

### Dates for your diary

**Friday August 15<sup>th</sup> to Sunday August 17<sup>th</sup>** The Kirknewton Festival of Archaeology. More details are available on the National Park website.

**Monday September 8<sup>th</sup> 7:30** Large Hall, Thropton. The Border Roads Project launch meeting. We will be describing our initial plans for the project and looking for your feedback, suggestions and ideas on how you'd like to be involved. Refreshments will be served.

**Wednesday September 24<sup>th</sup> 7:30** Small Hall, Thropton. Richard Carlton will talk about the remains of the 18<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 2:30pm** Rothbury Jubilee Hall. Clive Waddington will give the annual David Dippie Dixon lectures – focusing on 'Rescued from the Sea', last year's excavation of a burial cairn (and a lot more) at Hauxley in which some CCA members participated.



**Wednesday November 12<sup>th</sup> 7:30** Small Hall, Thropton. Chris Bowles, the Archaeology Officer for the Scottish Borders, will talk to us about 'The Dark Ages in the Borders'.

### Barrowburn 2014 – The Mill

As in previous years we've operated at two sites – the mill and the structure on the Hepden Burn. We'll deal with the mill first – our 4<sup>th</sup> season there.

You'll remember that we had two main objectives this year – to see if the upstream perimeter wall actually turned upstream at the river end, and to investigate the paved area we'd started to uncover in 2013.

We started by opening two small trenches, but fairly soon these became one. We determined that the upstream wall did not make a turn at the river, although there was a pile of stones on the upstream side of it, clustered round a large boulder that was probably in its natural position.



These may have accumulated there naturally, but it rather looks as if they were placed there, possibly as a crude buttress to support a fragile section of the wall.

Then we looked at the paving. Rather than being a yard or floor, this turned out to be a long, narrow structure with a bend in it about halfway along. It was made up of river-worn cobbles of various sizes, mostly in a single layer. We extended the trench away from the river towards the road, stopping short of the bank that supports it, and avoiding the BT cable we found last year. At the river end we stopped the trench about 2 metres from the bank.

Here's the central section of it.



We knew the structure was likely to be contemporary with the mill because we had found a medieval pottery handle effectively lying on it last year. We first thought it was a path, perhaps connecting the road above the mill with the river. But then we lifted a section of the stones in it, and it turned out to be a large drain. In this picture, taken just after the stones had been lifted, you can see the tops of the on-edge stones that form the side walls of the drain, together with the silt that filled it.



There did not seem to be any artificial floor to it, but it was still working to some extent – when we removed some of the silt, the resulting hole filled with water fairly quickly.

We don't really know what it was for. Away from the river it runs roughly parallel with the upstream wall and about 1 metre away from it. Then about halfway down it makes a 40° turn away from the mill; although we didn't get to the end, it looks as if it would empty into the river at this angle. Unlike the drains we found last year, it was obviously not intended to deliver water to the mill's working area. Perhaps it was there to drain the area above the mill (or the road itself) and keep it generally dry.

The reason for the turn is a puzzle too. Maybe it was just to take water further away from the wall, but it might have been to avoid a working area directly above the wheel pit, or to provide a more measured discharge into the river than would have resulted from a drain flowing straight down the bank.

Probably the only find of note was a set of medieval pottery fragments. A couple of these were above the drain itself, while others came from nearby contexts that were also above it, so that helps confirm the dating.



As you can see, at least two of the pieces can be fitted together along a break that is clearly an old and worn one.

So that was the end of the final season of work at the mill – although not the end of the work itself. We still have to prepare all the documentation and photographs for archival, get some specialist reports and process the survey data. We anticipate that the first paper on the mill will be published in the 2014 edition of *Archaeologia Aeliana*, and we hope that the second, which will focus in detail on all the archaeology, will be in 2015.

Finally, we should mention that, with support from the National Park, we've entered the mill project for a community archaeology award run by the Marsh Trust and the Council for British Archaeology. The decision is not until November, but we'll let you know what happens.

## Hepden Burn

Our second site was where we focused most of our resources this year. We were hugely helped by Tom Mason, who successfully got a small digger down to the site to open up the trenches – and, more importantly, got it out again.



Without his help we could not have achieved half of what we did.

First, for those of you not familiar with the site, here's a picture of it from the slope above it.



In all, we opened up 6 trenches or test pits and on some days had nearly 20 people working there (thank you).

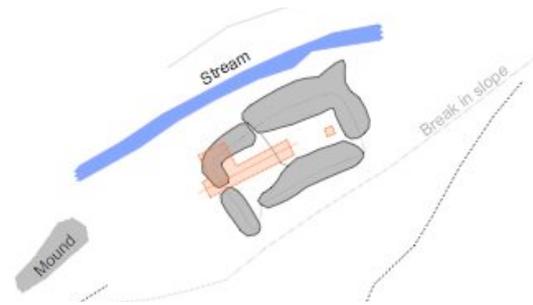
Away from the structure itself we opened up a large trench (its corner is at top right in picture) to look for any signs of agriculture, such as lazy beds, but we couldn't find anything obvious. At the corner of the structure nearest the burn we investigated what looked like either substantial slumping or an extension to the structure itself. This turned out to be a wall leading down to the burn. Here's the top of it emerging.



It's not clear what it's for. It may be later than the main structure, and was perhaps built to manage stock in some way, such as controlling them or guiding them while being gathered.

At the other top corner of the structure we opened up a smaller trench to look at the interior of the perimeter ridge. Unlike the ridge at the other end, which is stone-built, we confirmed that here it was mostly earth and some rubble. Indeed, last season's conditions were such that it was possible to make out the lines of old turfs that had been used to build it.

While at first sight the structure looks like a rectangle with some gaps, closer examination (and a survey) reveals that it's actually in 2 main parts, with a discontinuity near the middle resulting in the two parts being offset.



We put in a trench across the whole structure along this discontinuity (from about 11 o'clock to 5 o'clock in the drawing above). Here the main walls had more stone in them than the section described above.



In the middle of the structure we saw signs of an interior wall; it looks as if it's making a turn over some paving that's starting to emerge.



This paving encouraged us to connect the cross-trench with the main trench at the end of the structure where we found a floor last year - giving a better view of its extent. Here it is from one end (about 2 o'clock in the drawing above).



There's no clean end to the floor here, and parts of it may continue under the turf at the bottom.

Here's a view from the other end (note the dramatic change in page layout to give you a better view).



(That's enough of that). Investigation of the whole trench revealed a low wall running down one edge of the floor (blue arrow). At the far end (green arrow) it seems to make a turn across the floor (see picture on previous page). So it may be that there was a lightweight building around most of the floor, with the part it at the far end and outside being susceptible to robbery – which accounts for its uneven boundary.

The relationship between the floor and the walls showed that in most places the side wall post-dated the floor, while the large stone wall (red arrow) that was part of the apparent main structure was later again. However, the nature of the stones on the near side of that wall in the picture seems to differ from that on the other side. We're clearly looking at a multi-phase structure that needs more investigation.

In fact, those multiple phases may be even more complex. Sharp-eyed readers will have spotted a small rectangular hole inside the main trench at the bottom of the picture above. Here's that area before the hole was dug.



And here it is afterwards. There's another floor



below the level of the one we've been looking at – and in the small area so far exposed it seems to be made of larger stones.

The upper floor is perhaps late 17<sup>th</sup> century – pipe remains have been found that suggest this date. And we know that in 1538 (when Newminster was dissolved) raiders meant the area was largely abandoned, with no buildings and little summer grazing. This changed in 1603, with the unification of the crowns, and Kidland was producing healthy rents some 60 years later.

So do we have two 17<sup>th</sup> century floors, which implies a quick redevelopment, or is the lower floor earlier and from an abandoned building that was reconstructed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century? We won't know until we find something on it that can be dated – which means we'll almost certainly be back next year. And we don't know what either building was for. We've found no hearth on the upper floor; if not a house was it a shearing shed? Or a milking parlour?