



TAYSIDE & FIFE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
COMMITTEE
HISTORIC

Newsletter of the

Tayside and Fife Archaeological
Committee Issue Twenty-Four – September 2015
TAFAC is registered in Scotland as a charity (SC002450).

A return to Perth Whitefriars

Archaeological excavations on behalf of Manorgate Ltd restarted at the site of Perth's medieval Carmelite friary at Riggs Road in July 2014 and are still running. Last investigated in 2008 and in line with planning policies for the protection and study of archaeological sites, the friary complex still requires to be excavated before development of the site can proceed. Excavation by Derek Hall, archaeologist and ceramic specialist, and, for a short period, archaeologists from Perth-based Alder Archaeology Ltd, has so far concentrated on the church which has revealed a further 153 burials; these have included men, women and children. The vast percentage of them probably date from the 14th and 15th centuries, when the Bishop of Dunkeld had a residence at Tullilum. These burials are being carefully excavated, recorded and lifted before being sent to Edinburgh University for study.

The most unexpected find so far has been a fragment of a carved stone human figure in chain mail which is probably from a tomb effigy (right). The fragment had been broken up and reused as a packing stone in one of the phases of the church and may



The fragment of leg in chain mail from tomb effigy reused as packing in the rood screen of the later phase of the church. Image copyright: Derek Hall.

be from the earliest 13th century occupation on the site. Work has started to investigate the western range of the friary (the location of the guest accommodation and the kitchens) and evidence for its careful and systematic destruction at the Reformation of 1599 has been recovered. (cont)

Internal evidence is also being recovered for low temperature industrial activity, possibly a blacksmith's forge and stone-lined culverts associated with a possible kitchen area. The earliest phase of burial so far encountered in the Carmelite church is distinguished by the presence of pieces of green wood in the grave, these vary in size and the longer examples resemble wooden staffs although they are not substantial enough to function as such and are probably symbolic. Parallels for this burial rite are known from a couple of sites in England and in Scandinavia but so far these are the only Scottish examples known to the author. In recent weeks a wood-lined grave was located under the line of the southern church wall, possibly under a main doorway into the building or a wall tomb. Curiously this did not contain a proper burial but human bones that had been laid out to resemble a body.

Work progresses on the completion of the excavation of the church prior to a return to the west range and an adjacent and so far unidentified stone building running south towards Whitefriar Street. An interim lecture on the excavations will be given at this year's TAFAC conference in Perth.



Robber Steps – Parts of the robbed Northern wall-line of a wall-line of a building on the western side of the friary complex left in place as steps to aid stone removal. Image copyright: Derek Hall.

Plea for copy

Your editor wishes to let readers know that one of the purposes of this newsletter is to provide a vehicle for making topics that may be of interest to folk in the TAFAC area (and further afield) more widely known. Therefore he would be enormously grateful if articles, short or long, illustrated or unillustrated, notices of conferences and other events, etc, could be sent to him at the email address below: johnsherriff@hotmail.co.uk.

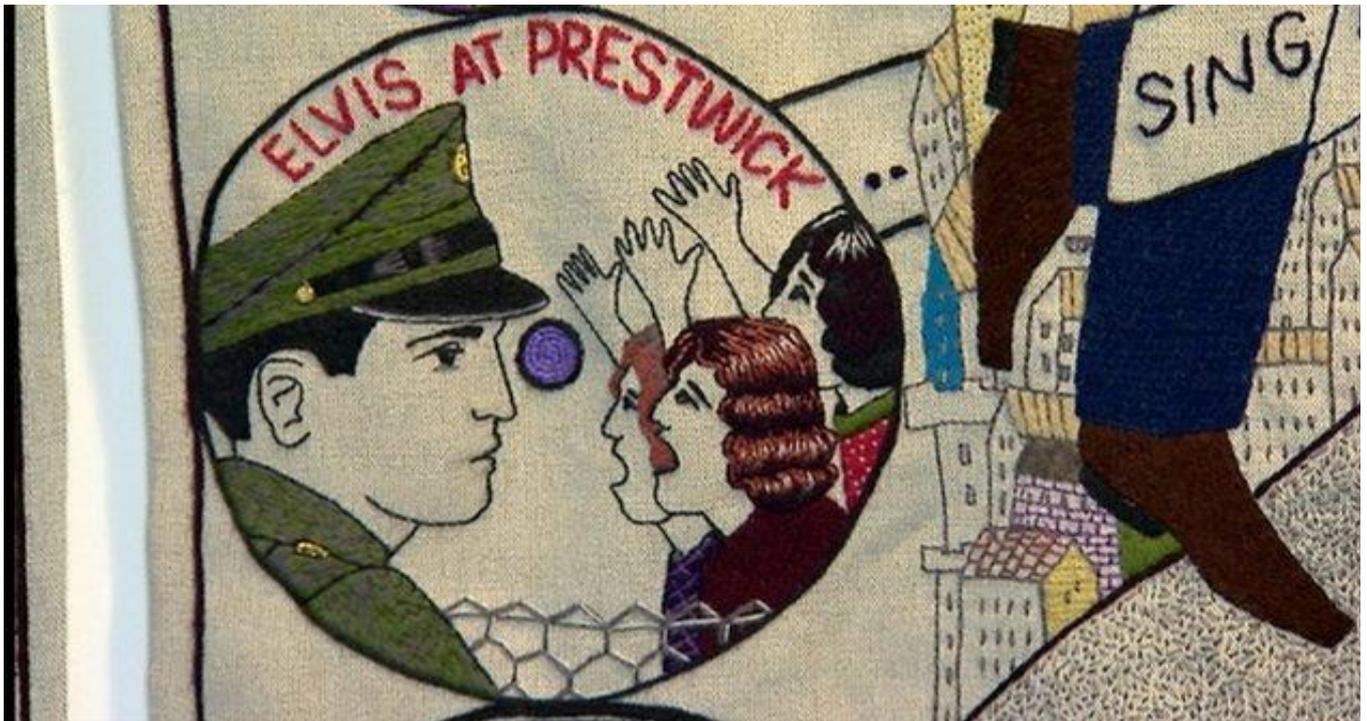
The Great Tapestry of Scotland is in Kirkcaldy

At Kirkcaldy Galleries until Sunday, 20th September 2015. The Galleries are open seven days a week, Sunday and Monday from noon and all other days from 9.30am. This is a FREE exhibition.

Consisting of 160 individual panels, running 143m in length, the Tapestry brings to life the history of Scotland in vibrant colour and detail. It represents one of the biggest community arts projects in the world and was created by Scottish writer Alexander McCall Smith, artist Andrew Crummy and historical writer Alistair Moffat.

Taking 1,000 talented volunteers more than 50,000 hours to complete, this project used a range of embroidery skills and over 30 miles of wool yarn to translate Andrew Crummy's descriptive artwork into a colourful, detailed and textural depiction of the history of Scotland.

Workshops and programmes focussing on different aspects of the Tapestry are on offer throughout the summer, as well as talks and gallery tours by some of the people involved in the stitching.



A section of the 'Great Tapestry'. Image copyright: The BBC.

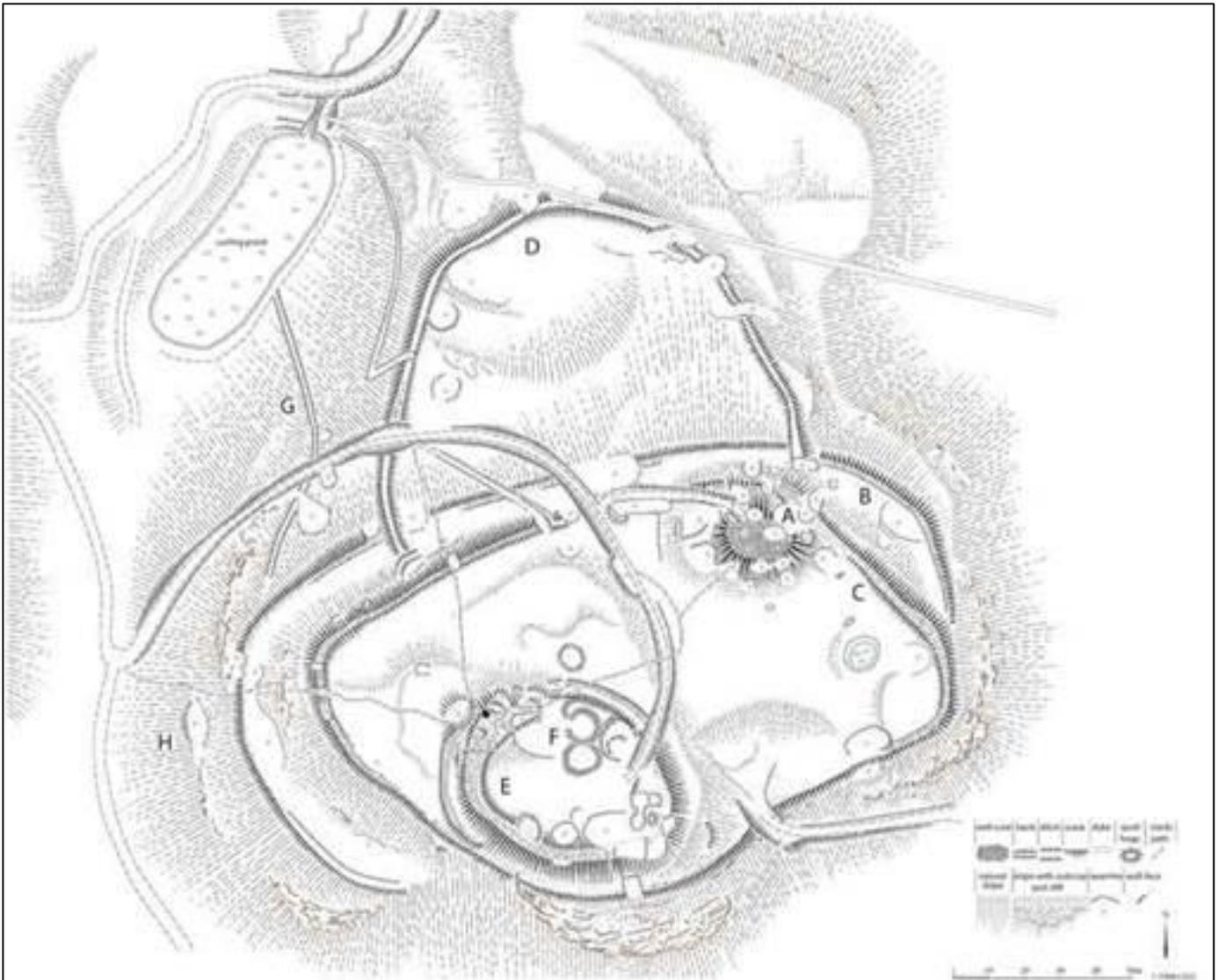
Having seen the Great Tapestry while it was at Stirling Castle earlier this year this viewer can say it is well worth a visit, whether your interest is in history, textile art or social history. Unlike some local museums, Kirkcaldy Galleries are open seven days a week and unlike some other venues the Tapestry has visited, entry is free.

Verdant Works Spring 2016

In partnership with Dundee Heritage Trust, the Tapestry will be on display at the newly renovated Hill Mill. Dates and details of the exhibition and events will be announced in due course.

Moncreiffe Hill Excavation

Archaeological excavation of the fort on the summit of Moredun Top, which is situated north of Bridge of Earn on the east-west orientated ridge known as Moncreiffe Hill, is taking place this month (Tuesdays to Saturdays), ending on 26 September. The excavation has an open access policy with site tours by volunteers. Anyone wishing a more detailed site tour by professional staff should contact David Strachan (David.Strachan@pkht.org.uk). Visitors are welcome between 10am and 4pm: there is a carpark (NGR NO 137 210) about one mile along the Rhynd Road which branches off the Edinburgh Road (A912) opposite Craigclowan School. Then follow the brown signs.



Fort, Moredun Top, Moncreiffe Hill, Perth and Kinross. Crown copyright, RCAHMS: DP203195

In May 2014 the fort was surveyed by RCAHMS (see plan above) and the following elements were identified. (A) – a large mound, possibly a prehistoric burial mound; (B) - an oval enclosure larger but earlier than enclosure (C), both defined by thick stone walls. (D) - a D-shaped enclosure later in date than (B) and possibly contemporary with (C); (E) – an enclosure with a very thick wall that overlies (C) and is therefore also later in date than (B); (F) – an apparently unenclosed settlement of stone-walled huts which are later in date than any of the phases of fortification.

Summer and Autumn events at Dundee Museum

August–September 2015

Children and Families FAMILY SPACE GALLERY ARTS AND CRAFTS

Available daily FREE: No need to book, just drop in !

Drop in to our museum's family space and try our fun drawing activities. themed costumes, books and games. Also look out for our gallery Art Carts packed with activity sheets, clipboards and art materials designed to help families explore the museum's collection of objects and artworks.

SMALL STORIES Mon 14 Sept 10:30 -11am & 11:30 -12noon

FREE: No need to book, just drop in!

Listen to local tales, sing, play and explore in these fun, interactive storytelling sessions for under 5s and their grown-ups.

Talks and Tours

WHAT BONES CAN TELL US: HUMAN AND ANIMAL BONES IN
ARCHAEOLOGY Thursday 10 September , 1- 1:30 pm

FREE Booking essential on (01382)30700

What can human and animal bones tell us about the past? All will be revealed in this tour of the archaeology galleries.

Talk: 30 September Doors open at 18:00 pm for an 18:30pm start

'The Lost Lives of Lundin Links: Exploring Pictish Diet and Mobility using archaeological chemistry'

Archaeological scientist Dr Kate Britton, the University of Aberdeen has reconstructed the diet and movements of the people buried at the Pictish cemetery at Lundin Links. Before the talk there will be an opportunity to view the permanent display on Lundin Links in the Landscapes and Lives gallery.

This talk will be held in the cafe and there will be no food service.

Free: Booking essential at <http://www.themcmanus.eventbrite.co.uk>

Broughty Castle Museum:

**DOORS OPEN DAY/SCOTTISH
ARCHAEOLOGY AND HERITAGE
FESTIVAL**

Sat 19 Sept. 10am - 4pm

FREE. No need to book, just drop in!



A possible Neolithic bowl found this year at Dun Knock. Image copyright: SERF

SERF Excavation at Dun Knock, Dunning

In the early summer excavation at Dun Knock, Dunning, by the Strath-earn Environs and Royal Forteviot (SERF) project expanded on an exploration first carried out by the team in 2008. This year, a long trench was excavated through the ploughed down defences on the NW side of the fort and your editor had

the privilege of spending five days catching up on exceedingly rusty excavating skills. While others were finding pottery bowls (see above) and spearheads, I contented myself with not making a complete hash of revealing for all to see a rather fine laid pebble surface. For more detail on this and other SERF projects go to:

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/humanities/research/archaeologyresearch/projects/serf/>

Major Exhibition

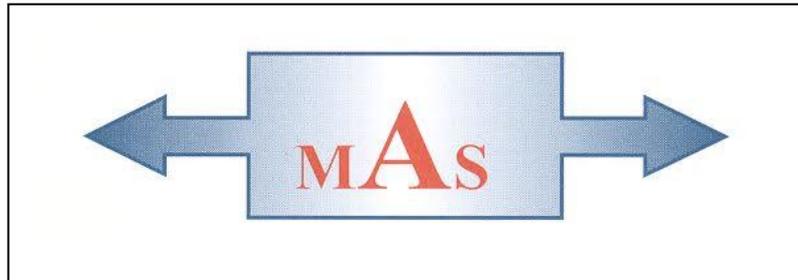
In 2015/ 16 The University of Glasgow's Hunterian Art Gallery and Perth Museum in Art Gallery will be collaborating on a major exhibition to highlight the discoveries made by the SERF project. You can read more about the exhibition

here: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/hunterian/visit/exhibitions/major%20exhibitions/cradleofscotland/>

The exhibition opened in early September and will then move to Perth in Spring 2016.

TAFAC Conference 2015

This year's conference will take place at the North Inch Community Campus, Gowans Terrace, Perth, PH1 5BF on Sat. 7 November 2015, 9.40am to 4.30pm. The tickets cost £15.00, which includes the cost of lunch. For more information contact Eva Bennett at tafacinfo@gmail.com or 01738 850489 or visit our website www.tafac.org.uk. The keynote speaker, kindly sponsored by Murray Archaeological Services Ltd, will be Richard Bradley, Professor of Archaeology at the University of Reading. The title of his lecture is 'The use and re-use of stone circles: new fieldwork at five Scottish sites'.



Croft Moraig, Perthshire, one of a number of monuments in central and NE Scotland excavated in recent years by Professor Bradley.

Another speaker is Moira Greig who will be talking about the Mason's Mark Project –

Summary

From what was once a strong Medieval Guild very little documentary evidence survives regarding the stonemasons who built the great castles, cathedrals and churches all over Scotland and much further beyond and who left such a built legacy. Many questions have been asked over the years as to the purpose of masons' marks, with different views being given depending on which aspect a person has been studying.

Even today masons' marks are often either ignored, or not thought of much importance, when surveys of buildings have been undertaken and are just

noted as being present. However, recording the locations of marks can help to identify different phases of construction, especially in buildings which have been constructed over several centuries.

This Project aims to rectify these omissions and help to record the marks for posterity, as well as try to identify an occasional mason's name and where and when he worked.

Other speakers include Derek Hall whose talk will be '*Back to Tullilum - excavations at Perth Whitefriars 2014/15*'

Sophie Nicol (Tay Landscape Partnership) will talk about the excavation of the fort on Moredun Top, --- '*The Hunt for the Hidden Fort –results of excavation at Moncreiffe Hillfort*'

Dr Gordon Noble, Senior Lecturer at the University of Aberdeen, is going to speak on the excavations at Dunnicaer, near Dunnottar, Aberdeenshire. His talk is entitled '*Early Pictish Fort Northern Picts project, an early Pictish fort*'.



Dunnicaer sea stack. Image copyright: The Modern Antiquarian.



Fortingall Kirk. Image copyright: Undiscovered Scotland.com

Other speakers are Neil Hooper – '*Surveying Fortingall Kirkyard*' –see *Newsletter 20 (June 2014) for an earlier account.*

David Munro & Oliver O'Grady will be providing an account of what is happening in the Lomond Hills—'*Living Lomonds Landscape: Year 2 Update*'

Dene Wright's talk is titled '*SERF: Excavations at Wellhill, Dunning 2014 and 2015. Early Neolithic settlement, agricultural practice and a Bronze Age barrow*'

Someone from Historic Environment Scotland is going to give a short talk on the new organisation which, from 1 October 2015, assumes the roles and responsibilities of the former Historic Scotland and the former Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.