

# NEWSLETTER 54

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Winter 2020.



## **A Hunter Gathers Rock Art In Central Australia And Finds A Boojum.**

*“But oh, beamish nephew, beware of the day,  
If your Snark be a Boojum! For then  
You will softly and suddenly vanish away,  
And never be met with again!”*

**The Hunting of the Snark : The Baker’s Tale (Lewis Carroll).**

**Editors: Ian Marshall, Dr Janet MacDonald.**

First of all Janet and I hope that all members are coping and surviving these testing times and that you will be safely catching up on this issue with a suitable glass of Barolo, the Macallan or a Tiree Gin & T to hand.

Of course we have tried to keep in touch with each other on - line, landline or, where possible, in socially distanced encounters in ‘social boxes’ whose walls contract or expand with baffling regularity.

In this issue, we complete Susan Hunter’s Australian Rock Art wanderings, to give us a lift when, for most of us, wanderings are currently confined to an exercise yard of adjacent streets – oh lucky ACFA living in the hills or on islands!

Followed appropriately by another contribution from Ewen Smith on recent developments in understanding of the first human contacts with the lost continent of Sahul, now Australia and a suitable damnatio memoriae on the recent shocking archaeological vandalism by one of the corporate giants of a potential treasure chest of the Aboriginal people.

We have in past issues occasionally asked senior members for their archaeological memories and biographies but I am very pleased to include one from a new member, Simon Davies who lives and works on South Uist. Having enquired as to whether he could provide some background material as to interests and motives, he kindly sent me material with a free hand to edit or prune it as required. However, on reading it, I was so impressed by his enthusiasm and its results, which I think matches those first experienced by all of us, nurtured and inspired from the old Certificate route, one seeded in the very values and insights of our late founding father, Lionel Masters.

Then two personal odysseys, first from Alison Blackwood on a long planned ‘pilgrimage’ to Jordan and “*the hues of youth upon a brow of woe. Which man deemed old two thousand years ago*”

Of course Petra and a bit of woe too when news came to their Bedouin camp that a strange plague had descended on the West and they had to mount their camels for a midnight dash to the nearest airport.

Another more personal note from Dugie MacInnes on his own discovery of the archaeological traces of his own kin running across the hills from Appin to Glencoe and a hint of more surveys and finally an envoi from twenty years ago and Newsletter 16 from that millennial year.

Some material for the spring letter is available and the editors are hoping to include further information on the 2020 corpus including Tiree, Halterburn and the ScRAP Project.

## **Stop Press:**

### **Annual General Meeting Saturday November 14 2020**

Our first virtual AGM went off as well as could be expected for a first attempt. It was a steep learning curve for most of us I think. Thank you to the members who joined us on the evening. It was a pleasure to glimpse so many members including John Holliday from Tiree and Simon Davies from South Uist.

Jennifer Boag and Janie Munro were re-appointed as treasurer and chairperson respectively, Margaret Gardiner was re-elected for a second term of three years and we welcome Ken Tomory and Stuart Mackey as new committee members.

We said goodbye to Elaine Black who has completed her six year sentence! We hope that she continues to have an informal connection with the committee. We also said farewell to Anne MacDonald who had been our correspondence secretary for the past year.

An up-dated constitution was adopted, thanks go to Fred Hay for his invaluable assistance.

We were also delighted to endorse Ken Mallard and Christine MacDiarmid as full members in recognition of their commitment to the work of ACFA.

After the business of the meeting Elaine Black and Ailsa Smith gave presentations on the Hynish Boundaries project in Tiree which gave the promise of exciting revelations about the age and sequence of the system of field banks and enclosures on the flanks of Ben Hynish.

**Janie Munro, chairperson**

## **“A Window on the Past: Quaich Winner.” Libby King.**

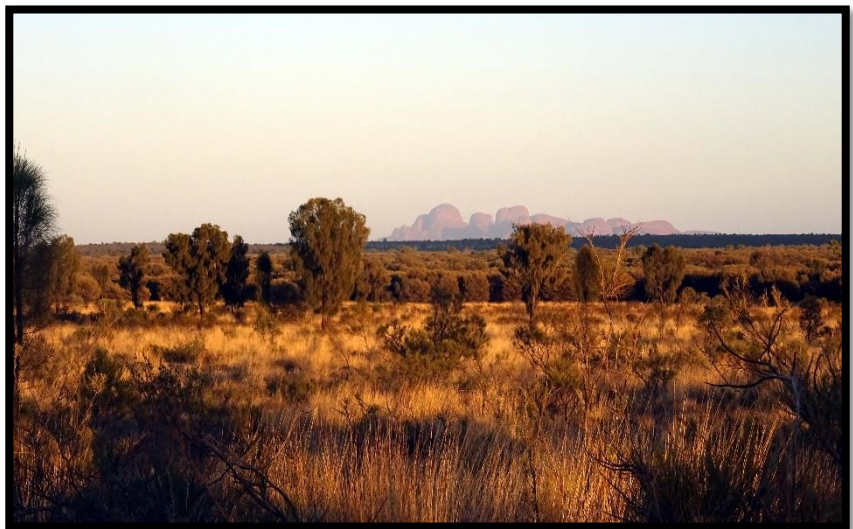


## Rock Art of Australia: Part 2.



From Sydney we travelled to the sacred sites of **Ulura** (Ayres Rock) and **Kata Tjuta** another large red arkose rock formation in the same area. Apart from seeing the colour changes of these rocks at sunset and sunrise rock art is seen within the lower area of Ulura. Within the rock art are stories of different indigenous accounts of Ulura's creation.

Archaeological evidence around Ulura is in the form of stone tools dated to 10,000 BP. The southern side of Ulura was an attractive place due to springs that could be relied on by the aboriginal people; known as **Mutitjilu** or **Maggie Springs**.



The area around Mutitjulu is sacred to the Woma Python and has a number of rock shelters with rock art. One on the underside of a boulder and in a sheltered position is well preserved. Inside this are concentric circles, stylised motifs and symbols but one has the best preserved 'tree' or 'fern-leaf' type motifs found in the area. Painted in white or yellow pigment, this design appears quite restricted in terms of size and decorative details.

The designs are seen across the central desert area from Queensland to Western Australia at Pilbara. It has been suggested that these images represent individuals wearing ceremonial headdresses and are thought to predate 1914. Other images around Uluru are possibly more recent as rock art was being recorded up until 1940.



We moved onto the **Alice Springs** area, known to Australians as Alice, where different rock art designs were seen.

Alice is the third largest town in the Northern Territory and is geographically in the centre of Australia. The first expedition to the area was led by John McDouall Stuart in 1861-62.

Until 1933 the resulting town was called Stuart. The first European settlement started in 1872 with the construction of a repeater station on the Overland Telegraph Line linking Adelaide to Darwin thus avoiding the long communications journey around the coast.

Near Alice in the MacDonnell mountain range we visited three rock art sites, firstly **Emily Gap** and **Jessie Gap**, which are part of important 'dreaming trails' linking up a number of places through the landscape although some do not contain art but are connected with Caterpillar Dreaming. The caterpillar is one of the most important food resources in the area; they are dug out of the ground and eaten as a key source of protein.

The gaps are narrow passes through the mountains and where rock art is seen is it generally in red ochre on a yellow background with thick layers of paint suggesting that the image was re-made on numerous occasions. The main panel depicts caterpillar, or ayeparenye eggs as circles, with long lines representing Ilani, or chest decorations.



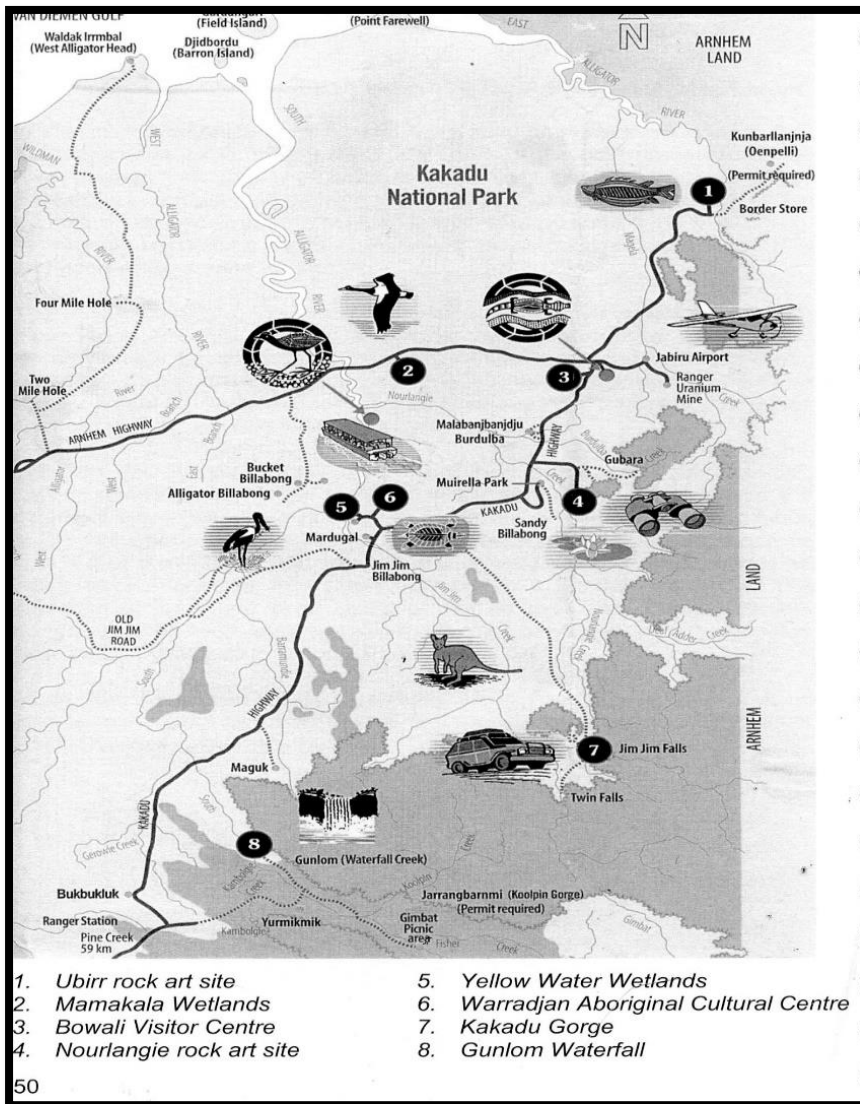
The third site at **Ewaninga** (place of rocks with small cave hollows) saw petroglyphs cut into rocks composed of a mixture of linear compositions, with meandering lines, in addition to circles, concentric circles and stylised animal tracks especially the tracks of the emu.



The art is more closely linked to eastern South Australia and western New South Wales rather than north and west Central Australia.

The site is the best preserved in the area of Alice and it is suggested that the rock art may be up to 30,000 years old.





Moving further north we came to **Kakadu National Park**, an area of intensive rock art set within scrub, woodland, part of the rugged sandstone escarpment of Arnhem Land and believed to be some of the oldest Australian rock art dating back to 20,000 to 35,000 BP. As the sea levels would have been 150m lower than present day this would make the land approximately 300km from the coast.

The landscape would have seen many changes and been dramatically changed over the years. Many of the rock art images are now not accessible sited on the underside of overhanging rocks which may have been worked standing on ledges that have now eroded away.

Weathering of images in separate areas of the same rock may also give the impression that they were produced at different times when in fact this may not be the case.

The majority of the early rock art was simple and used ochre imprints of a variety of objects, including poignant hand prints (almost always adults), grass prints and the images of thrown objects. Most of those that survive are red in colour. The image required was obtained by dipping the hand or object in ochre and pressing it against the rock surface, by throwing or hitting the object too which created more varied designs with an aspect of chance to their compositions.

The imprints of thrown objects can be as much as 6m above the ground and consist of short curved lines or blotched pigment surround by drips and spots of colour. It is thought that this was achieved by bundles of soft material such as string, paper bark or grass. Careful linear lines may have been achieved with lengths of grass. A suggestion is that the use of grass may emphasise the importance of grass seeds in their diets.

**Kakadu National Park** has 260 rock shelters which contain examples of the 'Dynamic Figures' style of rock art along with later hand stencils added to the rock art. The 'Dynamic Figures' do not vary much across 400km of Arnhem Land to the Katherine River. They were classed as 'Mimi paintings' in 1940s by Charles Mountford.



The images are seen by their monochromatic red colour although some of the more protected sites show hints of other colours. They are depicted as human beings emphasising the movement of the figures within action scenes. Human images, mostly adult males, generally measure around 150-500mm and animal images measure between 200-230mm long, in proportion with the humans they accompany.

The bodies of the males are much stylised being shown with thin torsos and small heads. The skin is decorated with lines, crosses and dashes. The few female figures that are seen are more natural and without body decoration or elaborate clothing.

Their heads are generally shown flexed backwards which is emphasised in the male figures by the presence of exaggerated hair styles or headdresses; some have a conical shape. Additional small lines are shown emphasising hair, beards and breasts.

The latter are shown differently from other forms of female imagery, with both breasts on one side of the body. The males and females are shown with additions, such as spears, axes, digging sticks and dillybags for females, boomerang, clubs, sticks and spears for males.

Some humans are shown with hybrid animal characteristics especially those of the Flying Fox.



We took a Yellow Water Billabong Cruise through the wetlands, seeing crocodiles and large amounts of birdlife. After this we spent time at **Nourlange Rock** which has many panels of very fine paintings, including some 'X-ray' depictions of animals and fish.

Later images depict ships and fingers with lace gloves. These show interaction with the early settlers to Australia they accompany.

Still in the Kakadu National Park and staying in a hotel designed in the shape of a crocodile another area visited within the National Park was at the World Heritage Site area of **Ubirr** which had a very large amount of rock art. Here we climbed through the ancient Aboriginal rock art galleries thought to be 20,000 years old.



The rock art galleries were divided into nine different sections accessed by routes climbing between and through overhanging rock cliffs. The sections included are *A clue to the past*, *A health warning*, *Ancestral Art*, *Art of the Creation Time*, *A lesson in good labour*, *Lime layers*, *Stories passed on*, *The Rainbow Serpent* and the *Land of the Spirit*.

Reaching the highest point this overlooks wetlands which surround one side of the area. During the wet season some of the areas we walked and drove through will become impassable with water flooding in from the rivers and coastal areas from the east and north reaching a height of quite a few metres.

While in the Kakadu National Park we went on the Guluyambi Cruise along the **East Alligator River** looking at the wild life, the local mythology, the river's abundant food chain as well survival skills essential in this part of the world. Traditional rock art is seen in the East Alligator River.

Human figures mostly female are shown distorted and fragmented which is a style that may have evolved over the last 1,000 years. Some of the figures of women have feather-shaped barbed spears piercing their flesh. These feather shapes are again connected to discomfort and evil in other parts of **Arnhem Land** rock art styles linked to the 'Namandi' or evil spirits.

When we saw 'Namandi' images they were not very large, generally red in colour and seen on overhanging rocks.

We then transferred to Jabiru Airfield down the road for our flight to **Mt Borradaile** to stay in the Davidson's Arnhem Land Safari Lodges. We landed on an airstrip in middle of the bush and were met by the guides and ferried to our lodge by their local form of transport.



Continuing our treks in the outback at **Davidson's Lodge** the rock art became more intense with large areas of rock completely covered with painted images in many colours. A lot are again seen on overhangs of the rocks. Some of the art was found within passages through the rocks, but these were more of single images, only to be seen by those who were allowed access to these darker areas. Some of the images depict strange looking human forms, animals, marine life and intermingled between these images are hands and abstract images that only the aboriginal people can interpret as it is all part of their history and civilization from their origins.

The headline photograph is of the Rainbow Serpent painted into the ceiling of a cave above the ground level. If anyone would like more information I have lots more photographs and leaflets about the rock art in the areas the trip took me to in Australia.





As many of us in Glasgow Archaeological Society are aware, the traditional welcome to new members is a drumming of feet in the lecture hall – so let's give a phantom feet roll then to **Simon Davies** up in South Uist!

## Hi all

As a complete newcomer to ACFA, Ian Marshall suggested you might want to know a little bit about me – particularly as my entry has not been through the conventional Glasgow University course route and my contact with ACFA has, so far, been restricted to virtual encounters only.



**Recent discovery at Berneray (photo © Anne Monk 2020).**

So, here goes. I finally retired from dentistry in 2010 after my third encounter with spinal surgery (I do take hints eventually!) and decided I needed some academic interests to keep the ageing matter occupied.

My first foray into Law resulted in a Certificate in Legal Studies, but to take this forward as a career path would mean leaving my home in South Uist – a non-starter for certain. I joined a UHI evening short course 'Inventing Archaeology' which ran for four months in 2014 with weekly evening sessions and weekend field trips to local sites. This course was slanted particularly towards a Landscape approach, encouraging observational skills and introduction to recording methods via my local Archaeology group, Access Archaeology' (now re-formed as UCAG).

The success of this route into archaeology was corroborated by my first significant 'find' which proved to be an unbroken Bronze Age pot eroding alongside a peat track near my home.



**"This archaeology thing seems easy"– a Uist Bronze Age pot find.**



**A 2015 find on Eval bealaich, an Iron Age Hut Circle, as found (left) and after vegetation clearance (right with self) while preparing for HES visit.**

**(Canmore ID 350551).**

The real pleasure of archaeology for me is the opportunity to 'take a walk on the wild side' of Uist and to get to those places often avoided as 'difficult'. Most people look at the Uist landscape and see wild, untamed wilderness, but just as ACFA has discovered time and again, the landscape we see has been moulded and modified by *Homo sapiens* over millennia and is quite as 'artificial' as that found in the centre of Glasgow, Edinburgh or downtown Balivanich. I joined up with two other like-minded retirees (teacher and architect) and together we formed the Uist Summer Wine Group and had great success, Roger finding a Bronze Age basket on Balashare beach and various group discoveries on the wild side of Eval, North Uist's main peak (published as **Eaval Field Survey** 2014-2016, online at <https://uistsummerwine.weebly.com/documents.html>). We later turned our attention to the Grimsay, Ronay, the Lees and Locheuphort areas.

During this time I returned to academia, taking on the challenge of UHI's course on History and Archaeology of the Highlands and Islands – still ongoing, but currently paused to pursue a Gaelic language introduction (*An Cursa Inntrigidh* through Sabhal Mor Ostaig) to help with more literal landscape interpretations! However, this does not restrict me to dusty libraries or offices. I still get regularly onto the hills and eastern shorelines of Wild Uist, and I record many re-discoveries, many of them relating to shielings or the industrial past, but the vast majority unrecorded (until now).

Since 2014 I have collaborated with HES, SCAPE and UHI Orkney on surveying Eabhal, surveying and sampling prehistoric intertidal peat deposits and submitted 13 initial site reports to DES (2014-2019) over 200 site reports and updates to SCHARP and some of the more significant finds to Canmore. I have also personally carried out focussed survey work of the area between my home and Loch Sgiopoint (around 15 km<sup>2</sup>) and had four archaeology-based reports accepted for publication on the Hebridean Naturalist, my local Natural History society (did I mention another of my interests as a county recorder for biodiversity?).



My main project last year was the investigation of the **Airigh na h-Aon Oidhche** (shieling of the One Night) which feature in Gaelic folk lore and have material existence at 16 sites across the Hebrides and West Highlands. I have visited and documented all the sites now and recorded the structures found (see DES 2019).

**Eriskay's hidden Airigh na h-Aon Oidiche and well in a 'secret glen', possibly a local centre for contraband activity).**

My current 'work' is an in-depth analysis of (and maybe a book about) Scottish Shielings, their material, cultural remains and importance.

In the last month (August 2020) I identified a new Iron Age settlement site on **Berneray**, eroding from a dune collapse (reports to SCHARP and DES pending) and re-discovered another area of intertidal peat on **Smeircleit beach**, South Uist.



**The 4500 year old woodland, Smercleit beach.**

This is only intermittently exposed by wind and tides, but once more came to light in August when I was able to record the site on the SCHARP data base and take

some pictures for 3D photogrammetry using Agisoft Metashape. (See <https://sketchfab.com/Smilemaker/models>.) Part of the site had already been investigated in a previous exposure period (2008) but no photos were recorded.

The deepest peat layers dated (Cal14) at 7500 years BP with tree dates of around 4,500 years BP, almost identical to those found during the **Liniclate Forest** research in 2018.

I look forward to meeting you all personally soon on one of the ACFA field research programmes. I had hoped to be involved with trips to both Tiree and Arran this year, before all the excitement about a virus! Now where's my Immac shampoo gone...?

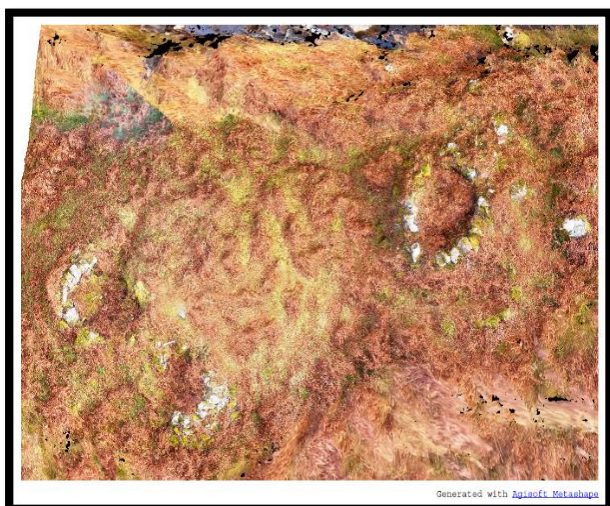
**Simon Davies**

**Grogarry Cottage, Isle of South Uist, Western Isles, HS8 5RR.**

**T: 01870 620 458 M: 07740 365 072.**

**Email: [simonmdavies@hotmail.com](mailto:simonmdavies@hotmail.com) also [13019888@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:13019888@uhi.ac.uk)**

Further information on Simon's work participating in the intertidal archaeology of a submerged forest and Bronze Age butchery site at **Lionclait** with Joanna Hambly and SCAPE (University of St Andrews), in a survey of **St Mary's Church at Grimin, Beinn na Faoghla** on Benbecula and participation in several important surveys range from his own work surveying further *Airigh na h' Aon Oidhce* shieling sites across Argyll and the Hebrides



(images of two new ones above)),

Access and further information from Simon's mail address above.

## Populating Australia.

Ewen Smith.



Prompted by Susan Hunter's fascinating piece on the rock art of Australia in the summer 2020 Newsletter, I decide to revisit work on the populating of Australia.

Some fascinating results for me.



First, as was well known, when speaking of migration to “Australia” we really mean to the mega-continent of “Sahul”, of which Australia was a part (1).

Sea levels were significantly lower for millennia before the island continent of Australia became established. Consequently people had been able to come to “Australia” from Sahul.

So, people have been in Australia for 65,000 years .

Which raises a question....or two; first, were these ancestors of the Aboriginal people the first humans to leave Africa, fully 20,000 years before modern humans reached Europe? And secondly, did they interbreed with other, archaic humans, *en route* to Sahul, as did modern humans in Europe with Neanderthals?

Of course, as folk arrived in Sahul, they did not immediately head far inland to Madjedbebe; clearly they settled in suitable sites at or near the coast, which was itself moving inland as ice melted across the globe. Consequently, much of the most important evidence is now under water, and that is where current research is increasingly looking.

However, given the importance of ice and its disappearance, it seems appropriate to admit that all we can see so far about human migration to Australia is, at best, the tip of the iceberg.

A word of caution, relevant to the sites world-wide. Despite their huge importance, some of the oldest sites in Australia, associated with the indigenous population, appear to be less protected than others.



**Before.**

A case in point is the **Juukan Gorge** rock shelters, egregiously damaged by Rio Tinto in pursuit of mining lucre; in the words of the site archaeologist, Dr Michael Slack, *the Juukan 2 rock shelter has the amazing potential to radically change our understanding of the earliest human behaviour in Australia. To date, there is no other site of this age with faunal remains in unequivocal association with stone tools. The significance of this cannot be overstated.*

Nor was this simply the subjective view of the site archaeologist. The Juukan Gorge shelters date back at least 48,000 years and their importance was well documented, and protected, under the Australian Aboriginal Heritage Protection Act.



**Action!**

However, Rio Tinto proceeded anyway, simply to gain access to “*higher quality mineral ores*” and, of course, to higher profits. In consequence, three executives have lost their jobs and some of their bonuses, while the aboriginal people, and the world have lost, “*tens of thousands of years of cultural significance*”.



**Result.**

#### References:

- 1) [An incredible journey: the first people to arrive in Australia came in large numbers, and on purpose](#)
- 2) <https://epicaustralia.org.au/rewriting-history-australias-oldest-known-campsite/>
- 3) <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0233912>

## **We meet a traveller from an antique land.      Alison Blackwood.**

**March 12<sup>th</sup> Flight to Amman.** We flew by Royal Jordan air services and a company representative from Exoticca, the travel company we used met us, helped us get entry visas, some Jordanian currency, namely dinars, and organised a taxi to our hotel arriving about midnight, tired but excited. The sites we visited over the next three days were all very quiet. We didn't realise we were just about the last flight allowed into the country before Jordan closed their borders.

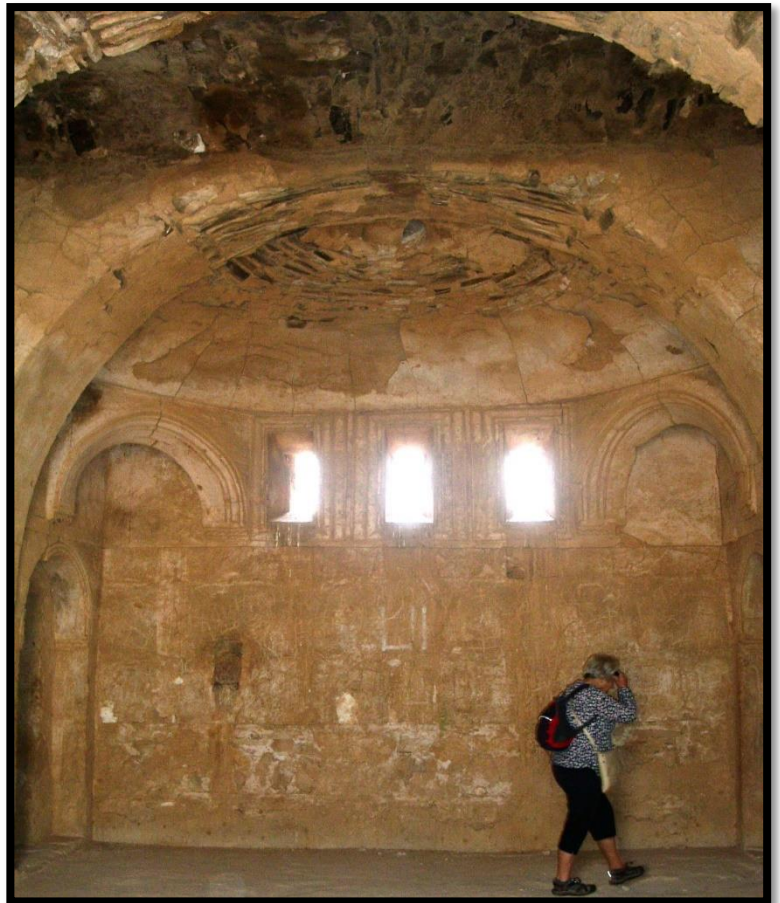
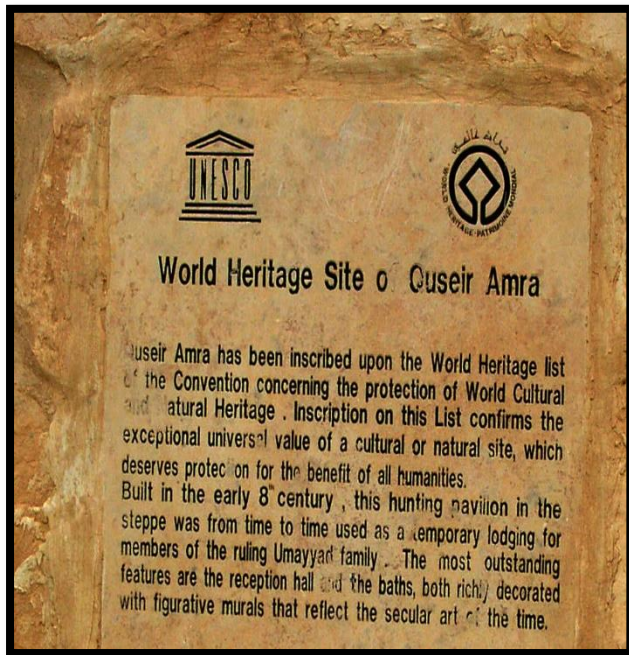


**March 13<sup>th</sup>** We visited Eastern Jordan and two desert castles.

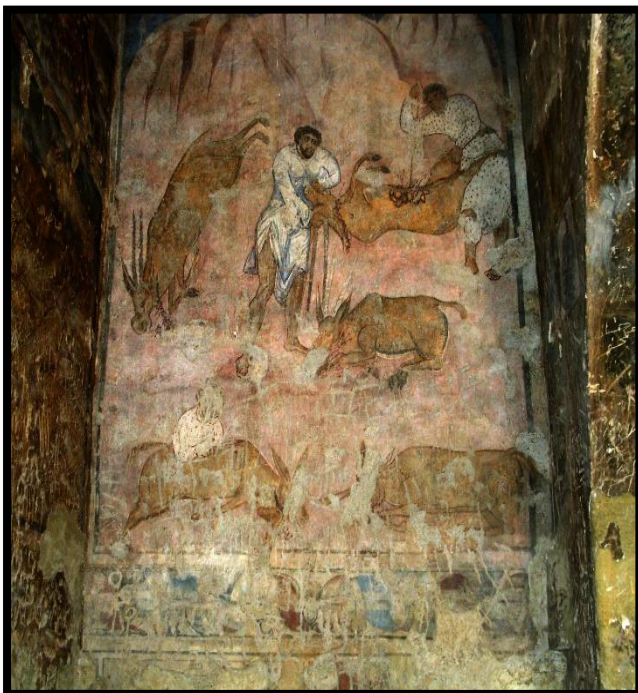
**Qasr Kharana.** It looks like a fortress, but was a meeting place for Umayyad rulers and local Bedouin. A date of AD 710 can be seen above one of the doors on the upper floor. Some stones with Greek inscriptions suggest re-use, perhaps used on an earlier Roman or Byzantine site.



**Qusayr Amra.** This desert building complex of the Umayyad has a vibrant 8<sup>th</sup> century fresco. It served as a Caravanserai with baths and a hunting lodge, and as occasional lodgings for members of the Umayyad royal family.



**The frescos at Qusayr Amra show hunters, musicians and a woman bathing**

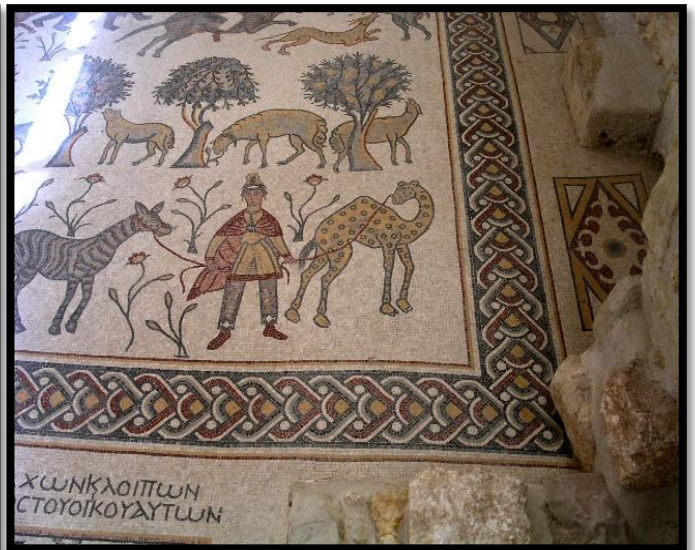




In the afternoon we visited the very salty Dead Sea. After lunch we went for a swim, rather a float on your back as you are too high in the water. It is not advisable to put your face in the water. We learnt that it was once known as the Pitch Sea as bitumen was traded to the Egyptians for use in mummification and water proofing.

There was also trade in indigo, sulphur, and copper. Ancient copper mines can be found along the Dead Sea shore.

**March 14<sup>th</sup>** We drove to the old town of **Madaba**, the biblical Moabite town of Medeba. It became a prosperous Roman town, then a Christian Byzantine centre; an important Christian centre in Jordan, known for religious tolerance and superb Byzantine era mosaics. It was devastated by an earthquake in AD 747. The Madaba mosaic school is based here. We visited St George's church and admired the floor mosaics and the mosaic map made in AD 560 of the biblical sites of the Middle East.



We then drove up to **Mount Nebo**. There are long views in several directions over Gilead, Judah, Jericho.

It is where Moses is said to have seen the Promised Land. Bethany was pointed out to us where John the Baptist was said to have baptised Jesus. The area where the Dead Sea scrolls were found was described but hidden in heavy cloud. We visited the Moses Memorial church and photographed some of the beautiful mosaics there.

### The Region of Mount Nebo. An area to be protected

To protect the richness of the archaeological and historical heritage and to preserve the natural environment of the Mountain, we have suggested to the late King Hussein and the Jordanian Government the establishment of an Archaeological Park of Mount Nebo.

In co-operation with a group of Danish archaeologists sponsored by the Danish Palestine Foundation, a detailed archaeological Map of Mount Nebo was prepared, in which more than 700 ancient sites and monuments, widely spread in time from the Lower Paleolithic to the Ottoman period, have been registered.

During the survey eight Pre-Pottery Neolithic sites were found, and five settlements probably belonging to the transitional phase between the Late Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Ages have been registered.

Three sites are of main interest for the Iron Age period:

Khirbat al-Mukhayyat, the Tower of Rujm al-Mukhayyat, and the fortress of al-Mashhad above the 'Uyun Musa Spring.

The village of Nebo at Khirbat al-Mukhayyat was inhabited in the Hellenistic-Roman period (Second Cent. B.C. – Third Century A.D.).

Churches and monasteries were built in the Byzantine-Umayyad periods, mostly inhabited until the Ninth-Tenth Century.

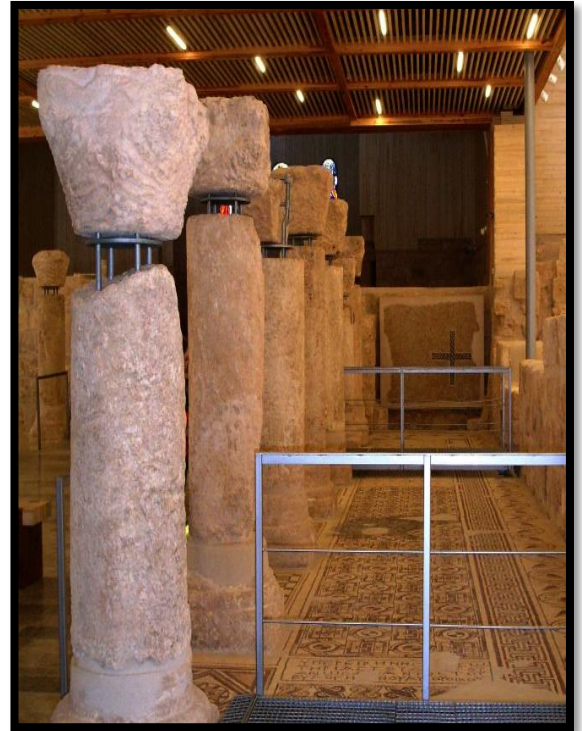
إقليم جبل نبو منطقة يجب حمايتها

The Mount Nebo area is a site of pilgrimage.

The first church is reputed to go back to AD 393 when a Roman nun Etheria is said to have visited. It now belongs to the Franciscan order.

We noted footings of earlier buildings in the grounds.

There is a Roman mile marker in the Courtyard and a rolling stone Abu Badd once used as a fortified door of a Byzantine monastery.



The Mount Nebo museum and interpretation centre displayed archaeological finds of the area. The collection ranged from prehistoric items to Roman, Byzantine and more recent times.

There was a large group of French tourists in the museum who had been told to fly home today as Jordan was closing their borders to outgoing tourists. I noticed how they were not touching interactive displays or handles.

This was all news to us as we were scheduled to drive on to **Petra**. This we did after visiting the quiet church and grounds of Saint Lot with more beautiful mosaics and enjoyed a picnic lunch in the grounds overlooking the Jordan valley.





We were driven south along the main road and parts of the historical King's Highway to Petra. We stopped to stretch our legs above **Shobak Castle**, built on the side of a mountain keeping watch over the route between Egypt and Damascus. It is an imposing crusader fortress built in AD 1115. It surrendered to Saladin in 1189.



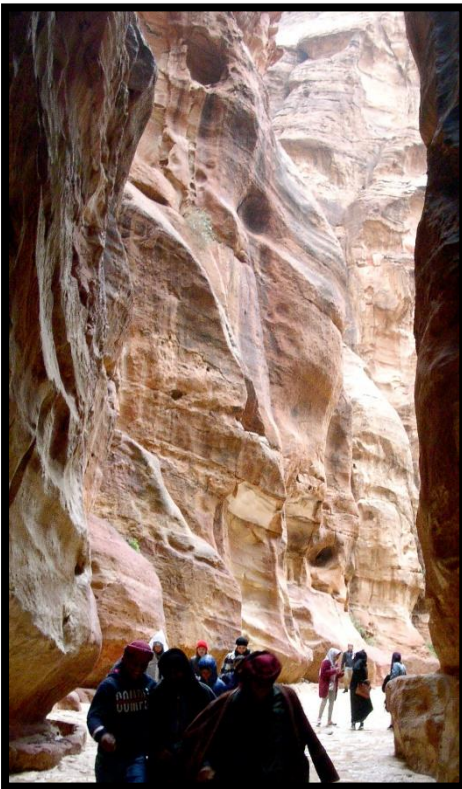
Travelling on, we next visited **Little Petra** also known as Siq Al Barid that translates as the cold canyon. It was thought to be a trading centre or supply post for the camel caravans visiting Petra. The rock cut chambers serving as cool accommodation for rich Nabataean merchants. Built by them around the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, this nomadic tribe became rich on trade along the silk-road. They traded in frankincense, myrrh and spices, gold, animals, iron and copper. Although not an empire, the Nabataeans had a large sphere of influence through control and servicing the caravan trading routes passing between the Arabian peninsula and the Mediterranean coast. They became skilled water engineers, excelling in water conservation and management necessary when living in and crossing deserts. The canyons are also subject to flash floods



Little Petra was closed following the heavy rains but we were able to see the entrance area before travelling on to **Wadi Musa** and Petra.

We stayed at the comfortable Hayat Zaman hotel with views over the mountains and valleys.

**March 15<sup>th</sup>** The next day, although raining, we were excited to be visiting Petra. It was built or rather carved out of the soft red and pink sandstone by the Nabataeans. The earliest dates are around the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. The Aramaic name is Rakeem, with Petra meaning “rock” in Greek. The Nabataean Kingdom was later absorbed into the Roman Empire.



During the Byzantine period some of the buildings were turned into churches. On the way we passed the Obelisk Tomb, the four pyramids may be a memorial to people buried there with a feasting hall below to honour the dead.

We entered by the narrow gorge called the **Siq**, a geological fault line, later eroded by water. There are the remains of a huge arch. Niches can be seen along the walls for votive offerings, and water channels cut into the sides bring water down to the city. The narrowness and height of the sandstone cliffs with the beautiful range of colours make for a dramatic entrance. It is thought to have been used for religious processions, a sacred way.

Our guide told us about the marriage stone. Then the Siq opened up and we saw the Treasury carved out of the red sandstone and said to have been built between 100 BC and 200 AD for the tomb of the Nabataean king Aretas III.

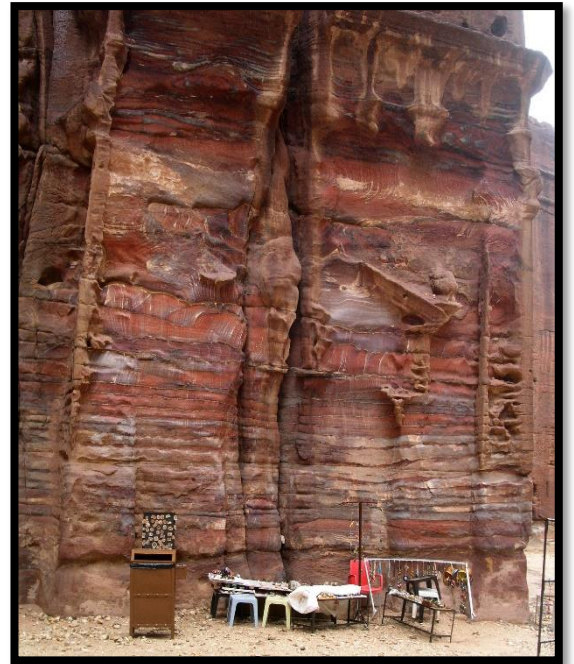
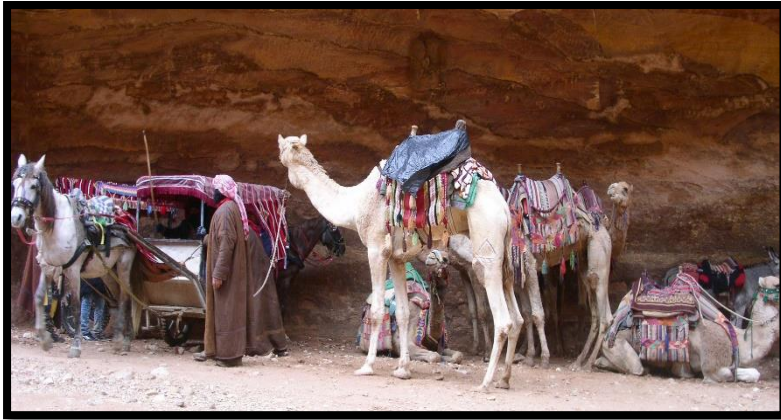


Around the urn on the second level are bullet marks. It was thought to hold treasure, hence the name of the monument, and the bullet marks show attempts to break it open, but it is solid ornamentation.

We saw the steep path and steps up to the Monastery, Al-Deir but were then told Petra was closing and had to walk quickly through the ancient site, passed the Street of Facades, the Theatre, the Royal Tombs, the Colonnaded street, Market place and the remains of the Nymphaeum, public fountain, and baths.

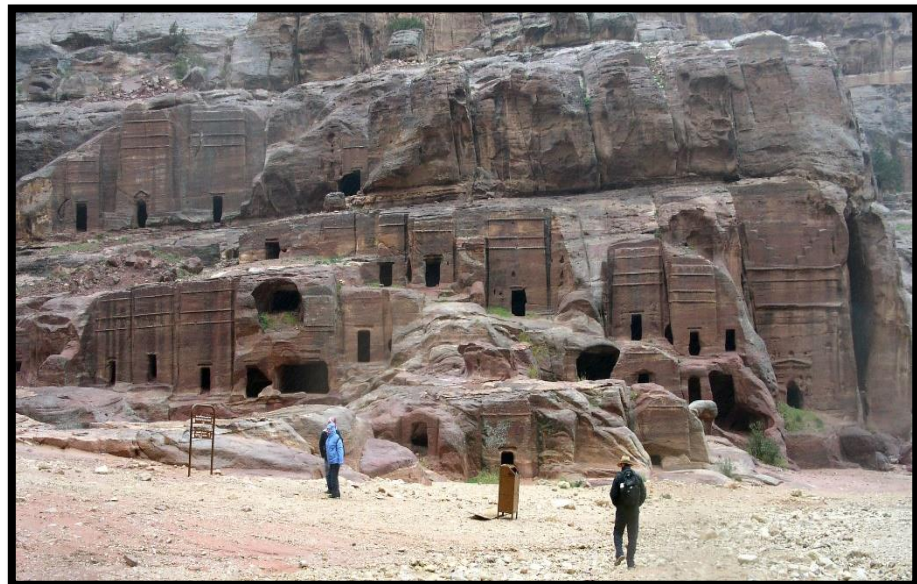


We passed colourful traders and admired the amazing colour in the sandstone.



The path widened and we could see rock-cut buildings and caves. We were sad to have missed so much of the old city of Petra but hope to go back one day. We had time to have something to eat before joining the queue for the pick-up trucks to evacuate the area.

Back at the hotel we were told it was closing the next day. Other tourists were flying home that night. Although advised to return home, we were unable to contact our travel agent or the airline for flights home. Jordan was closing all borders and Amman airport was closing. We were unable to get to Amman in time for the Sunday flight which we were told was the last one. However our resourceful relatives, back home working on our behalf managed to book flights for us for Monday morning.





**March 16<sup>th</sup>** The next morning we met up with our local guide, Yousef who was happy to show us the southern desert and **Wadi Rum**, infinitely preferable to sitting around at the airport.

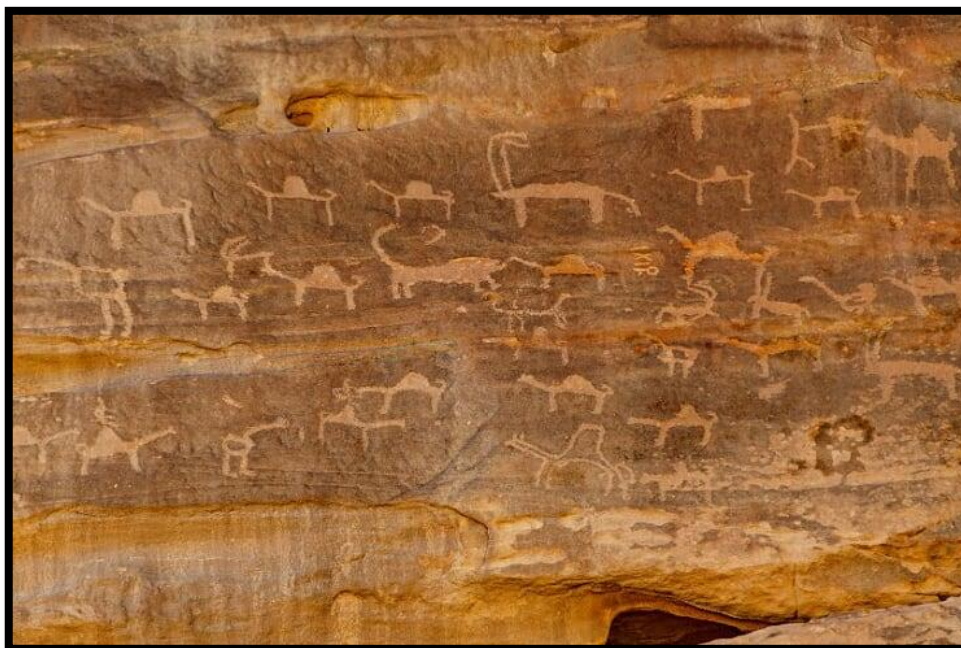
We all transferred in a 4WD vehicle with a local Bedouin. He showed us Lawrence of Arabia's cave and the spring he used. Next he demonstrated how a local plant was used for soap, another for healing and another for making a red dye.

Our friend took a camel ride while we admired the sandstone cliffs or Jebels popular with climbers.

Next we visited a Bedouin black goat-hair tent where we were served lunch and listened to traditional music.



On the cliffs above the tent were these petroglyphs and inscriptions of camels showing perhaps a way of life or leaving messages.



It was time to leave and head back to Amman for our flight home the next morning.

We had missed our camping night in the desert, had raced through Petra missing most of the special sites and hadn't had our day in the Roman city of **Jerash** but it was still an amazing visit. We saw an awe inspiring culture and met with kindness and hospitality everywhere.

### **Bibliography**

Mayhew, B. (2006) **Jordan**, Lonely Planet Publications.

Taylor, Jane (2002) **Petra and the Lost Kingdom of the Nabataeans**, Havard University Press.

## **In Search of the Ancestors (or How I Came to Be) Dugie MacInnes.**

In 2019 I was in Duror with Elaine Black where we were drawing some remains of a house, byre and barn in Glen Duror for our forthcoming occasional paper *'In Search of James of the Glen'*. With us was local historian, Neill Malcolm, who, when I told him that I remember my father telling me that our ancestors had lived in Appin, suggested that I should look into my family history. I did nothing about this until, during the Covid-19 virus lockdown, I thought that I'd briefly search for my ancestors on my father's side.

Through Scotland's People and the Family Search website, I managed to trace my lineage back to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with some interesting results.

Grandfather, John McInnes, was the farm manager at **Ardsheal Estate** in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Hence, my predilection for all things farming?) .



**Figure 1.** At the home farm, Ardsheal Estate.

Photo: Anne MacInnes

Whilst at the home farm, by chance I met up with the estate's groundsman, Ally, a jovial, friendly character. When I mentioned what I was about and was seeking Ardsheal Cottage, he informed Anne and me about a ruined cottage about half a mile to the south.

On the way, I came across some bits of archaeology that I found out later had not been recorded. One, possibly two cists (Figs. 2 to 4) were encountered along with a lovely wee rock shelter (Fig. 5). It was a very pleasant walk along the shores of Loch Linnhe.

**Figure 2.** A bit overgrown at the time but at the ranging pole there is a rectangular cut in the bedrock with a possible capstone (see Figure 3) and note the kerb in the foreground.





**Figure 3.** A possible cist.



**Figure 4.** A possible cist.



**Figure 5.** A rock shelter.

We reached the sites of the ruins of **Ardsheal Cottage** only to find that where the OS First Edition map shows two roofed buildings the ground was thick with bracken (How unusual?). A bit of rooting about, however, (in true ACFA-style) and the meagre footings of two structures were found – hardly a substantial stone in sight, I might add. It was Anne, however, who found the cottage (Figs. 6 and 7) a little farther back from the shore at the base of a tree-covered slope. Here, the ruins of a well-constructed cottage indicates the place where my great-great grandfather died and where my father's father was born; he was also called Dugald, by the way.



**Figure 6.** Anne at Ardsheal Cottage.



**Figure 7.** Ardsheal Cottage.

Another residence of the MacInnes family is called **Back Settlement** or Lecknasgeir (Figs. 8 and 9). It is situated about half a mile down the coast and today, two of the buildings have been restored but lack electricity or running water. Neill suggested that we could stay there if wished – really!! He was joking, of course; only 4-star accommodation, at least, for us softies.



**Figure 8.** Back settlement



**Figure 9.** Dugie at Back Settlement (where's the kilt and broadsword?).

Photo: Anne MacInnes

There is another former settlement in Appin where my ancestors resided. This is called **Salachan** in the glen of that name, but we didn't have time to visit it. There is also a place called **Cilmalieu** on Morvern – a future venture methinks.

On our return home (we were staying a couple of nights in the Airds Hotel, Port Appin – gourmet grub) we stopped at the head of **Glencoe** (Glencoe is my birthplace and for the first time in my life I returned to the big house where I was born) just as it meets with Rannoch Moor.

If you know the road, (Helen Maxwell does, very well) there is a conifer plantation on the right as you head towards Glencoe. Just across the road from it there are the scant remains of two buildings and a yard (Figs. 10 and 11) at a place called **Alltnafeadh** on the maps.

This is where my great-great-great-grandfather, also John, a shepherd, lived with his family in the 1850's. There was a third, building as shown on the OS First Edition, but it has been obliterated by the creation of a rough car park, but the stones from it have been piled in a heap. The house is only extant as a low stony wall; the creation of the present trunk road having removed much of it. The yard wall is quite substantial, though.

Across the road, within the plantation, there are the remains of a fank, also on the 19<sup>th</sup> century maps and in wandering over the ground, (as we do) I came across the footings of another two structures, one of which I suspect is the remains of a shed, perhaps constructed during the creation of the trunk road. The other, however, is well away for the road but I did not have time to have a good enough look at it.



**Figure 10.** The ranging pole shows the location of the house where my great-great-great grandfather lived



**Figure 11.** The yard wall.

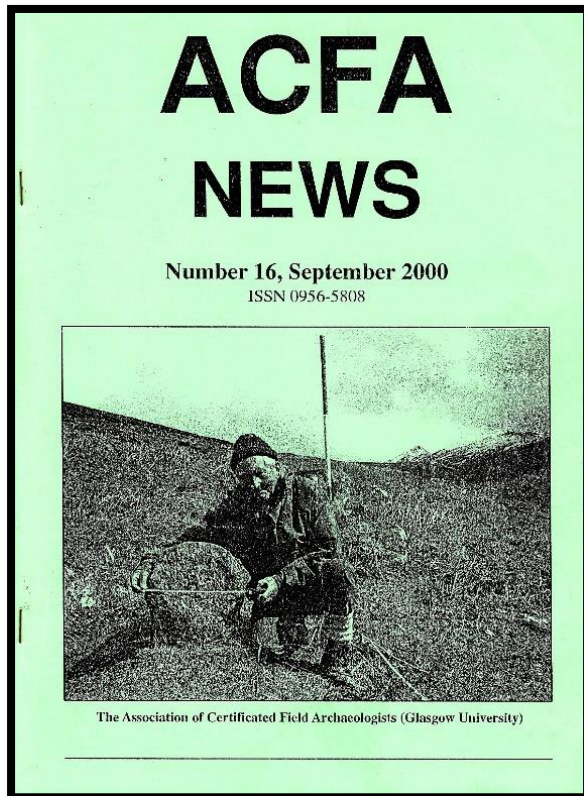
I cannot image what it must have been like in the depths of winter on Rannoch moor, but then, us MacInneses are (well, were – I do like central heating and my duvet), a hardy folk.

There is a wee inkling in my mind that a survey is in the offing – a few years down the line, mind. Neill Malcolm has already drawn up the remains in Back Settlement; thank goodness as it is a rough walk-in!

Anyway, that is a wee insight into some of the places where my ancestors resided, and making me the man (sic) that I am today.

## ACFA NEWS Number 16, September 2000

**“It was twenty years ago today, that ....”**



Here are some excerpts guaranteeing to raise a smile from the archive.

The Newsletter was then produced by a committee of five – the G5 Quintet as they were billed – although one named MacInnes the grey eminence.

The issue included:

From the late lamented **Harry Bell** (*Glasgow's Secret Geometry.... the Glasgow Network of Aligned Sites*) in the first of two parts on his prehistoric line alignments theory which he sub-titled “*Four Ringworks and a Funeral, with apologies to Hugh Grant*” Some were baffled, others dismayed (shades of Alfred Watkins), but all were entertained.

Harry's original little booklet, run out from a hand printing press in his garage, is now only available for astronomical prices on eBay.

The **Raasay Millennium Volunteers** embarked on the surveys of the wild north of the island, in very mixed weather, accompanied by our then soil scientist, the late Roland Golightly, who “*..declined the offer of smelling peaty bog land in favour of walking over it....*”, then the sun came out and “*the 'boldly goers' made a great display of still having to work while others could laze, but it was generally suspected that their work consisted of getting over the first rise and lying down in the sun to crack open the wine.*”

Surveys at **Leny Wood** (Pat Wilson), **Sandwood Estate**, Sutherland (Jim Waterton) and **Blackhill Hill Fort** at Lanark for the NTS, the first outing for the new EDM – “*....93 points in a very short time*”.

Sue Hothersall, then in Lewis, published the booklet ***The Lost Wheelhouses of Uist*** along with Robert Tye.

The survey of **Glen Lochay** continued above Tullich Farm where a possible disc-headed grave stone was found by Libby King and others, including her sister Margaret Gardiner: “*Probably a dead coo,*” said Margaret “*oh look there's yet another shieling hut.*” – see title page above – the stone subsequently disappeared to ACFA chagrin.

A great autumn jolly week was held in **Benderloch**, set up by Scott and Anne Wood around Speyside's archaeological high points ending in a great banquet of "... inspired repartee, anecdotes and nonsense (helped along by liberal libations of Aberlour, Balvenie, Chivas Regal, Glenfiddich and for the heathen in our midst – vodka and tonic."

*ACFA's curling section, the Standing Stones, is about to embark on the new season. If you would like to try this splendid game...."*

The then ACFA MBS section, named by the ladies as *The Military Bastards Section*, mounted a visit to the Royal Armouries in Leeds, including a battlefield tour of Marston Moor, Stanwix Earthworks and a visit to the Roman Fort and Civitas at **Aldborough**, where "... the mosaic found there and now in Leeds City Museum is labelled as 'of Romulus and Remus'. This was unanimously agreed as having been grossly misidentified and is in fact a depiction of the frightful centaur **Rank Badjin** who captured **Lobby Dossers'** two wee nephews Ecky and Fecky seen skiting off in the background, school of Budneileus.



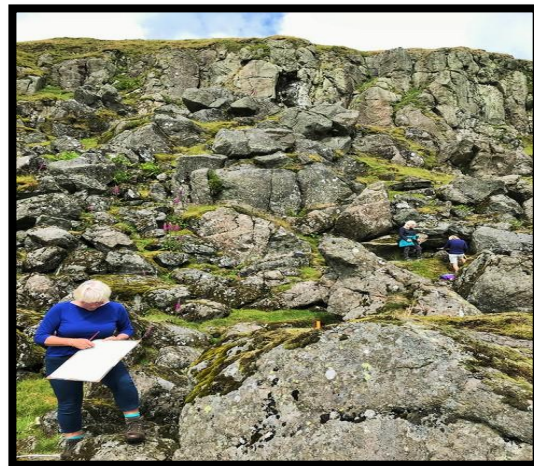
## **Planting for 2021:**

In spite of everything, ACFA has been out in 2021 whenever it could as those of us Zoomed in to the AGM saw from the work of Elaine, Ed and Ailsa on Tiree.

Here are a few images from other forays small groups who slipped out when opportunity and regulations allowed – fuller reports on these in the Spring Issue



**ScRAP: Patterton Quarry and Rouken Glen Doocot Slabs with Richard Anderson.**



**Possible rock shelters or shielings in the Kilsyth Hill: Dugie, Anne, Libby, Margaret.**



**Halterburn Valley: social distance measuring at the Stob Stone.**



**Many thanks to all contributors – keep them coming. So say we all.**

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