

Editor's note

Due to a variety of circumstances (such as trying to keep the grass cut), this newsletter is a bit shorter than usual. However, as you read it you will see that it contains some very good news.

Dates for your diary

Thursday July 17th to Sunday July 27th

This season's dig at Barrowburn. Please contact David Jones on domj49@yahoo.co.uk or 01669 620436 to sign up. There are spaces available on every day (the rest day is Tuesday 22nd).

Friday August 15th to Sunday August 17th

The Kirknewton Festival of Archaeology. Nearer the time more details will be available on the National Park website.

Saturday August 16th & Sunday August 17th.

As part of the events around the World War I commemoration, CCA will lead walks to the practice trenches dug by the Northumberland Fusiliers on the land above Rothbury. Details to follow.

Monday September 8th 7:30 Small Hall, Thropton. The Border Roads Project launch meeting. More details are in the article below.

Wednesday September 24th 7:30 Small Hall, Thropton. Richard Carlton will talk about the remains of the 18th century waggonway found at the Neptune Shipyard near Walker which was used by horse-drawn carts to carry coal down to the river.



Sunday October 19th 2:30pm Rothbury Jubilee Hall. Clive Waddington will give the annual David Dippie Dixon lectures – focusing on 'Rescued from the Sea', the excavation of a burial cairn (and a lot more) at Hauxley last

summer in which some CCA members participated.



Wednesday November 12th 7:30 Venue TBD. Chris Bowles, the Archaeology Officer for the Scottish Borders, will talk to us about 'The Dark Ages in the Borders'.

The Border Roads Project

In the March newsletter we described how the Heritage Lottery Fund had turned down our original grant application, but had advised us to reapply at a lower level, ideally with funding from another source as well - and that we had done this, and secured £4900 from the National Park.

Last month, just before the AGM, we had some really good news. HLF have approved our revised application and have awarded us a grant of £44100, making a total of £49000 for the 3 year project.



A cross-ridge dyke on Clennell Street

Here is the summary of the project that was part of our application to HLF:

Many footpaths and routes traverse the Cheviots, joining what are now England and Scotland. Most have their roots in prehistory; today they are the province of the walker and the farmer, but over the years they have served disparate purposes - cattle droving, trading, smuggling and military movements. They have supported social activities, with a youth hostel high on Clennell Street and people walking for miles across the border to get to the dances at Windyhaugh. With little major development in the area for thousands of years all this has left its mark on the landscape. The routes are a palimpsest of generations of activities and events; almost nowhere else can so much of our past be seen in such a small space.

We will research the history of these roads, identify the prehistoric and historic sites that lie along them and document these through photography, surveying and excavation. We will package this information and make it available to as wide an audience as possible through walking guides, a book and an interactive web site. We will involve schools, groups and societies and the general public on both sides of the border, reconnecting communities the roads once supported.



A ruined farmstead above Blindburn

So we will be busy for the next 3 years – on both sides of the border. Although the excavation at the Barrowburn mill site will come to an end this summer, work at Hepden Burn will continue as part of this new project, and we are already thinking about other sites in the area for the future; we have been allocated continued funding for an annual dig.

The funding also covers production of the book mentioned above, a Border Roads website and walking guides linked to both. We plan to purchase a small quadcopter with a camera that will allow us to capture both still aerial photographs and video sequences – helping identify details of archaeological sites as well as flying people over and around them when they visit the web.



Field terraces on The Street north of Hownam

We are clearly going to do some initial planning over the next couple of months, but in September (see Dates for your Diary above) we will be holding a launch meeting to describe the project in more detail and get input from as many people as possible.

There are obviously lots of ways members can get involved and we will explore these at the meeting. With many different aspects to the project we hope to cater for as many interests as possible; the types of activities we envisage include:

- Desk research – which would include working on current Historic Environment Record entries to identify sites and searching archives at places like Woodhorn
- Walking the routes - taking photographs and notes and thinking about how we could package information for walking guides, as well as the book and the web. Some of the walks will be best done from our side of the border, but on occasions we'll probably have to drive into Scotland to start
- Excavation – every season we will have a dig. As at Barrowburn, these will usually last for about 10 days and we'll pick sites that are as accessible as possible
- Writing – we'll be producing a book on the Border Roads, and we'll need ideas on design, layout and content as well as some actual writing. The same is true of the website, which can be more flexible than the book and contain material in many different forms (such as video).
- Communications – planning and putting together talks, as well as designing events for schools and other community bodies

If you would like to focus on one or more of these and would like to contribute, please let David Jones know. Or (and) come to the meeting on September 8th and let us know then. And other things we'll have to do will undoubtedly emerge over the next few months.