

# NEWSLETTER 53

[www.acfabaseline.info](http://www.acfabaseline.info)

Summer 2020.



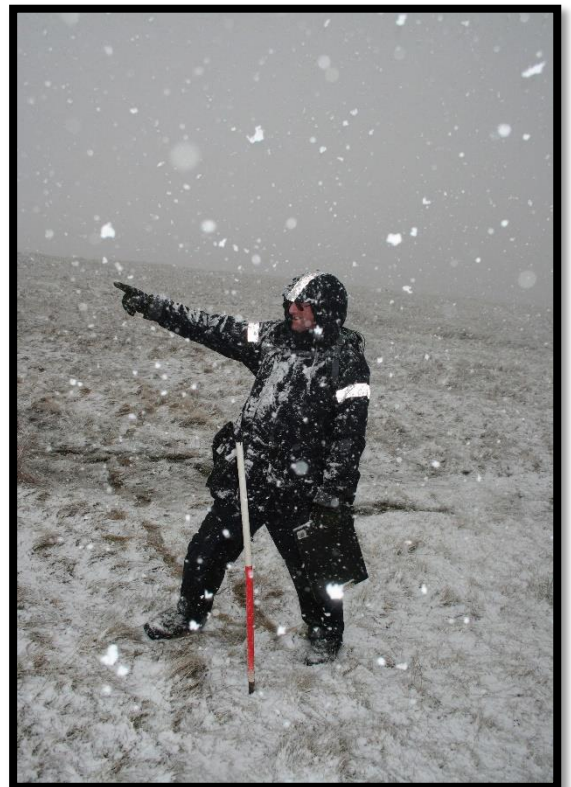
## Glen Lochay – summer and winter 2005.

Due to Covid 19 this issue must lack stirring images from work in progress, so a few memories of times past and a great ACFA personality, the late Bruce Henry in action in Glen Lochay seems appropriate for an opener.

Here he is above, *Silent upon a Peak in Darien* and here he is, not silent - on the Beardmore Glacier telling us that this is totally too far south and we should have synchronised on his GPS.

This glen consumed our energies for years and, of course still does, with the Scottish Rock Art Project around Duncroisk and Corrycharmaig in suspension.

Let's hope we will all be swinging into the Bridge of Lochay car park soon!



Editors: Ian Marshall, Dr Janet MacDonald.

Strange times readers.

Who could have imagined that in our senior years we would find ourselves looking out of windows on an exceptional spring and summer, unable to stray further than the end of the garden, the balcony or a furtive scurry to the end of a market queue?  
This has resulted in a dearth of material on what we did this summer.

Of course for the most senior of us with childish memories of rationing and the blackout in 'Dad's Army Land' long ago, perhaps not so strange - but nobody was then told to stay 6.5618 feet from your neighbours in the queue while wearing your gas mask or be fined £60.

We did think of running up a few Fake Surveys within the allowed exercise ranges, such as *Some Shielings of Shettleston* or *A possible cursus in Tollcross Park* - inspired by the late Leslie Gray with his *The Hilltop Forts of the Southern Netherlands*. However, we decided it would be too much work and the market has been cornered for fake news anyway.

A special thanks must be extended by all of us to the indefatigable Sue Bryson and others for the daily trawl of clips and cartoons which have been flying around among us to keep up morale, plus the committee zoom meets, texts and enquiring phone calls

If nothing else it does seem to have enabled many of us to dig out some old or unfinished surveys, and for Janie to launch our updated website, still stocking up but please give it a click and check it out. In this shorter issue we have a ghost story, the first of two parts exploring Rock Art in Australia, a review of a favourite museum in Copenhagen, some recommendations to new books and a fuller obituary for the late Tom Craig.

We finish with a round-up of what some of us have been up to for the last three months.

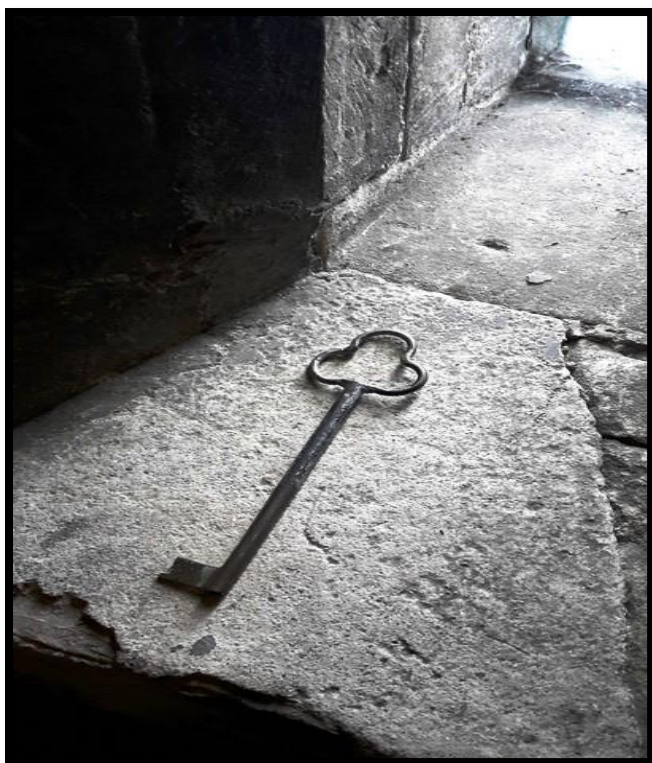
Stay safe, keep waxing the boots, polish up the trowels and prepare for better times.

Ian and Janet.





## ACFA Photo Competition.



It's the ACFA Photo Competition time again! This year we have changed the format and have added a brand new category, giving you even more opportunity to enter!

We've gone on line to allow the entries to be viewed from home or wherever you are logged in. The photographs will be exhibited on the ACFA website for members to enjoy, then all will be able to vote for their favourites by e mail.

The theme as always is Archaeology, with the following categories:

- Home.
- International
- Humorous
- Stills by drones **New.**

So, for the chance to win prizes for the Best Photo in each category and also the coveted Overall Best Photo award, here's what you need to put in your e mail to enter:

- Photo as attachment
- **Category**
- Title of photo for display
- Your name
- Your preferred contact e mail address

Optional – Any further information about the photo you may want to add for further reference eg location, when taken, subject etc.

**Please note, you can enter all four categories but entries are limited to one per category.**

Entries should be emailed to [acfacomp202@outlook.com](mailto:acfacomp202@outlook.com) from Monday 31<sup>st</sup> August until the closing date of Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September.

The final entries will be available to view at the ACFA website. You can vote for your favourite in each category and also your overall favourite, from Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> October until Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October.

You can only vote once for each photo you choose and please no voting for your own, even if it is the best!

Full details on how to vote will be available on the ACFA website after the Entry closing date.

The results will be announced at the AGM, or should the event have to be cancelled, they will be announced on the website. This will be updated for you as appropriate.

So, as Lockdown eases, dust off your cameras, your photo albums or even your drones and let's enjoy your fabulous photos! We're looking forward to some really great entries.

Good luck!

## *A Warning to the Curious.*



With living in a kind of limbo at the moment and only a void on what we have been up to, I thought it might be an opportunity to offer an item from the 1996 issue of the Newsletter, written by Anne McDonald – a story from the edge, the margins, and an ACFA ghost tale.

The survey of the Milton of Lawers settlement on the northern shores of Loch Tay was published in two parts in 1998 and 2002 by Dugie MacInnes and the late Margaret Alexander. A seminal survey for ACFA in that it was one of the first ‘grand’ surveys bringing together substantial numbers of original and new members and was accompanied by a comprehensive historical research of both the area and the settlement.

Access to the site was down the steep ravine of the Lawers Burn and some of the party stayed in a small cottage, halfway down, called Shian Cottage – currently up for sale although perhaps *caveat emptor* might be considered in the light of this piece!

Old Lawers Village on the lochside has its own reputation as being seriously haunted and its association with the predictions of Mary Campbell, Lady of Lawers when the ruined kirk - surveyed by ACFA - was being built in the late AD17C and her ominous prophecies:

*When the tree at the church gable reaches the roof,  
the House of Breadalbane will have no heir.*

Box ticked

*The land will first be sifted, then riddled of its people.*

Box ticked

*Ben Lawers will become so cold that it will waste the land  
for seven miles around.*

Box awaiting tick





### *An Addition to the Lawers Story by Anne MacDonald.*

Now you know me, I'm not a person who is known for flights of fancy or sentimentality. So I'm offering this story just as it happened and leave you to be the judge.

There are some people who still have to work for a living, but the survey for Old Lawers village was scheduled for the start of the school's October holiday and therefore Anne Johnston, Scott Wood, John and I decided to stay for the whole week rather than for the weekend of the survey.

Accordingly, we booked Shian Cottage, an idyllic old cottage much improved, situated beside the Lawers Burn and on the path down to the site. The cottage still retained its old walls although a top storey, for two bedrooms and a bathroom, had been built on to it. It is situated next to a large knoll, the back of the house being virtually built into the knoll.

Now, Anne Johnstone is not a good sleeper and can, on occasions, be very restless during the night. On the very first night of our stay we all went off to bed quite late and comfortably full of food and good malt whisky. During the night, perhaps about 3 o'clock, John and I both heard Anne downstairs in the living room/kitchen, we thought possibly making herself a hot drink because she couldn't sleep.

After a short time, the outside door opened and closed and my last thought before drifting off again, was that poor Anne had had to resort to a short walk to try and tire herself to sleep.

In the morning, neither Scott nor Anne came down stairs for breakfast and John and I, feeling, uncharacteristically kind, left them to sleep, realising that Anne had had a very disturbed night, however, when we realised that Oberst. MacInnes and his team of surveyors would be passing the door very shortly we decided that we had better wake up the sleepers. They tumbled downstairs a bit bleary-eyed and demanding to know why we hadn't wakened them long before 8.50am. We explained about hearing Anne moving about during the night and our generous impulse to allow them to sleep late. "I've had a great night's sleep" said Anne, "I haven't moved all night-never heard a thing till John banged on the door."



We checked the doors – they were both locked and the key was inside the door.

We had a repeat performance on the last night of our stay.

**Sithean** – the people who inhabit the other world, who live in fairy knolls. Later the name simply came to indicate 'the knoll'.

You don't believe it? Neither do I, but its true!

Anne MacDonald.

### Editor's addendum:

As a member of the Lawers survey I can only comment that I passed Shian Cottage every morning that weekend on the way down and while admiring its situation and reconditioned state, there was something about the place a little...eldritch?

And why am I unable to change the only image we have of the original cottage from this ghastly colour?





**Shian Cottage circa 1930.**

Shian cottage and the nearby hillock of Ant-Sithean appear in Farquharson's plan of 1769 and has been intermittently the residence of widows, paupers, wool carders, domestic servants, an umbrella maker and a roadman. Vacant by 1920 and a ruin by 1927.

It was then rescued in the 1980/90's, a new top storey erected and has become a small beautifully sited cottage to let.





Towards the end of 2019, I had the good fortune to visit the David Collection Museum, in Copenhagen; so impressed was I that I had planned to write a review for the next edition of the ACFA Newsletter, but life has got in the way. However, I had reason to “re-visit” the Collection on-line, and being reminded of how outstanding the Collection is, I thought that others might be interested in a review of a virtual experience of the museum.

First, a brief background ... the Collection was bequeathed to the Danish public by C.L.David in 1945. Following his death in 1960, it grew significantly, in part by use of the funds of its Foundation. A major renovation of the property (originally David’s home) was completed in 2009. Thus, the expanded Collection is now housed in a 19th. Century building with 21st. Century facilities of the highest order ... lighting, environment, security (I suspect, though it’s largely invisible), conservation studio, etc. And, of course, digitisation resources. Which is where this review comes in.

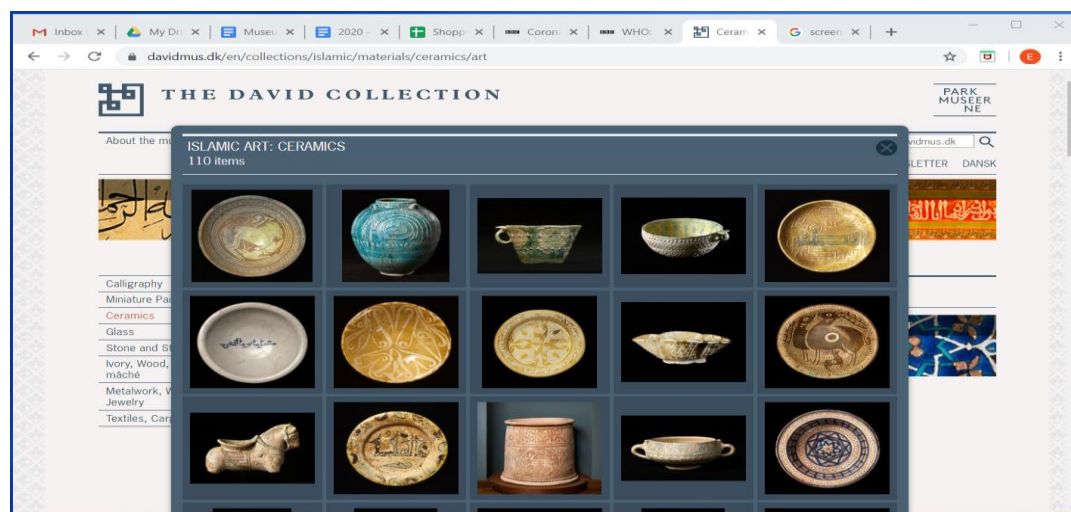
The permanent collections fall into three major categories ... Islamic Art, European Art, and Danish Early Modern Art. It is the first of these that account for the Museum’s renown. It is quite simply superb! Doubtless there are larger collections, perhaps some are even better displayed, but I don’t know of them.

The web-site, which matches the very high standards of the real museum, can be found at <https://www.davidmus.dk/en/information> and I urge you to take a look. It is easy to navigate. Taking by way of example the Islamic Art section, this is organised chronologically, and geographically, and covers all periods and dynasties from the 6th. to the 19th. centuries, and from Spain to Afghanistan, as well as by materials used. The website can be searched by any of these criteria, and consequently, as well as viewing the exquisite art works, you can learn about the historical and cultural contexts which contributed to their inspiration. Perfect.

By way of example ... if I want to view Islamic art, with a focus on ceramic art specifically, I go first to the web-site (see link above); next, I select the tab for Islamic Art, which takes me to <https://www.davidmus.dk/en/collections/islamic> There, I select “Materials” which takes me to <https://www.davidmus.dk/en/collections/islamic/materials>

Once there, I choose “Ceramics” which directs me to <https://www.davidmus.dk/en/collections/islamic/materials/ceramics>

If I now click on “Works of Art” I’m presented with the following page:-

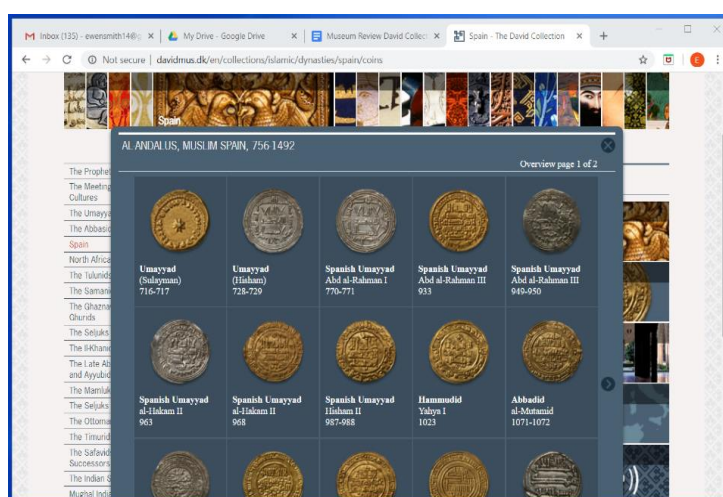


Alternatively, my interest may lie in the coinage used by the Al-Andalus dynasty in Spain. From the Museum’s home page, I would again select the Islamic Art tab, and then opt for “Islamic Dynasties” which takes me to:

<https://www.davidmus.dk/en/collections/islamic/dynasties>

From there choose Spain and from the resulting web page <https://www.davidmus.dk/en/collections/islamic/dynasties/spain>

I can choose between Works of Art, Coins, Architecture and Geography. Selecting coins produces the following page:-





Then, you can select a particular item and get further catalogue level information. For example -



The David Collection is now one of my favourite museums, and its web-site gives an excellent introduction to it. Hopefully, you'll enjoy it as much as I do.



## Rock art of Australia: Part 1

**Susan Hunter.**

Australia is a vast country with large inhospitable areas covered in red dry earth. My journey round the country was to look at its rock art. We travelled from Sydney to Arnhem Land in what is called the top end (Northern Territories). The Dutch were most active in this region with the Dutch East India Company hence Arnhem Land.

I am going to break the journey into different areas, first some of the rocks around Sydney in the **Ku Ring Gai Chase National Park** in the area of the Terry Hills. This is Australia's second oldest National Park. Within the boundaries of the park evidence of centuries of indigenous Australian life is seen. The area was originally home to four different groups of indigenous people. There are over 800 archaeological sites including burial sites, grinding grooves and middens in addition to rock art sites. The art found includes paintings and engravings. Here the art we saw was in the form of petroglyphs cut into flat slabs of smooth rock. The first site we visited was named **American Bay Track** and on this site could be seen all types of marine life.

The second site called **Elvina Track** had various figures including humans, kangaroos and a petroglyph thought to represent a snake.

The third site **Guiringai Land** contained petroglyphs showing dreamtime, animals, people and materials. Moving closer to Sydney our local guide took us to see a site not on the itinerary called **Dundundra Falls** which had human figures, animals and footprints.







**Rock art on the American Bay Track**





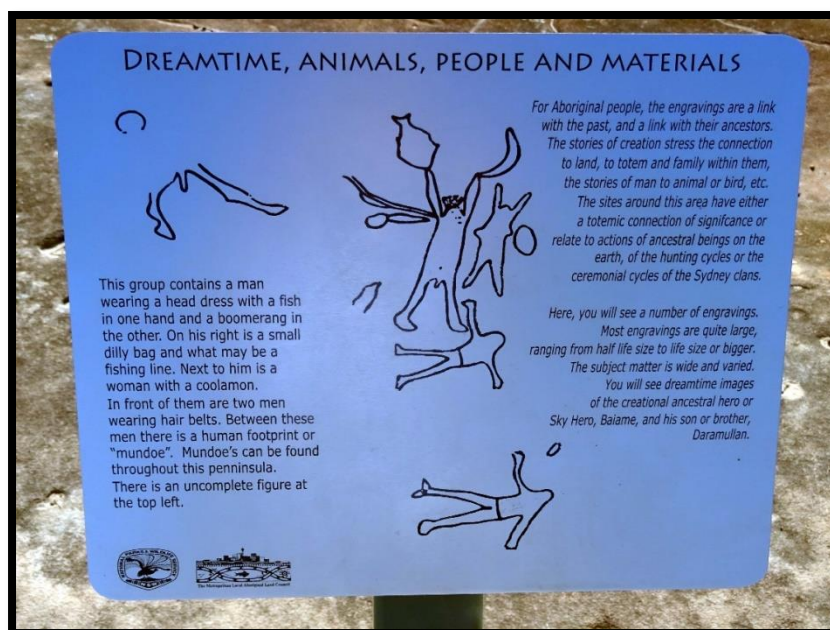
**Right Elvina Track**



**Below Guiringai Land**







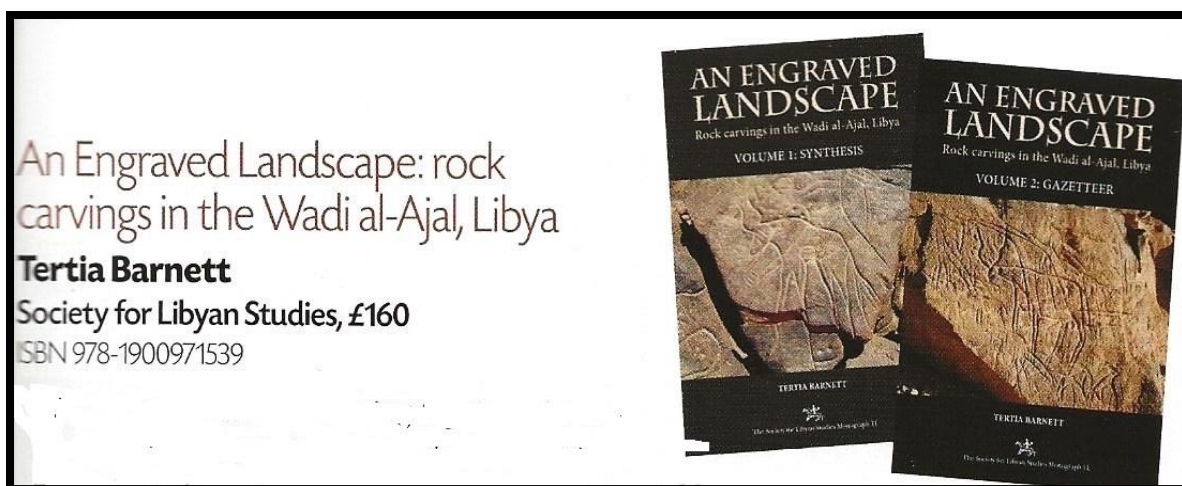




**Further sites at Uluru (Ayres Rock), Kata Tjuta and three sites in the MacDonnell ranges near Alice Springs to follow in Part Two.**



## New Book Recommendations: reviews welcomed.



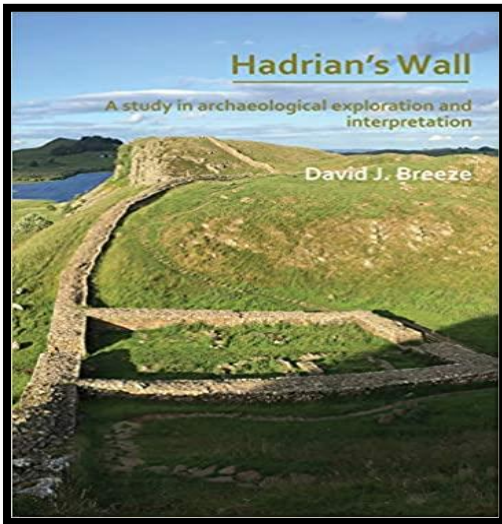
All involved in the Scottish Rock Art Project have been enthused and inspired by the dedication and help of Tertia Barnett and her team – Maya Hoole, Joana Valdez-Tullet, Stuart Jeffrey and Guillaume Robin. Most of us know that Tertia came with an unparalleled knowledge of rock art from England and further afield in North Africa.

For some of us the presence of astonishing rock art in the depths of the Sahara may have come in the opening scenes of Anthony Minghella's *The English Patient* when a biplane skims down into a red desert – based on the real discoveries by the rather dodgy Hungarian aristocrat and explorer, Lazlo Almally in 1933 when he found **The Cave of the Swimmers** on the **Gilf Kebir** plateau.

Tertia may not have buzzed around sites in a Sopwith Camel but these two volumes are a magnum opus of her work at **Wadi al-Ajal** in south-west Libya – “...one of the most significant studies to be made in this part of Africa in recent years.” (George Nash).

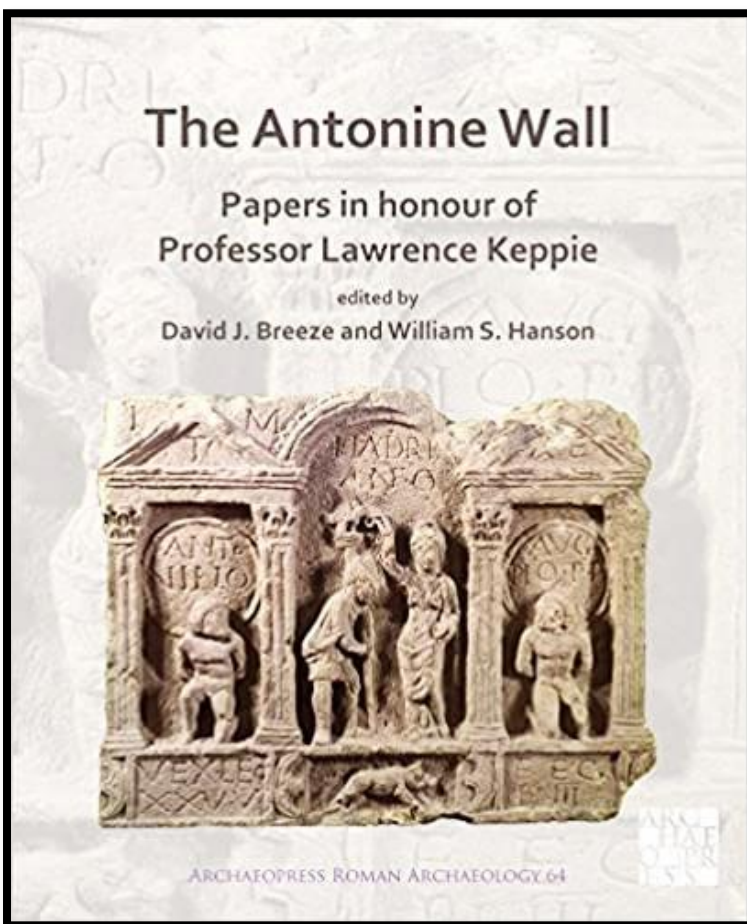
The richness and diversity of North African rock art ranges in time from c.8000BC to within the last few centuries with a peak in the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC when a wetter environment supported mobile pastoralists and is in utter contrast to the almost total abstraction of motifs found in the British Isles, an exceptionalism awaiting an explanation.

Of course most of us will not be finding this in our Xmas stockings – but, when the university libraries re-open it will hopefully be available – the photography is ravishingly lavish and worth a look alone. It must be a matter of great concern when we receive reports of damage and vandalism at some of these sites in the anarchy which has engulfed Libya and the silence about the situation while the eyes of the world are elsewhere.



***Hadrian's Wall: A study in archaeological exploration and interpretation*** (Dr David J Breeze OBE) is another must read by a good friend to Glasgow Archaeological Society and ourselves when he welcomed many of us during the joint centennial celebration meetings with The Society of Antiquarians of Newcastle upon Tyne and the joint pilgrimage in 2008 and 2009 to both the Antonine and Hadrianic frontiers

He has always been a champion of the environmental and landscape issues which we share.



***The Antonine Wall: Papers in honour of Professor Lawrence Keppie. Ed, David J Breeze and William S Hanson.***

Lawrence Keppie is an even older friend of the Association – we have been enjoying his company even more since his retiral in the monthly pub lunches in Paisley – many of us having cut our teeth as volunteers on sites such as Barochan Hill (1993) and Westerwood (1994-95),

This festschrift edited by David Breeze and Bill Hanson is another one which all his friends will I'm sure wish to get their hands on. Unfortunately the launch was postponed due to Covid 19 but copies are available on Amazon.



## Thomas Morrison Craig (1938-2020)

Tom Craig was a member of ACFA and GAS for some years after he completed the Certificate Course and became a valued colleague and friend, along with his companion Jack Lyttle, in the Pollok Ring Work excavations (2007-2009) and at High Morlaggan with the Arrocher Hidden Heritage Project



He also assisted with some of the training exercises in which ACFA participated with the Department of Adult Education Field Archaeology Courses in subsequent years.

Tom and Jack were one of those duos which volunteering sometimes bring together – one thinks of the legendary digging partnership of Frank Newell and Harry Sinclair from a previous generation, *‘showing the young ones a thing or two about shifting earth’*.

Tom was born In Wishaw in 1938 and brought up in a traditional room and kitchen tenement flat in Tollcross in the East End becoming a noted football, hockey and tennis player at Eastbank Academy – and a piano player with a love of jazz music.

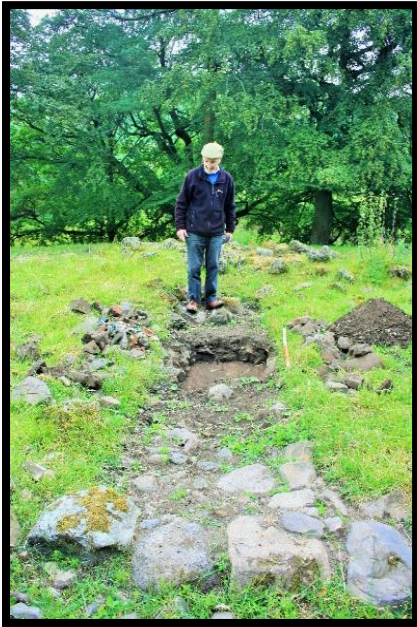
An apprentice electrician at Stewarts and Lloyds led to 40 years of service as an electrical engineer ending at Scottish Power. Tom also developed wider horizons with rock climbing and mountaineering with the iconic Creagh Dhu climbing set, the ‘Glencoe Mafia’ forged in the shipyards , nurturing a unique coterie including the legendary John Cunningham.

He continued his love of outdoor life taking up sailing on Bardowie Loch with the Clyde Cruising Club.



**Tom and Adrian at Pollok 2008**





He also returned to education and the Certificate Course in Field Archaeology in which I had the privilege to become acquainted with and appreciate his company and would occasionally visit him at a small abandoned farm platform to the east of Strathblane where he happily stumbled on a wee midden of transfer fragments.

He was also a rich commentator on characters from the village and area, from the comedian Larry Marshall to the hillwalker and TV 'star' Tom Weir.

In putting together this piece I have extensively used a eulogy from a source which I am unable to thank personally but to which I must acknowledge gratitude and end with a precis of the Tom those of us in ACFA can testify to:



**Tom in fighting digging gear: bunnet, red shirt, white knee pads and red socks (High Morlaggan 2011).**

*Tom used to say that to expect to be happy was a bit greedy and the most one could expect from life was contentment. Tom engineered his own contentment, never greedy, always considerate – he had no time for vanity in others and was never vain himself. Tom felt his views were important but never expected anyone else to think that his views were important. Tom always had time to listen and never insisted that others listen to him. He instinctively saw all men as equals and was assuredly proud of his working class roots. Fairness and democracy was important to Tom and he felt privileged and proud to be Scottish – he loved his city and he loved the Scottish wilderness and this passion is his greatest gift to his family*

We too extend our sympathies to Alison and all his family and friends.

## **Stirrings in the undergrowth:**

For some of the older members Covid 19 stirs memories of an earlier tragedy in 2001 when all our field work for the year was suspended and when, on a local scale, any journeys might be accompanied by melancholy glimpses of smoke pyres from the Foot and Mouth casualties seen in passing farms, and globally when our screens were filled with images of burning glass towers. Then as now, we found some refuge and opportunity to work on completing work unfinished and preparing for work to be done when the curtain lifts and we here record some of the work being carried out by individuals and on line groups over the last few months.

### **Glen Lochay: the Book of the Glen.**



Dugie, Margaret and Libbie are continuing with work on the Glen Lochay opus through fortnightly Zoom meetings and making good progress. A draft history, archaeology and personal farm names for each settlement has been sourced, a list of all the hill, stream and place names has been completed for analysis commissioned by ACFA from the place name authority Peter McNiven.

Dugie has been working on the maps and a range of topic case studies has been assigned for research by individuals including – Crops, Crime and Punishment, Emigration, Religion, Statistical Accounts and possibly the Fencibles among others.

Dugie and Anne, exercising in the Kilsyth Hills, have been picking up a few shieling sites as part of his weaning and recovery programme from rampant shieling syndrome which has recurrently struck so many of us over the last thirty years.



## **Glen Orchy: March 1991 – 92.**



**Old Arichastlich: Structure 1**

Ian has been working on revisiting and revising the Glen Orchy Report No. 10 from 1996 with a view to re-publishing it.

The sites of Old Arichastlich and Bochyle were included in this report, but not Barr a Chasteilean to the west, surveyed by later teams but never published.

The original report was of its day and it is intended to update it and incorporate images of the sites. This will require re-visiting the sites, hopefully to be done when open access returns and may be of interest to members who participated in the surveys – if they think they can still get to them! We are also looking for a volunteer(s) to get Barr a Chasteilean report together, the original field surveys and context sheets still survive.

Any survivors from the original teams interested – please contact me? I have the material.



The significant difference between prehistoric archaeology and historical archaeology is that the latter can make use of extant contemporary documentary materials which contribute critically to the dating and interpretation of physical features and artefacts of the period. This tempers the necessity for inference from material evidence alone and aligns archaeology with history rather than allowing it to be solely an adjunct of anthropology.

The work being done – now nearing completion – by ACFA on Luing, in conjunction with the Luing History Group and directed by Dougie MacInnes, provides a case in point. The field survey evidence of the remains of agricultural activity from the medieval to late-modern periods has been supplemented by contemporary archival materials from the Breadalbane Muniments, private and public cartographic evidence and statutory and other legal sources, in particular the decennial population censuses from 1841 to 1911.

Taken together these chronicle the transformation of the island from a primarily subsistence agricultural economy of ten medieval townships, through its ‘improvement’ to 20 townships of rent-yielding tenanted farms and a small number of crofts, and the subsequent consolidation of the constituent farms for pastoral enterprise, ultimately becoming, in the mid-twentieth century, one single commercial livestock farm.

Central to this progression, and reflected in the surviving material evidence, was the replacement of the original medieval ferm-touns with a larger number of late-eighteenth century townships, some with buildings on the original sites, followed by the dereliction and demolition of farm-steadings as the process of farm consolidation gained momentum. This was done with a thoroughness which left little behind apart from footings.

At the same time the rural population (outside of the villages related to slate quarrying) declined rapidly, from 456 in 1841 to 82 in 1911, changing its composition as it did, losing in particular rural craftsmen, cottars, paupers and other elderly residents that previously



contributed to the 'organic' social nature of the township communities. The nature of the agricultural workforce changed too, as well as declining from a quarter of the island's population of nearly 900 in 1841 to less than ten percent of under 550 in 1911. The bulk of the labour became provided by farm families rather than employed workers, whose departure contributed more to the redundancy and loss of buildings on the island.

The jury is still out as to whether clearance was involved in any wholesale sense, as elsewhere on the estate of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marquess of Breadalbane. Earlier censuses on a parish basis do not provide figures specifically for Luing. Its parish (Kilbrandon and Kilchattan) lost slightly over 8 per cent of its population between 1831 and 1841, compared with 17 per cent in Killin and Kenmore, where clearance was rigorous. Interestingly, perhaps, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marquess was President of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland from 1852 till his death in 1862.



**Mary on Glass Eilean, Luing November 2019.**

Lockdown and dry spring weather have enabled survey work to continue on Luing.

Armed with maps supplied by Dugie Macinnes, a survey of the old boundaries is underway by suitably self-distanced Mary Braithwaite and Zoe Fleming from Luing History Group: sinuous turf-and-stone dykes, turf banks and stone walls of many descriptions, some just spaced-out boulders hidden under turf, others three foot high or more, with fragments of turf capping still in place. The remarkable weather not only enabled bogs to be crossed without huge detours, but also showed up three areas with networks of stone boundaries that look very much like coaxial field systems, possibly late Bronze Age in date.

As they lie on or immediately below the ridge between the two impressive duns of Ballycastle and Leccamore, and in one case in close proximity to two round houses and other interesting features, this has been an exciting discovery, made possible by bleaching of the moss and turf on the stones. ACFA visits have generally coincided with wet weather, some very wet indeed... A proper survey of the field systems and some other new discoveries must await a future ACFA visit.

Other work on the Luing survey has been progressing. Zoe has been assembling documents from LHG archives, notably old farm leases and sasines, as well as census data for Fred Hay's analysis of the farms and townships post-Improvement. Mary has completed introductory sections for the final report covering the history of Luing, the forts and duns, and the pre-Improvement townships and boundaries. Although the report is some time away, the survey results are already in use, helping (we hope) to protect archaeological sites threatened by an extensive scheme of woodland planting.



A photo was requested, but as dykes and walls aren't very inspiring here's a shot taken on a sunny Sunday morning in April from above Cullipool boatyard, showing Fladda lighthouse, the slate quarry island of Belnahua, and the Garvellachs with the medieval fortress of Dun Chonnuill at one end and Holy Isle with its early Christian monastery at the other.



**There are benefits to lockdown.**

## **Message from Janie Munro, Chairperson.**

I hope that you and yours have got through the worst of the Covid crisis. In other times I would be taking this opportunity to wish you a happy summer of archaeological adventures at home or abroad but as we all know these adventures have been put on hold. The committee is looking at how best to get us back into the field safely and resume our activities. Be assured we will always abide by current Scottish Government advice. As this advice continues to evolve no decision has been taken on the form our AGM will take this year but we will keep you informed.

There is a tiny light glimmering at the end of the tunnel and we can begin to look forward to slow and steady progress towards what will become the new normal, in the meantime stay safe.



***Registered Scottish Charity number: SC 007099***