



Newsletter June 2013

Dates for your diary

Tuesday 11th June 7:30pm Thropton Memorial Hall (small hall): A rescheduled talk from Nigel Mills, World Heritage and Access Director at The Hadrian's Wall Trust, who will talk on 'Hadrian's Wall and the Hadrian's Wall Trust'. Hadrian's Wall is a world heritage site that includes not just the wall but also the extensive surrounding area and structures such as coastal defences. The Trust's job is to manage the site for the community and visitors, promote education, protect the archaeology and conserve the landscape.

Saturday 29th June 10am – 3pm Harbottle Village Hall. "It's not about the Mattocks". Gemma Stewart, the Community Archaeologist with Northumberland National Park, will be holding a one-day workshop on archaeological recording techniques. The workshop will take participants through the step-by-step process of how to record excavated features, including how to record cuts, deposits (including the composition), stratigraphic relationships using the Harris Matrix and recording interpretation. The workshop is open to everyone whether you have been on one of our digs or not. If you would like to come please e-mail Chris Butterworth on c.butterworth@btinternet.com or phone her on 01669 621955.

Tuesday 8th October Venue and time to be announced. Barry Mead will describe the excavations and clearance work at the old Bedlington Iron Works, which closed in 1857 but whose remains can still be seen around the River Blyth.

Sunday 20th October 2:30pm Rothbury Jubilee Hall. Paul Frodsham will give the 2013 David Dippie Dixon lectures. Many of you will know Paul for his help in defining the CCA research agenda. Going even further back, it was his talk to the History Society some 10 years ago on the centenary of the publication of Upper Coquetdale that instigated the National Park project that eventually became CCA. Paul is now with the North Pennines AONB, running a project called Altogether Archaeology which

brings together professionals and volunteers to investigate the area's archaeological heritage.

Wednesday 13th November 7:30pm Thropton Memorial Hall (small hall). Peter Rowley-Conwy will talk on Mesolithic sites in the Western Isles. Peter is an anthropologist, and is Professor of Archaeology at Durham University.

The AGM

We held our AGM on Thursday, May 16th, with over 40 people coming to Thropton Memorial Hall. Chris Butterworth reviewed the highlights of the year, which included Fraser Hunter's Dippie Dixon lectures, the participation of CCA members in projects such as Flodden and the National Park's Heritage at Risk initiative, and HLF's recognition of the quality of the work we have been doing around the Barrowburn excavation.

Chris also said that the committee would not be proceeding with plans to limit the length of time officers or committee members could serve – but both she and the president stressed the need for regular injection of new skills and experience. She was pleased to announce that Elanor Hillier, who worked with the National Park to set up our group, had volunteered to join the committee; this appointment was duly proposed and seconded.

The meeting thanked Ian Colquhoun for his walks, talks and inspiration; the thoughts of all members are with him and his family at this time.

Finally, members heard three short presentations – one from Chris Burgess on the context of the battle of Flodden, another from David Jones on the plans for the 2013 season at Barrowburn (see below) – and one from Richard Mason of Rothbury about a hoard from Holy Island.

In 2003, while underpinning some foundations, Richard found a brown jug, but it was not until 2011, when cleaning it, that it was found to contain 17 gold and silver coins. These come from the reigns of almost every English monarch between Henry VI and Elizabeth, as well as from

France, the Papal States, the Netherlands and the Electorate of Saxony. The latest coin dates from 1562; being in very good condition the collection was probably deposited soon after that, and this ties in with the provenance of the jug, which probably come from Frechen – a town in the Rhineland near Cologne.

Barrowburn 2013

This year is our last planned season's work at Barrowburn. The dig will run from Thursday July 11th to Sunday July 21st, with a rest day on the middle Tuesday (the 16th). If you haven't already done so, please let David Jones know on which days you'd like to work

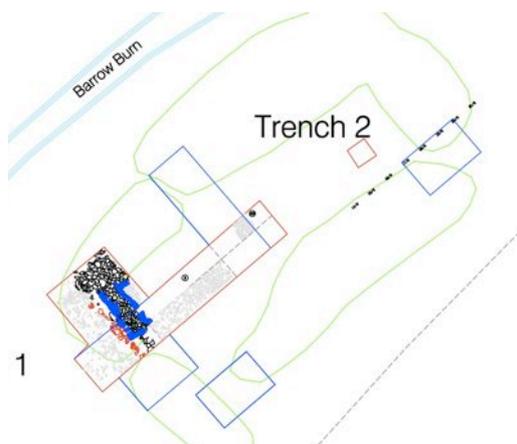
(domj49@yahoo.co.uk or 01669 620436).

Visitors, of course, are welcome at any time.

It's always dangerous to plan too far ahead, but at the mill site we currently have three main objectives:

- To carry out further exploration of the cobbled and paved area above the probable site of the mill machinery
- To excavate further at the upstream end of the 2012 trench to see if we can find a wall to match the one downstream
- To investigate the area where at the end of last year's dig we started to find metal remains and a concentration of charcoal.

John Nolan wants to do a number of things at the Hepden Burn site. These include completing the exposure of the probable entrance where most of the work was carried out last year, investigating what may be the remains of an earlier structure under the main one, and examining other possible entrances and discontinuities across the site (as shown in the blue rectangles here – the red rectangles being the sites of the 2012 trenches)



And then after lunch.....

Robert Lumsden Revisited

Last year's April's newsletter described the memorial at Murder Cleugh where Robert Lumsden killed Isabella Sudden. The article finished with a guess as to where Lumsden lived; a place called 'Horsholes', it's not on any modern map but a friend of Lumsden's came from Prendwick (near Alnham) and there's a Lumsden Hill nearby.

However, James McQuillen recently pointed out that there's a stretch of the Wansbeck at Morpeth called 'Horse Hole', together with a Lumsden's Lane near the bus station. Bridget Gubbins confirmed that Lumsden is a common Morpeth name, and that a Robert Lumsden was an alderman in 1669. Some 60 years after Isabella's death, it's unlikely to be our man, but the coincidence is striking.

As well as describing a place where horses were lowered into a coal pit (which must be a later usage, with the development of deep mining), the term 'Horse Hole' crops up on other rivers too. Several Scottish rivers have pools with the name, and it also referred to a riverside part of Durham. But the origin of the name is not clear; it may have been a place where horses were washed or watered.

But back to Lumsden. A closer analysis of his 1630 appearance at the Archdeacon's court in Durham shows that not only did the Prendwick witness claim he lived 3 miles from Lumsden, but another witness from Wreighill (west of Rothbury) said Horsholes was 4 miles from his house, and 5 miles from part of Scotland. Now these figures are not consistent - no one place fits all these criteria - but if you draw circles on a map they suggest that Horseholes may have been in an area between Biddlestone and Kidland.

Andy Curtis then pointed out that Dippie Dixon refers to a paper in the 1885 History of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club that says that "*Fairy-pipes*" had been picked out of old ash-middens at the "Horse-Holes", a recess in the green braes at Milkhope where half-wild horses might retire to at night for shelter'. Sure enough, south of Milkhope and on the south-east edge of Kidland, there's a place on the OS map called Horse Close – 5 miles from the border, about the same from Prendwick and between 6 and 7 from Wreighill – which is quite close to the testimony in the Durham trial.

The Forestry Commission planted this area in the 1950s; a close examination of a 2002 Google Earth image (see next page) shows a possible outline (yellow arrows) with what may be the remains of a section of wall (red arrow).



The good news is that many of the trees have recently been felled and the Horse Close has reappeared (it's at NT 9250 1049). The area measures about 50 x 70 metres and the surrounding wall has mostly survived; there's even what may be a small bothy in the NW corner (yellow arrow) and the remains of an original entrance on the east wall (red arrow).



The bothy or shelter

It's not an easy place to get to – you either go up a very steep hill or across forestry waste – but an Edward Miller visited it in 1953 at the request of the Society of Antiquaries, just before the planting took place. He referred to it as 'Horse Close or Horse Holes' and said it was approximately an acre in size (which is about right), and that there were 'grass-grown founds of rectangular buildings' inside it.

Is this where Lumsden lived? We'll probably never know – but it's less than 4 miles to Murder Cleugh – and not much more to Holystone, which is where Isabella lived with her husband, Andrew. The problem is that any further investigation is going to be seriously hampered by the residue of the forestry and subsequent felling.

Rock Art Workshop

A focus group and workshop will be held in Rothbury on Saturday 29th June, which aims to harness the knowledge of rock art enthusiasts in order to test and evaluate a new tool kit being put together by Newcastle University and Queen's University Belfast. The tool kit aims to enable experts and non-experts alike to evaluate the condition of open-air rock art in a user friendly way yet one that utilises the latest scientific research into stone decay.

In order to ensure that the research team creates materials that are user-friendly, they need to develop them with the help of individuals both with and without specialist knowledge of rock art. If you become involved, you can influence the production of the materials and ultimately contribute to the long-term care of rock art. If you think you might want to get involved with this project, then please contact the people on the email or phone number below as they are in the process of coordinating a group to help in the production of the toolkit.

To book a place email heritagescience@ncl.ac.uk or ring 0191 222 5283. The event will be held from 10am until 4pm at Jubilee Hall, Rothbury. As an incentive, lunch will be provided.

Trapain Law Lecture

Recently some CCA members went to Berwick to hear Fraser Hunter (last year's Dippie Dixon speaker) talk to the Border Archaeological Society about Trapain Law. For those of you who didn't make it, there's a video on the web of him and Kenneth Painter talking to the Society of Antiquaries in London about the Trapain Law treasure. Discovered in 1919, it consists of over 50 pounds (weight!) of chopped-up Roman silver; associated coins suggest that it may have been deposited in the 5th century AD. It's thought that the treasure might be the result of a cross-border raid, or perhaps be a payment for mercenary service in an economy with insufficient coinage.

The lecture lasts about an hour and is at <http://www.sal.org.uk/newsandevents/Lecture%20Archive/lecturerecordings/lecture16may2013>