



APPLEBY ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP - ONE DAY CONFERENCE



Medieval Life in the Eden Valley

SATURDAY, 3rd October 2009 : 9.30am - 4.00pm
APPLEBY GRAMMAR SCHOOL, APPLEBY-IN-WESTMORLAND, CA16 6XU

An overview of the History of North Cumbria 1100 - 1603.
Tim Padley, Keeper of Archaeology, Tullie House Museum

Westmorland and the King of Scots, 1137-1157
Dr Hugh Doherty, Junior Research Fellow, Jesus College, Oxford.

**Peel Towers, Hunting and Anti-Social Behaviour - the Later Medieval Seigneurial
Landscape of Mallerstang**
Erik Matthews, Independant Buildings Archaeologist : AASDN

Recent excavations in Medieval Carlisle
Frank Giocco, North Pennines Archaeology.

Use of the land - medieval farming
Dr Angus Winchester, Lancaster University: (Chairman for the Day)

The Monastic Presence in the Eden Valley
Professor Janet Burton, University of Wales, Lampeter

The archaeology - Recent Work at Staffield Nunnery, Armathwaite
Fiona Wooler

Conference attendance : £11. Optional buffet lunch £5.50 (vegetarian options available)

Reliving the Middle Ages in the Eden Valley

Over a hundred people, some local, many from much further afield, enjoyed a fascinating journey back in time to 'Medieval Life in the Eden Valley' at an Appleby Archaeology Group Conferenæ held in the hall of the town's Grammar School.

The organisers had assembled a fine cast of speakers whose expertise shed light on aspects of life in Eden from Norman to Tudor times. Tim Padley, Keeper of Archaeology at Tullie House, set the scene with an entertaining overview, pointing out that the border between English and Scottish control of Cumberland and Westmorland moved north and south according to the strength of the respective governments. When both were weak, Reiver banditry flourished.

He stressed the effects of the 'Disastrous 14th Century', a theme picked up by the Chairman, Dr Angus Winchester of Lancaster University, who explained how aerial photographs supplement documentary evidence to provide clues about how land was farmed. When population collapsed in the 1300s, partly but not only because of the Black Death, much arable land (mainly growing oats) was turned over to pasture. When cattle were moved to summer upland grazing ground the herdsmen went with them, living in little huts, known in different localities as shiels, scales and scholes.

Decline in the late Middle Ages is also evidenced, as Frank Giecco of North Pennines Archaeology showed, in the findings of excavations of Carlisle. The moving of a tannery within the walls is a sign of insecurity for where possible these stinking but necessary medieval workplaces were located away from densely populated areas. Indeed in the 15th Century Carlisle's fortunes were in such decline that the township of Caldewgate was well-nigh abandoned.

Focusing on the other end of Eastern Cumbria, Erik Matthews, a Buildings Archaeologist, showed how study of the landscape and ruined buildings combine to make possible the reconstruction of the hunting culture of the great landowners in Mallerstang. The Cliffords of Pendragon and Whartons of Wharton Hall were bitter rivals. Also prominent Mallerstang hunters were the Warcops at Lammerside until the implacable Thomas Wharton forced them out in the mid 16th Century.

Professor Janet Burton of the University of Wales at Lampeter invoked the evidence of wills and charters to reconstruct the economic as well as spiritual importance of monastic houses in the Eden Valley. A major landowner was Bylands Abbey in Yorkshire as a result of the piety of landowners like Torphin, who left Bleatarn, Warcop Mill and Warcop Church to the monks. The impact on Eden, as elsewhere, of the destruction of the monasteries and seizure of their land by Henry VIII was profound.

Whereas other speakers had ranged over centuries, Dr Hugh Doherty of Oxford University, focused on two decades of Westmorland makes it possible to reconstruct the shifting power alliances of great landowners and the Scottish and English crowns. Hugh Morville senior bossed the Appleby area on behalf of David, king of Scotland. His son, also Hugh Morville, one of the killers of St Thomas Becket in 1170, did the same for Henry II of England.

An excellent buffet lunch and regular tea and coffee punctuated a highly successful day of learning, which will be available to those unable to attend when Appleby Archaeological Group publish the Conference papers.