFA without the certificate course: do we attempt to arrange training ourselves or do we open ACFA to all-comers as NOSAS does and engage with professionals to supplement the archaeological knowledge?

We have been in discussion with Peta Glew re training for and upgrading of our existing EDM, but she has also been asked to provide an estimate of the time required and cost of delivering training in the use of differential GPS, required for the level of accuracy needed for the Hynish project, and the comparative benefits of purchasing equipment or hiring. The use of GIS mapping brings ACFA into the forefront of field archaeology and complements our existing survey techniques and would benefit existing projects such as Luing and Halterburn, as well as those in the future.

Please send your thoughts and suggestions to acfacommittee@gmail.com

[Janie Munro \(Chairperson\).](#)



Baldernock Mill - ACFA - May 2018



Once more, a succession of discoveries has led to articles in popular scientific journals that allow us to re-assess our story, of human evolution, and following are summaries of some of those recent articles. First, however, where were we?

If I understand it correctly, the generally accepted theory has been that the first modern humans evolved in East Africa, from *Australopithecus afarensis*, some 200,000 years ago, but only migrated from Africa c. 60,000 years ago. (*H. erectus* had much earlier migrated to Eurasia, where *H. neanderthalis* evolved, as did, presumably, *H. denisova* and *H. floresiensis*.)

Though *H. erectus* is considered the first hominid species to migrate from Africa, other species almost certainly followed over the next 1 million or so years, with *H. sapiens* only the most recent, and very recent addition to that journey (c. 60,000 years ago).

So far, so very straightforward. However, a tide of recently reported discoveries began to throw serious doubts on the accepted theory, with the identification of three new ancient species and advances in DNA research suggesting that humans split from chimps anywhere up to 7 to 13 million years ago (MYA). However, in addition to this questioning of the established basis of our understanding about human evolution, questions are emerging about our *A. afarensis* heritage, with a contemporary of “Lucy”, ***Kenyanthropus platyops*** which some researchers claim show closer similarities with modern humans than “Lucy” does. Add to this the real possibility that bi-pedalism started much earlier than previously thought, and pre-dated the spread of a savannah-type environment, and the debate widens

to consideration of whether the apes from which we evolved were more human-like, and less chimp-like, than imagined.

Grounds for a big debate, but the point to make here is that “***in any event**, determining which hominins evolved into humans is no longer as clear-cut as it once was*”.



Dmanisi hominin

Nor is the pace and source of migration from Africa left unquestioned. The discovery of the so-called **Dmanisi skull in Georgia**, in 2002, demonstrates that small-brained hominins did indeed leave Africa, and around the same time that *H. erectus* left. Likewise *H. floresiensis*, discovered in Indonesia, in 2004, shows “striking similarities” with African hominins of 2 to 3 MYA, while evidence from China argues that *H. sapiens* arrived there 100,000 years ago, not 60,000 years

But who could have made these tools? Thus far, no hominin remains have been found associated with these tools directly. However, their location and age suggest three possibilities: ***Kenyanthropus platyops*** (“the only hominin species known to have inhabited western Turkana at the time”), ***Australopithecus afarensis***, and ***Australopithecus deyiremeda***. None were thought to have a brain size compatible with tool manufacture. So, to date, we’re left with ancient tools and dissociated (and less ancient) hominins. Together, these raise two initial possibilities; first, that there are further undiscovered *Homo* species of a very early date; or second, that tool-making was not the initiative of the *Homo* species.



Kenyanthropus platyops

In that latter case, “*If stone-tool manufacture was the game-changing development that experts have always thought it to be, why did it not catch on as soon as it first appeared and initiate the feedback loop that expanded the brain*” for the hominin species that developed the technique?

Best guess? Both possibilities are correct ... and others, too, that discoveries yet to be made will reveal.

Talking of which, back in Africa, the discoveries do indeed keep on coming. Most recent are the results reported from excavations in Morocco (**Jebel Irhoud**), where fire-heated flint artefacts have been found that are directly associated with remains of *H sapiens*.

Fine ... except those artefacts have been dated, by thermoluminescence, to somewhere between 349,000 and 281,000 years ago! The earliest human remains reported, and around 100,000 years before *H. sapiens* was supposed to have evolved from *H. erectus*.

In summary, what have we got? Possible human/chimp divergence much earlier than had been believed; possible bi-pedalism in a non-savannah context; possible break in the *A. afarensis* to *H. Sapiens* lineage; possible much earlier stone-tool manufacture than previously realised; possible emergence in Africa of *H. sapiens* 100,000 years before previously accepted; and possible earlier migration of *H. sapiens* from Africa by c. 40,000 years.

As has been suggested, in a comically under-stated fashion, "Perhaps ... we have oversimplified our understanding of hominin evolution". And that's possibly not just me?

Scientific American; May 2017, and June 2017

Nature; June 2017

Science; June 2017

Spring/Summer Surveys, Excavations and future plans, 2018.

ACFA revisits LUING:

Margaret Gardiner

On 17th February 5 ACFA members set sail for Luing again.



The aim of the visit was to field walk areas of the island not covered previously and to confirm and record sites already identified by the Royal Commission. Also, with the use of First and Second Edition Ordnance Survey maps we were able to locate sites of pre-improvement and improvement settlement. These were mainly crofting areas such as Achaphola Croft, Millers Croft and Smiths Croft.

Excitement broke out when, with almost fingertip searching, we located the mill and lade at Ardinamar. All that was left of the building was a 4 foot stretch of walling with some mortar.

GPS readings, descriptions and photographs were taken of each site. Fortunately most of the sites this time were dry with no or very little bog!



Julia Schiff (Luing Historical Group), Libby King (ACFA)

We were assisted enthusiastically by members of the Luing History group who have been scouring the island for sites and were able to lead us to many new discoveries including two previously unrecorded circular enclosures, near Ardinamar and the village of Cullipol respectively.

Not only were we enthusiastically assisted and guided by Luing History group members but we were met with the warmest of welcomes possible with contributions of wine (always welcome) home- made apple crumble and gingerbread. We also received free tickets to attend The Great Luing Bump Off, a very entertaining murder- mystery performed by the local drama group.

However on a more serious note the discussion turned to the cancellation of the Certificate course by Glasgow University and the following difficulty of ACFA in recruiting new members. Points to consider were, would they have the skills and knowledge to be able to contribute to the group? Were they fit and able to physically cover the ground in field walking which is often steep and difficult and would they have the time and commitment Talking of which -

A further 'welcome' from a local was another encounter with 'Munin, the Black Raven God of Luing' as he likes to term himself, (despite being a pheasant) who attacks all survey parties south of Ardinamar Bay.

The basis of his outrage seems to be ACFA's reluctance to seriously consider his applications for membership on what he considers as pervasive stereotyping and systemic prejudice against the pheasant order stemming from their Roman origins.



Alison Blackwood attempting to calm down 'Munin the Black'

In the photograph we see Alison interviewing this prospective member who certainly showed some of the qualities mentioned above. He had followed Ian's group on a previous visit, popped up again and accompanied us for at least a mile. As a local he certainly knows the ground and proved he can cope with the terrain. His commitment was obvious as this was his second appearance.

However, although he seems to be listening attentively to Alison, it was agreed that his tendency to fly up and attack members' rear quarters probably cancelled out his other qualities. We do feel that this must be brought to the wider membership and include some anonymised correspondence on this delicate matter to allow a group judgement.

"Dear M. I did interview this bird last year and he freely admitted that he had completed a counselling course in anger management and had put these issues behind him, but when I mentioned that his hachuring was still not up to scratch, I'm afraid he completely lost the place again shouting "Well you try it when your under attack from people with bloody ranging poles!"

At which I broke off the interview. I do fear he may be back"#

"Dear I. I feel quite upset about the situation he finds himself in and on reflection and on purely sympathetic grounds, I feel he warrants a second chance. Perhaps there may be deep seated reasons for his behaviour in an unhappy chick hood, loneliness, a broken heart – after all he is always on his own, no sign of a mate. Can we not revisit such a decision? Perhaps we need to widen the discussion to members before the matter is taken out of our hands as I overheard local volunteer Birgit threatening to shoot him – and he may indeed already have been eaten. Can we not take the matter up again in November if he can make the meeting?"

Ominously no further contact has been established with him, I am afraid.

A further visit to Luing is to be arranged in November this year, when drawing will commence.

Scottish Rock Art Project: updates from Teams

The ScRAP rock art website is now fully operational and two licenses have been issued to each of the three ACFA teams to enable accessing the range of sites requiring modern re-assessment, photogrammetry, tightly consistent recording format and submission of results to the central record.

The ACFA area to be covered over the next three years has been informally divided into the north and south banks of the Clyde Valley and extending down the west coast to at least as far as Ardrrossan. A few further outliers in the Halterburn Valley, Glenlochay and in Perthshire have also been 'reserved' for our contribution to the Project.

Now we have to prove we can do it.

Some short notes on work in progress:

Team West: *Ed Smith*

The Glasgow West Team has been concentrating on sites in Muirshiel Country Park above Greenock. As can be seen in the picture, we had some very nice weather early in the year before the winter snow and frost brought everything to a shuddering halt.

We have had some interest from the Park Rangers in our activities. They are looking for sites of interest which they can show to visitors. Indeed, they mentioned a previous Ranger who was interested in archaeology and maintained a sand-pit which children could excavate for hidden pottery and bones.

Unfortunately, the sites we have recorded are not very interesting. So far, we have found only a few cup marks.



Enjoying the winter sun mixed
with a biting wind.

Sketchfab (<https://sketchfab.com/models/90db520bd7e8424e8feb314a59bb292e>) shows one of the panels we recorded. However, the suspicion is that most of these cups are natural erosion marks. What do you think?

But things could get better. An earlier Rock Art hunter found a possible animal carving on a rock panel in the area (<https://canmore.org.uk/site/332023/gourock>).

We haven't got around to that site yet, but it looks very interesting. Things can only get better!

Team North: Ewen Smith

The Glasgow North team or, as we've heard it referred to frequently, "the A-Team", has had a mixed start, with several planned outings cancelled because of illness and/or atrocious weather conditions. Nonetheless, some success, with two new panels (i.e. unknown to Canmore, at Allanfaulds Farm), and another (on the Canmore list, at North Blochairn), surveyed successfully, and the images duly aligned, clouded, meshed and textured. No success yet, however, with uploading to the ScRAP web-site!



Three quarters of the (then) 'A Team'



North Blochairn 1

Other Canmore sites were visited, but no panels were located, at Auchentorlie and Loch Ardinning. Others are already planned, but not all within the ACFA North area ... Crosswood, in the Pentland Hills, and around Moulin, near Pitlochry.

Many lessons learned, so invaluable in that regard, though the start has been disappointingly slow. Hopefully, the next Newsletter will offer an improved report.

Team South: *Ian Marshall*

The team have concentrated attention largely on a long basalt outcrop on Bonnyton Moor to the west of Eaglesham traditionally known as Carlin Crag. The site has presented difficulties, both climatically- very exposed over February and March - but more challengingly, interpretational.

We were initially hopeful in putting to bed a site originally recorded in 1943 as having up to 30 cupmarks with rubbings (lost), to 19 with scale drawings in 1955 (deposited with Glasgow Museum service and still to be found), to 14 by R.W.B Morris in 1967 – to “.. a number of possible cupmarks..” (RCAHMS 2007)



Christine McDiarmid and Susan Hunter - Feb 2018

The basic problem is the same as recorded by Ed, the problem of weathering and the nature of the rock – hard basalt. Current work has severely slimmed down the initial scan to perhaps a dozen, to be clarified by photogrammetry and some limited turf clearance. Examination of a further possible site on a sandstone boulder at Brownsmuir plantation just south of Eaglesham has confirmed it is natural.

Cora Mill on the Nethan Burn (CVALP Project), 28th March 2018



A small day-survey of the site of Cora Mill was carried out by a small team from CVALP and ACFA members, led by Dawn Ferry (Northlight Heritage).

The site is just at the foot of Craignethan Castle on the east bank of the burn and structurally revealed a complicated and probably multi-phased history.

Tiree: Tuesday 17th-23rd April 2018:

A fuller interim report on the spring field programme on Tiree will be hopefully available for the winter issue of the Newsletter due to the eventful but fruitful outcome of this work - with two days stormbound at Oban, the full field party was only assembled at the Hynish Centre on the Thursday and even then groups of frustrated and disappointed members had to cancel when Cal-Mac could only offer them a passage on the Saturday!

We attach some images from three of the sites surveyed with comments, but the major effort was again in the return to the astonishing archaeological richness of the East Hynish and Mannal townships and their bafflingly intricate web of multi- period boundaries which stimulated an evening pow wow to discuss the upgraded technology which we now require to master the unravelling of this area.

All these sites have been surveyed at 1:100 or 1:200 scale.

Kilkenneth Settlement:

A linear fermtoun of domestic and work units running along a now tarmacked side road leading from the medieval chapel of Kilkenneth on the rise in the distance into the former moss, lochan and central bog area.

Recorded in the OS.First Edition 1843 map in substantially visible layout; by the OS Second Edition 1892-1905, lengths of the working range are only partially roofed.





Vaul Settlement at Dun Beag:

At the foot of Dun Beag on the western promontory of Vaul Bay, an enigmatic sub-rectangular ditched enclosure with a causewayed entrance, encloses the multiple hollows of probably early modern potato clamps, known to have occupied the site in the early AD20C.

However, geophysical survey of the immediately adjacent large mound has suggested

sub-turf images of a sub- rectangular feature with even earlier, possibly prehistoric underlying features below.

Dun Mor Vaul - double banked enclosure at Lochan Fhaing:

To the west of Dun Mor Vaul and on the coast, accessed by a narrow creek, an enclosure of both revetted stones and a stone turf bank. It has its western landward length enclosed by two banks, the outer a vestigial one of turf, the inner more substantial turf and stone with an entrance to which is attached a low turf and stone dwelling. Despite wild speculation of its relation to the nearby broch, it is probably a small homestead, period unknown.



Excavations at Baldernock Mill (Calluna Archaeology), 15th-19th May 2018

ACFA members and local volunteers participated with Dr Heather James as Director and Professor Paul Bishop (School of Geography and Earth Sciences, University of Glasgow) as commissioner in the investigation of the putative site of an early Lint Mill on this site. It was a week of glorious sunshine in the outstandingly beautiful small gorge of the Craigmaddie Burn full of wild garlic and bluebells.

Professor Bishop has pioneered the study of sediment deposits in mill and dam reservoirs to analyse the deposition of lead isotopes in the deposited silts of these structures as a dating mechanism analogous to dendrochronological dating of tree rings.

The aim of the excavations was to understand how the Lint Mill, downstream from the later Baldernock grain mill, operated, by finding the lade route along the side of the gorge in which it is situated.

As always challenges were encountered including the discovery of a metre thick midden deposit of ironwork, bottles and smashed ceramic tipped into the gully which carried the prospective lade. Frustrating, but like all middens, full of surprises.

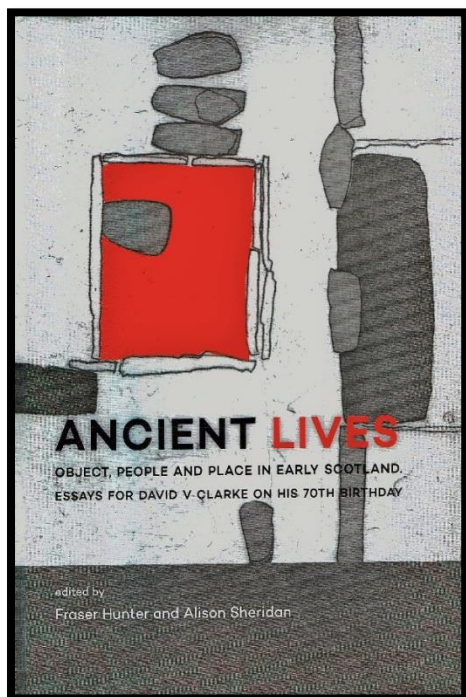
The mill lade was found in two trenches but seems to have just bent nearer the gorge beyond these trenches and under a substantial mound of debris rich with trees and undergrowth.

Memorable week and company.



Museums, exhibitions and book reviews

Some of the recommended books we have been reading and a perceptive review of an article from one of them by Ewen Smith on a controversial piece by Sir Mark Jones, former Director of the NMS.



In *Ancient Lives: Objects, People and Place in Early Scotland*, an article by Mark Jones, entitled “*Museums and Their Collections*”.

Good article, for being both interesting and thought-provoking, and I would recommend it to readers.

And having been duly provoked, I was happy to respond in kind. Initial response was sceptical, but warmed to the serious questions raised. Of these, two were particularly challenging:-

- a) have museums been diverted from their original purposes?
- b) are they now simply the equivalent of early ritual deposition sites for “treasures” and gifts?

I’ll return to those, but first am bound to note that Jones (for whom I have great respect) has been rather selective in his choice of examples from the museum world. Though not the sole source of his argument, he draws heavily on the South Kensington Museum (now known as the Victoria and Albert, of which he was the Director), and seems to me to reinforce his argument by drawing upon similar museums. The different examples, in the UK, of military museums, university museums and independent museums are absent, presumed non-existent. Nor does he look either explicitly or often beyond the UK, or beyond our time.

In my view, he might have been better to present his arguments, not in a manner contradictory to that of the general opinion, but used his examples as an exploration of where the museum world stands now, and its direction of travel.

Jones begins with a look at museums’ mission statements, then shows how little they seem to meet their own ambitions.



Museum of Archaeology, Oman

At heart, because the focus of museums, he argues, is on “ancient, medieval or marginalised” cultures, they fail to be adequately meaningful to people today.

Where, he asks, are the attempts to understand contemporary culture, through these collections? Where is imperialism and colonialism studied? Where post-war Europe? Where slavery?

He notes, for example, that “*There is more in the British Museum about American Indians than there is about the dominant American culture that has shaped our world over the last century*”. However, I’m bound to contrast Jones’s example with others drawn from museums such as the Imperial War Museum (London and Manchester), the Museum of Slavery (Liverpool) and, moving out of the UK bubble, the National Museum of American Indians (Washington). All museums cannot explore all cultures.



National Museum of American Indians (Washington, DC)

Perhaps the issue is less about how/if museums have moved away from their mission statements, but that those writing mission statements are out of touch with how people learn about and engage with other cultures.

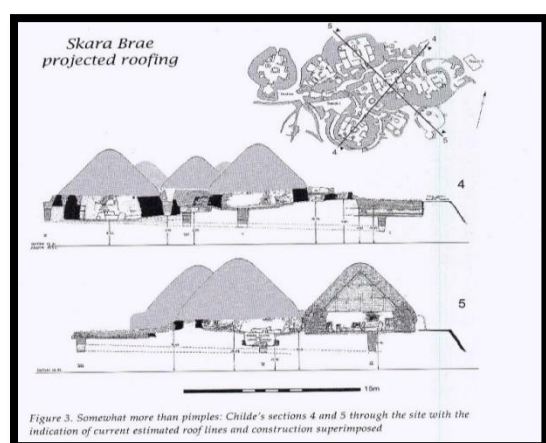
If there had been no change within the museum world, then the engagement that was germane in the past would be obsolete today (as our 21st. century model will be obsolete in its turn).

But perhaps Jones's most provocative suggestion, beginning late in his piece, is that museums have become deposition sites, either to deflect criticism of conspicuous consumption by rich collectors (*"The creation of museums such as the V&A and the National Gallery was explicitly motivated by the need to fend off the revolutionary disorder so frighteningly present across the Channel"*) or *"for ritual disposal of gifts and treasures"*, thereby confirming the gifts are not valued by the recipient and simultaneously indicating that there is no obligation to reciprocate with a gift of their own. This mirrors the practice in other societies and times where the ritual breaking of valuable weapons and their sinking in bog, river or cenote removes them from display.

Where I depart ultimately from Jones's view is that I see museums here are attempting to deal with difficult issues, be they war, slavery, imperialism, post-industrialisation, emigration or immigration, or a host of other things. If we don't address such issues then, of course, we remain ignorant of them, at best, and wilfully misrepresent them at worst.

But it takes a while, and considerable resources, to change how museum collections are displayed and interpreted, to say nothing of the immense difficulty of changing the collections themselves. This is not new, in my opinion, but like a vast oil tanker these institutions take a long time to turn, and funding limitations act as a constraint even to that slow speed in changing direction.

Ewen Smith.



Ancient Lives: Objects, People and Place in Early Scotland: Essays for David V Clarke on his 70th birthday. (Ed. Hunter F. and Sheridan A.) Sidestone Press, 2016 – Amazon at £55.00.

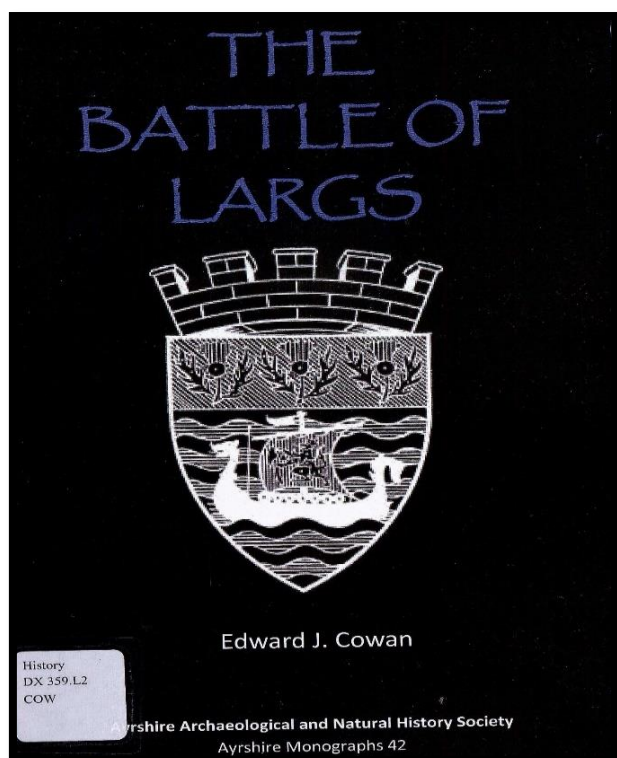
This book is a celebration of the work of David V. Clarke on his 70th birthday contains several further striking articles, including a concise and lucid account for non- specialists on **Scottish Neolithic** pottery understanding by Dr Alison Sheridan - of interest to any who worked on the Leadketty and Wellhill sites at Dunning with Dene Wright.

Of perhaps more general interest is an article on Skara Brae by Alexandra ('Lekky') Shepherd which is a taster of the long awaited **Skara Brae: A Full Compendium of the Site** (Clarke and Shepherd, pending).which will be required reading.

Ian Marshall.

The Battle of Largs: (Edward J. Cowan.) 2017.

Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Ayrshire Monographs 42



A monograph in the excellent series of monographs regularly produced by the Ayrshire Society.

Cowan sets the battle – ‘...barely recorded at the time and later accounts largely fictitious.’ in the political and cultural context of the skalds and sagas, particularly the eye witness accounts preserved in Sturla Thordarrson’s *Hakonar saga*.

The battle, though ‘something of a guddle’ is rich in Scandinavian characters such as Guthorm Bank-club, Ogmond Crow-dance and Thorlag the Hot. However unlikely it might seem, Largs was indeed the scene of a battle which resulted in the Scottish acquisition of its Western islands.

Cowan is suitably neutral about the diverse sites claimed for the conflict, although most observers now reject the Pencil Monument as being the least likely. The significance of the ‘hillock’ which figures in the accounts is perhaps the key and I have always been persuaded by Alexander, Neighbour and Oram’s 2002 suggestion of the ‘Green Hill’ a supposed motte on the north side of the Gogo Water as fitting the description spatially. Only one of the unlikely to be solved enigmas of the battle Cowan notes the lack and uninformative nature of contemporary Scottish references to it, Why was more not made of it?

The Ayrshire Society is one in which we have had friends, from the days of Roland and Sheila Golightly to Michael and Katherine Scott today, and has a rich archive of material some of which reaches out from the purely local to the wider public and are just a real good read. I recommend both the above and *The Loans Smugglers* (Frances Wilkins, 2008) and many of the smaller ones available on their website at very reasonable prices. – *Historic Troon, Historic Ayr and The Church Buildings of Ayrshire* (John R Hume).

Even more stimulating is the large list of material available for free downloading on subjects ranging from castles, harbours and abbeys to the little ‘locals’ that just lure you in like *Newmilns Weavers and the American Civil War* or *Ancient Fishtraps on the North Ayrshire Coast*.

Ian Marshall.

Museums and Exhibition Reviews

Bankfield House Museum: Halifax.

*From Hull, Hell and Halifax,
tis thus*

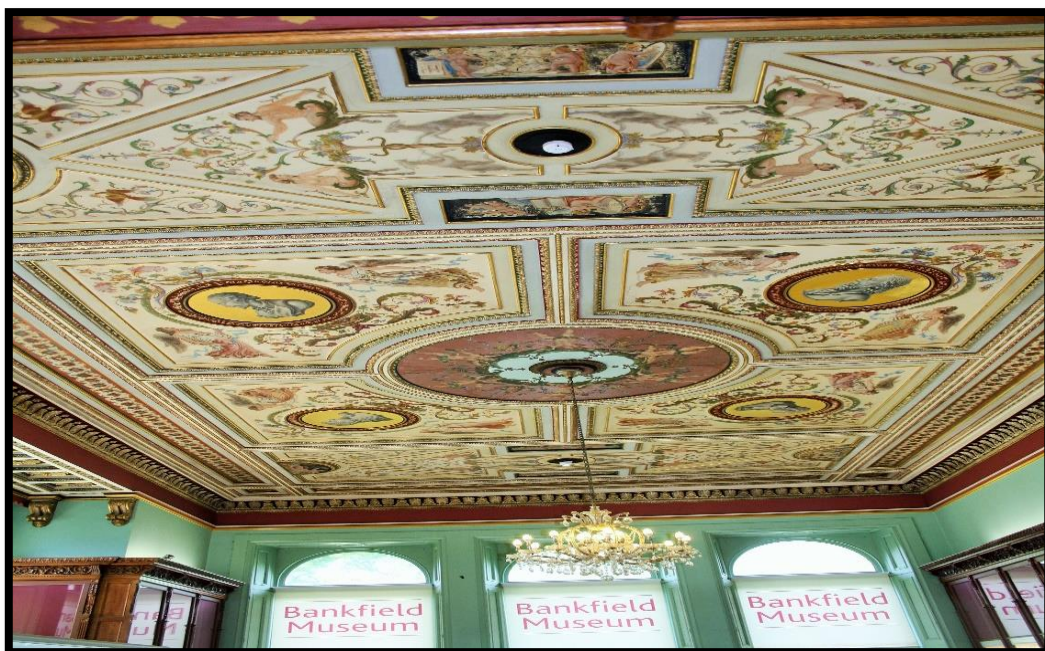
*From all these three,
Good Lord Deliver Us.*



Piece Hall, Halifax

Halifax, West Yorkshire, where the Hebble Brook runs into the River Calder, an iron mill town in recuperation with the restoration of the stupendous Piece Hall, a European open square, and a cloth hall worthy of Flanders, the equal of any in Northern Europe.

On the town's green edge - **Bankfield House**, a former palazzo of the Ackroyd mill dynasty, now a splendid, slightly shabby, locally loved, nationally unknown fanfare for the local museum.





Centred on the West Riding regiment, (Duke of Wellington's Regiment) plus a glorious mash of waif's and strays - local ceramics, textiles, a case of massive prehistoric ards, children's toys, antiquarian antics and local heroines – see poster advertising the appearance of Mrs Harry Humphries (local lass, Lizzy Yates) who will be in Paisley next week to celebrate her 1911 walk around the world for £2000 to celebrate 'Woman's Endurance' - unfortunately we were not able to make it.

And then the surprises like Ned Kelly's armour– recent research has revealed that the Kelly gang all came from Hebden Bridge and that their last stand was actually on the outskirts of Cleckheaton.

This of course has been suppressed for years by the Ozzies for years now.



Armour recovered from Noddy Kelly, shot by Constable Jimmy 'Bullseye' Clitheroe, in the cart yard of the Wild Rover in Cleckheaton 1874.

This little museum holds in its basements, one of the most significant collection of textiles and costumes in the UK.

Smashing museum. Do see it if in the neighbourhood.

Ian Marshall.

And finally ... a welcome back to the Master of Hill and Moor.

A True Tale

Have you seen the hooded figure
That plods o'er hill and moor.
O'er landscapes that are lonely
For inhabitants once more?

He keeps a constant vigil
No matter what the weather,
He visits all the ancient sites
And draws their strings together.

You'll find him round at Oban
Or along by fair Loch Nell,
He checks Kilmartin valley
And Cowal he notes as well.

In Galloway they know him,
Dumfries and Peebles too,
Stirling, Perth, Caithness
And Clava he will view.

But the "special" haunt is in the North
Where he will spend all day,
Communing with the spirits
Of the cairns of Camster Grey.

And what's the raison d'être
That takes him to and fro
Where whaups their plaintive cry
The same, as long ago?

Imposing cairn, or clearance
He links us to that place
Where people lived and died;
A humble ancient race.

He's not Macdui's Grey Man
Nor is he Man of Storr
Or even is he Man of Hoy -
But, he's the Green Man of Greensmoor.

For the concerned he is the conscience
The preventer of disasters
The Keeper of the Cairns
He is, alias, Lionel Masters.

Jean Aitken. 1993.



Looking down a hole in Ireland – names, date, place?