

## Appleby Archaeology Group, November 2011

Appleby Archaeology Group welcomed Jamie Lund from the National Trust to their November meeting in the Supper Room. He came to talk about the Archaeological Landscape Survey of the Sizergh Estate near Kendal. Jamie is archaeologist for the National Trust's North-West Region who works to develop community participation in discovery and conservation management. He is keen to make sure that archaeology is not just a necessary evil, but is something in which local people can participate and from which they value the results.

Jamie began by outlining other recent community archaeology projects in the Lake District including Derwentwater, Buttermere, and excavation of a roman fort at Ambleside, and looking forward to next year's "Windemere Reflections" project. He went on to explain the idea of an Archaeological Landscape Survey. These are undertaken by the National Trust in order to learn as much as possible about their properties, especially how they have changed and developed over time and how this guides current conservation. Sizergh was chosen because it seemed that there was a complete absence of information about its historic parklands. Nobody knew where they were or whether their outlines had survived in modern boundaries. One reason this has become important is that under Natural England's Higher Level Stewardship scheme, there is potentially funding for parkland restoration.

He went on to explain how he had worked alongside Levens Local History Group, as well as National Trust volunteers at Sizergh, to develop and undertake the project. Happily the team was not just sent into a field armed with shovels. A training day was held to explore what needed doing followed by a walk up the fell from the Strickland Arms to see what was already visible in the area. Then some initial research was undertaken at Kendal Record Office with a professional archivist from Oxford Archaeology North, based in Lancaster. The archivist also helped them get the best from the Levens Local History Group archives, the Castle archives, and papers owned by the Strickland family.

The team split into four groups who surveyed one area each. They had hand-held GPS, digital cameras, and a 50m tape measure. They took over eight hundred photos over a six week period, and sent all the information they accumulated to a professional report writer at Oxford Archaeology North.

As a result of the project, the number of known archaeological sites in the area has increased from over three hundred to nearly six hundred. They relate to prehistory, the deer parks, and later industry. Their

work on prehistoric sites built on older excavations, including one done in 1904 where the finds are still stored at the castle. The material was dated to the Neolithic and Iron Age. A Bronze Age beaker was found during the current project, completing an extremely broad spread of dates, and a Bronze Age kidney-shaped mound of pot-boiling-pebbles was found south of the ha-ha in Sizergh park. Following a huge amount of work with archives including old maps, three deer parks were identified. Sizergh Park and Larkrigg were east of the castle, and Brigsteer Park was to the west, beyond a tract of demesne land. The team did manage to find evidence of park boundaries and were able to trace how they had evolved over time, becoming smaller and redeveloped for other uses as priorities changed from a hunting, sporting landscape to a taste for picturesque landscape vistas. Industrial evidence related to limestone quarries, lime kilns, charcoal burning platforms in coppice woods, a bark peeler's hut and potash pits.

Jamie concluded that we have gone from knowing nothing to knowing a great deal about the locations and development of the deer parks, have identified three hundred new archaeological sites, and sown seeds of imagination and enthusiasm for further exploration and investigation. The audience wanted to know more about the types of boundaries and the ways in which wild deer were enticed or driven into the parks and Jamie was ready to talk through the possible options and explain why limited evidence on this had been unearthed to date.

A vote of thanks was proposed, warmly appreciating the enormous amount of work that had been put into the project and the exciting discoveries that had been made. The Chair, Phyl Rouston, reminded the meeting that the next talk would be on Dec 13th when Annie Hamilton-Gibney would talk about flint analysis in the Upper Eden Valley and an update on "Living among the Monuments"