

The Annual General Meeting of the Appleby Archaeology Group was held recently at the usual venue, the supper room above the Public Hall in Appleby. After the formal business of the meeting had been dispensed with, a series of short talks on various subjects of historical and archaeological interest were given by members.

The first speaker was Carol Dougherty who presented details of a recent trip to the Kilmartin Valley in Argyll, an area packed with prehistoric interest. She began by describing the Temple Wood series of stone monuments, about which there is speculation that it may have started life as a solar observatory. Burial cists, once covered with piles of stones, with some containing Beaker pottery and flint arrowheads were added later, during the Bronze Age.

Moving on to Kilmichael, Carol described and showed slides of the stunning rock art on a huge boulder, consisting of a large spiral and concentric rings, as well as cup and ring markings.

Next on the expedition was a stiff walk up to the Castle Dounie iron age fort, with its magnificent views over the Sound of Jura. Proceeding with her talk, Carol moved on to nearby Dunadd hillfort, which was originally an iron age enclosure, thought to have been occupied later by the Scotti, who sailed from Ireland & gave their name to their new country. Later still, it apparently became a seat of the Kings of Dal Riada, who are thought to have ritually placed a foot into a depression shaped like a footprint during their coronation. Legend transforms this into Ossian's footprint

The Nether Largie district contains 3 cairns, the largest being the North cairn which is more than 20 metres across. The cairn was rebuilt following excavation and contains an inscribed stone with 40 cup marks & 10 axe heads. The cairn field is probably one of the oldest monuments in the Valley, dating from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium BC.

After a quick sprint through the medieval remains in the area, including numerous elaborately carved grave slabs and an early medieval cross, Carol ended her talk with a slide of a beautiful Jet necklace, dating from the second Millennium BC, which had been recovered from Glee Cairn.

The next speaker was Elisabeth Hodgson, who entertained the group by extolling the trials and tribulations involved in the purchase, investigation and modernisation of what was thought to be a coaching inn in the village of Brough. Elisabeth and her husband had purchased the building in a dilapidated state in 2009 after it had been unoccupied for many years. The property benefited from sandstone and brockram walls with clay mortar construction and original lime plaster, lath and plaster ceilings, a stand pipe but no internal plumbing, just two light fittings, a kitchen range dating from 1800 and a floor sloping by 2 feet from the front of the building to the back. Elisabeth had thought that this might have been to expedite the speedy handling of beer barrels. Later investigations began to suggest that although it may have been used as an inn at some time, the original use of the site may have been as a village bakery. This had been deduced from the hearth tax records. Elisabeth also said that the upper floor had been constructed with very strong joists and a number of windows, which had later been blocked up. A wooden shuttle and some wood fragments which might have been from a hand loom suggested that the upper floor may therefore have been used for weaving.

She explained that much assistance had been given by the Tullie House Museum in

Carlisle, principally with the identification and dating of finds. These had included a fork dating from around 1690 and a decorated clay pipe bowl from 1600, interestingly about the time of the introduction of tobacco from the West Indies and the American colonies. A decorated button dating from the late 14C had also been discovered. Most of the artefacts were however later in origin. These included a single George III penny, Queen Anne pottery from the late 17C, pistol shot, Victorian pottery and, upon pulling down some lath & plaster ceiling, a mummified rat.

Elisabeth's prize find though was a child's leather boot, a real link with the previous inhabitants of the building, particularly so, as, at the time of discovery, one of her own children had been 6 years old. Following her talk, members of the group were able to examine some of the finds which Elisabeth had brought along.

The final speaker of the evening was Trish Shaw, who made everybody present yearn for blue skies and sunnier climes as she related her exploration of the Asklepieion of Kos during a recent holiday.

In ancient Greece, Asklepieia had been centres of medicine and healing and had been constructed on sites chosen for a perfect balance of air, water and land. They had been dedicated to Apollo, who was the father of Asklepius, part human, part god and generally accepted to have been the first 'doctor'.

Asklepieia became therapeutic centres for pupils, teachers, pilgrims and patients during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. Practitioners included high priests, physicians, gymnasts and physiotherapists, all dedicated to a holistic approach to life, meaning everything from healing, through physical excellence to the arts. Patients at the Asklepieia followed a strict regime in three stages. Initially, they would spend 21 days of healing, bathing, exercise etc. in the first Andron, or terrace. Proceeding to the second terrace, they would be given psychological support from meditation and prayer, sometimes through use of drugs. The third terrace was where they would receive treatment for their physical symptoms and recuperation. All the information was recorded and became an invaluable record of both successful and unsuccessful treatments.

Trish went on to explain that Hippocrates was born on the island of Kos in around 460BC and the Asklepieion there was where he taught and learned. In addition, he collated records from other Asklepieia all over Greece, going on to develop methodologies and therapies from his research. In doing so, he founded medical science and divined the ethical responsibilities which resulted in the Hippocratic Oath, still sworn by doctors to the present day.

The ruins at the Asklepieion of Kos date from 2 centuries after the death of Hippocrates although finds have been made proving earlier use. The site was excavated under the Ottoman administration between 1902-5 by Rudolph Herzog after the discovery of a reference in an Egyptian papyrus. He found evidence of the flourishing state of the Asklepieion during the mid and late Hellenistic and the Roman periods. In 1938, further excavation revealed Thermae dating to Roman times as well as artefacts dating back to the Mycenaean period between 1600 and 1150BC.

Much of the site is still unexcavated, including the gymnasium, stadium and the theatre - Trish explained that she had spoken to Greek archaeologists who felt that there would be no immediate prospect of significant work there because of the economic crisis enveloping the country. In the meantime, the site unfortunately deteriorates.

All three speakers were warmly applauded by the assembled members who then made their way home through a cold January evening, probably wishing they were on Kos.

The next meeting on February 12<sup>th</sup> will hear a talk on the history of Holme Cultram Abbey, given by members of the West Cumbria Archaeological Society.