

# Association of Certificated Field Archaeologists Annual Report November 2022

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Life has gradually begun to return to normal or at least a new normal after COVID and we have resumed our activities this past year with renewed enthusiasm.

## Surveys

Having been sunburnt and overheated the previous year our survey in **Halterburn** at the end of March brought snow and biting winds, weather ACFA is much more accustomed to. We were back working over the border in England this time at the foot of the valley on a deserted, possibly medieval, settlement and series of IA scooped platform sites.

Members also made return trips to **Tiree**, tying up loose ends and carrying out further investigations including a small excavation of a midden site, and surveys at Balephuill and Kenevara.

The survey of the North East corner of Mearns (south of Glasgow) at **Kirkhill** was finished and the team returned to work on **Thorntonhall** picking up where COVID had stopped them. This survey is on-going, but highlights include an early 20<sup>th</sup> century mineral railway siding and the Thorntonhall Station.

Work in the island of **Luing** was completed.

We were also invited by Stirling local archaeologist, Murray Cook, to carry out a survey, at the instigation of a PhD student at Stirling University, of an 18<sup>th</sup> century planned landscape near the university, **Hermitage Wood**.

In many of our surveys we have been supported by members of the local community and members of the wider archaeology community for which we are very grateful. The survey of Thorntonhall Station for example saw a gathering of ACFA members, community council members, Scotrail staff and staff from Archaeology Scotland's Adopt a Monument team.

## Online

After what seems like the longest gestation period ever our Raasay papers are now available as free downloads from our website. Work will now commence on putting our other papers online giving priority to the Glen Lochay and the Eaglesham papers.

Our popular series of online lectures was repeated this year. The series kicked off with a first for us, a link between archaeological survey and crime fiction with Elaine Black presenting the literary and historic background to our survey of the supposed home of James of the Glen and her interview with author Douglas Skelton whose novel A Rattle of Bones was inspired by the Appin Murder. Carol Primrose reprised

her Arran talk which had been so well-received at last year's trip to the island. Heather James updated us on the results of the excavations at Ardleish, Argyll and of a midden in Tiree. Member Iain Ross Wallace presented Leaving a Mark on History a summary of the results of his master's project on masons' marks. The series finished with Ian Marshall talking about the history and archaeology of the village of Carmunnock and of Cathkin Braes. We intend to launch a new series of talks in the new year.

All these talks are available to view on our YouTube channel.

## Publications

**James of the Glen**, a survey in Glen Duror including the history surrounding the Appin murder and some new information about the case, proved very popular with the Jacobite fraternity and local visitors. **The Broom Estate**, part of the survey of the North East corner of Newton Mearns, was published as were the surveys of **Croy Hill**, the island of **Torsa** and the **Halterburn Valley part 1**. **Kirkhill** the final part of the Newton Mearns survey is forthcoming as is the **Luing** paper. Papers are due on the remaining work in **Tiree** and a major publication of the work carried out in Tiree titled **Teeth of the West Wind** edited by Dr John Holliday and Dugie MacInnes and including essays from a number of contributors is due next year. Also expected next year is another major publication synthesising the years of work in **Glen Lochay** with additional research, edited by Dugie MacInnes, Margaret Gardiner and Libby King. And finally, Sue Hothersall has the final **Bute** report CARES 3 ready to go to the printers.

## Outreach

In addition to collaborations mentioned elsewhere members gave talks to the Borders Archaeological Society and Yetholm Historical Society. Members also led a guided walk round a selection of key sites in Halteburn Valley for Peebles Archaeological Society.

## Miscellaneous

This year the committee set up a short life working group with the remit of considering the future of ACFA. We are grateful to all those who gave up their time to this. The resultant paper provided helpful and practical suggestions.

Funding is being sought for analysis of ceramic and lithic finds from Tiree.

Ailsa Smith continues to represent ACFA on the group monitoring the correction of errors in the transfer of data from the SCRAP website to CANMORE. There has been progress, but much remains to be done. We are grateful to our colleagues at NOSAS (North of Scotland Archaeological Society) whose representative has maintained a keen oversight of the project.

Preparatory discussion has been held regarding a collaboration between ACFA and the Dept of Archaeology at Glasgow University focussed on Cathkin Braes.

A group of members enjoyed a visit to the Machar Stones deep in the woods near Fintry and members also joined members of the Clutha Archaeology group for a tour of the archaeology of Chatelherault.

We have welcomed two issues of our newsletter this past year containing much of interest. Thanks to Ian Marshall and Janet MacDonald for their hard work producing and editing the newsletter.

Work on the Eric Cregeen archive has recommenced after its COVID hiatus and Fred Hay assures us the end is in sight.

Our treasurer, Jennifer Boag, has compiled a list of our equipment which will be available to consult in the Members' Section of the website.

We were sorry to note the deaths of Irene Hughson, Paul Bishop and Tam Ward. Irene was an alumnus of the certificate course and later taught the Picts to CfA students. Tam was also an alumnus and former member who went on to develop an outstanding reputation in archaeology particularly for his work on the earliest inhabitants of Scotland in the Upper Paleolithic. Many members worked with Professor Bishop on the excavations of the Drumshanty mill site and lime kilns near Stirling. He had been due to deliver one of the online lectures in the last series.

With a number of surveys planned for spring 2023 and potential partnership activities it looks like ACFA will continue to be busy.

Janie C. Munro, Chairperson

