

## Lecture Summaries

### Early medieval Carlisle: the development of an Anglo-Scottish town to the late 13th century

Mike McCarthy

Cumbria has many close associations with lowland Scotland. For considerable periods it was part of the Scottish king's patrimony, but it was seized by William II (Rufus) when he invaded in 1092. Having taken control of Cumbria, the kings of England were not likely to part with it, and the Scots' desire to recover it has played a not inconsiderable role in Carlisle's subsequent history. Other links include pastoralism, a dispersed settlement pattern, a system of lordship based upon the shire, the social hierarchy including drengs, thanes and bondmen, and the Brittonic language, spoken until the 11th century. It was a Scottish king, David I, following his mentor Henry I, who laid the foundations for the subsequent development of Carlisle.

Carlisle began life as *Luguvalium*, a name that commemorates a major Celtic deity and perhaps one that may imply an important pre-Roman interest in the area. It came to acquire the biggest concentration of people, when considered with Stanwix, in north-western Roman Britain. In Roman times it was not only a major military centre, but it was also the administrative and judicial focus for the area. Its heyday probably came in the second and third centuries AD, and it is likely that it was during this period that it became the *Civitas Carvetiorum*. There are indications that the settlement began to fragment in the late Roman period with roads and many properties becoming derelict, although there are hints in places that occupation continued into the fifth century.

Documentary sources, notably references to the bloody battle of Arthuret in 573, indicate the continuing importance of the area around the Solway Firth in the post-Roman period, but archaeological evidence from Carlisle is sparse. Anglian settlement, principally the nunnery founded by the Queen of Northumbria assisted by St Cuthbert, is, however, documented by Bede and in an Anonymous Life of St Cuthbert. Excavations have located some structural features, including dendrochronologically dated timber-lined pits, traces of buildings, and the use of some Roman roads, alongside which finds of the Anglian period are distributed. They include many Northumbrian coins (stycas) as well as cross fragments, glass, metalwork and other objects, the distribution of which attests settlement along the road to the south of the former Roman fort and towards The Lanes on the eastern side of Carlisle.

Archaeological evidence, obtained largely but not entirely from the Cathedral, demonstrates the occupation of Carlisle in the Anglo-Scandinavian period. There are indications that the settlement was relatively extensive and may have included as many as four churches, although the evidence is variable in quality and reliability. Nevertheless, the evidence is good enough to refute John of Worcester's claim that Carlisle lay deserted for 200 years before the arrival of the Normans in 1092. Indeed, a consideration of the documentary evidence (Gospatric's writ), in tandem with that of the archaeology, suggests that a relatively complex settlement with many of

the attributes of urban status may have been emerging in the 10th and 11th centuries. This is of considerable interest because for much of this period Carlisle was under Scottish rule, and further archaeological evidence from the Cathedral and Castle (the latter is assumed to have been Dolfin's place of residence) could shed interesting light on the nature and expectations of the Anglo-Scottish nobility at this time.

In many respects the displacement of Dolfin (son of Gospatric, Earl of Northumberland and Malcolm III's representative) and the arrival of the Normans marked a watershed in Carlisle's growth. Under David I it acquired a mint, a priory, a see, a stone castle and urban defences, as well as a social élite composed of (mostly French) foreigners, as well as others drawn from the Midlands. In an economic sense the development was gradual. During the 10th to the early 12th centuries it can be argued that Carlisle was, in most practical senses of the word, a town. The legal definition, accompanied by specific privileges, followed later, as a step in a long process.

From the mid-12th century onwards, however, the documentary sources seem to imply that, notwithstanding the importance of trade with the Scottish borders, Carlisle looked increasingly to England. In 1237 the Border was finally formalized at the Treaty of York.

Carlisle is an unusual town in that it has always looked in two directions. The documentary and archaeological sources available to us for the period between the 10th and 13th centuries show that it was neither truly Scottish, nor was it truly Anglo-Saxon. Rather it seems to combine elements and influences from several areas. This emphasizes the point that the region around the head of the Solway Firth, including Carlisle, is something of a cultural crossroads.

## Adomnán, Iona and the cult of the Saints

Thomas Owen Clancy

Lives of Irish saints, while they tell us much about the image of the holy man, reveal little about the development of the cult of saints, few choosing to recount tales of miracles worked by saints after their death. Patrick's hagiographers tell us a bit more, especially Tírechán, who shows Patrick distributing relics both of continental martyrs and of his own as marks of authority. Adomnán is exceptional among Irish hagiographers in focusing carefully on the posthumous efficacy of his patron. There are parallels in this with contemporary Northumbrian saints' cults.

Various documents from seventh-century Iona allow us into an evolving thought-world concerning the saints and their continuing patronage after death. Four poems from that period show a development of the idea of *snádud* ('protection'), granted to the poet in heaven, into a conviction of the saint's continuing protection on earth as well.

Adomnán's own works are particularly informative in this regard. In three texts, one can see his interest in the power and patronage of saints worked out. In *De Locis Sanctis*, especially in its account of Constantinople, he gives us glimpses of his interest in relics, rituals and holy places. His twin accounts of the power of St George, effected through an icon of the saint, to bless his benefactors and curse his detractors are particularly instructive.

In the *Vita Columbae* he separates from the main text two sets of posthumous miracles. Those in Book Two describe the practical methods by which the saint's power was invoked to end a drought and to change winds. These display Adomnán's application of foreign literature (Gregory the Great) and his knowledge of Columba's past miracles to his present-day situation. In addition he notes Columba's protection of Adomnán himself from the plague. Those miracles recounted in a separate preface deal with his power to protect both kings (Oswald) and criminals.

In all these he sets out a number of ways by which the saint may be invoked. His purpose in delineating these miracles may have been to convince an audience with such interests of Columba's sanctity, for instance a Northumbrian readership, to help focus the Columban *familia* on the personal patronage of their saint, and/or to help reinforce the authority of the Law of the Innocents, enacted by Adomnán in 697. The earlier strata of the text of that Law show Adomnán using saints as guarantors of the Law alongside earthly kings and churchmen. A slightly later stratum suggests, alongside sculptural and poetic evidence, that Iona had an interest in the patronage of the Virgin Mary as well.

These texts suggest that Adomnán had no small part to play in developing the thought-world of the succeeding century, which would see the introduction of relic-circuits and the greater use of saints as enforcers of law.

## The Lairg Project: the prehistory of a Highland landscape

Roderick McCullagh

In 1988, Historic Scotland (then Historic Buildings and Monuments: HBM) initiated a programme of survey and assessment of prehistoric settlements and field systems located immediately south of Lairg in Sutherland. The project was aimed to inform HBM on the line of least damage through the monuments for a road-improvement scheme on the narrow A836, the main road to the growing west coast fishing ports. The lecture concentrated on the science-based techniques employed and the results obtained by the project.

The advice document was based on the detailed topographical survey of a 3.5 km by 0.3 km corridor of land defined by the operational limits of the road engineers. The survey employed mapping techniques developed on various projects in the preceding decade that allow a highly detailed but relatively objective record of the land-forms to be assembled and the identified monuments to be graded in terms of their archaeological potential. In the report, this classification was expressed as a predictive map of archaeological significance with the recommendation that there was virtually nowhere in the corridor that could sustain the construction of the road without substantial loss of archaeological information.

In a follow-up operation in 1989, over 200 test pits were dug to establish two further criteria for site classification: the distribution of the monuments through time and the variation in soil conditions within the transect. With over 700 monuments mapped, including 54 possible round-houses, the final selection of the road line would require careful targeting of any mitigating response.

In 1990 and 1991, representative examples of most of the surveyed monument types were excavated. A total of 11 sites were fully excavated and a further nine were extensively sampled. At the same time two postgraduate studentships were established to research the palynological and pedological evidence for the human impact upon the landscape.

A detailed pollen record has complemented the archaeological record (both supplemented by 153 radiocarbon dates) and altogether a series of protracted phases of settlement, interspersed with phases of woodland recovery, has been identified. With evidence of tillage dated to the late third millennium, a discontinuous sequence of episodic land-use and settlement was established. Excavation of a cluster of well preserved second millennium BC round-houses revealed superimposed episodes of construction and tillage. Two sites represented substantial round-houses, which portray many of the characteristics hitherto associated with much later dwellings. The

chronological range of monuments exemplified by excavation includes a series of early second millennium BC cremation burials associated with Beaker and Food Vessel ceramics, two Bronze Age burnt mounds, an Iron Age defended site, a phase of abandonment which saw the overgrowth of narrow-rig by peat late in the first millennium AD and finally a turf long-house and out-buildings dating to the late 18th century.

Much of the investigation and analysis has focused on characterizing and measuring the extent of land-use through time. This has led to attempts to define the methods of soil management, crop husbandry, and the extent of the concomitant erosion through time. As the analysis progresses, it is clear that the practice of prehistoric agriculture was sophisticated and the causes of land abandonment were complex. The significance of such practices and processes, both in the formation of the landscape and in reconstructions of past societies, cannot be underestimated.

## Cannibals and Carnivores: Pontnewydd Cave and the earliest Palaeolithic of Wales

S H R Aldhouse-Green

The site of Pontnewydd Cave was occupied over 200,000 years ago by hominids who were almost certainly Early Neanderthals. The preservation of artefacts, fauna and the remains of the hominids themselves is due to their emplacement within the cave by debris flows and the consequential protection of the deposits from destruction by glaciation.

At least four, and perhaps as many as seven, hominids have been recognized so far. The remains themselves are very fragmentary, in the manner of the other faunal material from the site, but all come spread over a localized area, some 7 m in linear dimension, located at some depth in the Main Cave.

Hominid finds of this antiquity are so rare that it would strain credulity to regard them as being other than a penecontemporaneous assemblage. Indeed, it would seem likely that they represent an original deposit subsequently dispersed by debris flow. It is not now possible to determine whether that deposit may have represented a single act or was formed by successive deposition. The interstratified fauna largely represents a bear den assemblage (63% of all identifications being bear) which must be of intra-cave origin. Accordingly it would seem inescapable that the original deposit likewise derives from within the cave.

The finds are reminiscent of a yet older assemblage of no fewer than 24 fragmentary hominids from the cave of Atapuerca in Spain, interpreted by the excavators as being a deposit of anthropogenic or catastrophic origin. In the case of the Pontnewydd finds, the incompleteness and fragmentation of the fossils probably arise substantially from the debris flow action. The hominid finds themselves display no surviving evidence of carnivore damage or humanly made cut-marks. None the less the degree of natural fragmentation is such that neither carnivore predation, deliberate defleshing nor, even, cannibalism can be excluded as pre-depositional processes. If the latter, 'survival cannibalism' at a time of starvation would seem the most plausible explanation and would harmonize with potential, albeit contested, pathological evidence for periods of environmental stress affecting Neanderthals.

Deliberate burials are not certainly known older than about the last 50,000 years – and indeed doubt has recently been cast on the formal nature of many Neanderthal burials. Casual disposal of corpses in convenient caves seems an equally plausible interpretation both at Atapuerca and Pontnewydd. It is likely that future excavation, combined with taphonomic study of the fauna, may further enhance our understanding of this remarkable discovery.

## Tea and Taste: Glasgow tea rooms 1875–1975

### Perilla Kinchin

Glasgow invented tea rooms – the first was opened by the tea dealer Stuart Cranston in 1875. They were remarkable both for their distinctive part in city life, and for their connection with progressive design: Miss Cranston, doyenne of the tea rooms, was Charles Rennie Mackintosh's best patron.

The tea rooms appeared as a characteristically entrepreneurial response to the needs of a busy mercantile society under strong pressure from the Temperance movement. They catered in the first place for men's 'coffee habit' and lunch, offering fast service, good cheap food, and comfortable surroundings. Middle-class women out in town also found them invaluable. Safely segregated areas within the tea rooms meant that both sexes could use them without social discomfort.

Tea rooms increased in popularity with Glasgow's first International Exhibition of 1888. By the second in 1901 the city was 'a very Tokio for tea rooms', and the peculiarly 'artistic' character of their decor, derived from domestic taste of the period, was firmly established.

Miss Cranston was identified as the originator of the essential Glasgow tea room. She began her separate business in 1878, three years after her brother. A woman of strong will and eccentric dress, Kate Cranston was not afraid to flout convention. But respect for her business capacities was generally extended to her tastes, and this made her a powerful champion of Glasgow's avant-garde designers.

Her first commission to the young George Walton in 1888 launched his decorating company. When she built her prestigious Buchanan Street rooms in 1896, the new-art elegance of the interiors was enthusiastically received. Walton's innovative, sophisticated work was chiefly responsible, but Mackintosh contributed striking mural decorations. At Argyle Street in 1898-9 Walton's light touch confirmed the essentially feminine style of tea room decor. Here Mackintosh designed the furniture, including the first of his famous high-backed chairs – visually stunning, but ill constructed for heavy use.

The Willow tea rooms of 1903, which included the sumptuously elegant Room de Luxe, were all Mackintosh's work. In these and subsequent jobs Mackintosh served well Miss Cranston's instinct for staying ahead of the competition. People loved the chance to experience a complete Glasgow Style interior without having to live with it. There were numerous other 'artistic' tea rooms at this period, though none commissioned Mackintosh.

With increasing provision for shopping and leisure in the Edwardian years, tea rooms took a firm hold on daily life. After the First World War, Glasgow's industrial economy collapsed but the leisure industries flourished. The new dance halls and super cinemas of the 1920s all had tea rooms. Great family bakery and tea room businesses flourished during the Depression and built lavishly, applying the glamour of art deco. In the early 1930s new tea rooms in country-style like 'Wendy's' opened, offering comforting homeliness at a disturbing time.

Tea rooms were busy during the Second World War when Glasgow's heavy industries found new life, but succumbed after it to harsh economic realities and profound changes in social habits. With affluence in the 1950s came a desire to shake off the past. New restaurants offered 'international cuisine' and 'ultra-modern' ambience. From the 1960s, fast-food chains further undermined the tea rooms. 1975 marked the end of the traditional tea rooms but also the turning point of Glasgow's self-destruction. Mackintosh has become the city's 'house-style', and new design-conscious café-bars flourish.

## Seventy-five Years on: the Treasure of Traprain and its place in the study of late Roman silver

Catherine Johns

The Treasure of Traprain Law was found in 1919 and remains probably the single most important find of Roman material from Scotland and one of the most significant treasures of late Antique silverware from inside or outside the Roman Empire.

The catalogue of the Treasure by Alexander Curle in 1923 is an exemplary publication in which the whole inventory is described in detail, superbly illustrated, and discussed with reference to other silver hoards of the period, the late fourth and early fifth centuries AD. The great change which has taken place since 1919 is that there is now far more comparable material from within the Roman Empire, and Traprain, though still a very exceptional find, can be seen in a fuller context. In Britain, the hoards from Mildenhall, Canterbury, Water Newton, Thetford and Hoxne all include parallels for items in the Traprain Treasure, as do the Ténès, Desana, Kaiseraugst and Sevso treasures from elsewhere in the Empire. By comparison, Curle could refer only to the Esquiline and Carthage treasures, to the *Hacksilber* hoard from Coleraine, and to a handful of British finds such as the Corbridge silver found in the 18th century.

The many close parallels between the fragmentary silver table-vessels in the Traprain hoard and the complete ones from Mildenhall, Kaiseraugst and the Sevso treasure make the point that the objects in the Traprain assemblage belong to the standard class of high-quality silver tableware which was used throughout the Roman Empire. Curle was able to suggest very plausibly that the silver had been looted from continental Roman sources by Pictish raiders, but we now know that silver of this quality was in use in *Britannia* in the fourth century, and the neighbouring Roman province may well have been the source of the objects.

The Treasure remains the classic example of a *Hacksilber* hoard, one in which the individual silver vessels and utensils have deliberately been cut and broken to reduce them to scrap silver or bullion. It does not necessarily follow that the owners of the Traprain silver had acquired it as loot: it may have been legitimate payment for some service or commodity from within the Empire to persons or communities outside; all we can be certain of is that the owners of the Treasure had no use for silver vessels on the dining-table.

In the 75 years which have passed since the Traprain Treasure was excavated much has been learned about the late Antique silver plate, but there are still many unanswered questions: in particular, *Hacksilber* remains difficult to interpret. The important thing is that this major find was well recorded, studied and published, and continues to be available for research and comparison with new finds. It will thus continue to contribute towards our understanding of the world of late Antiquity within and beyond the frontiers of the Empire.

## A petrographic study of the Neolithic pottery from the site of Pool, Sanday, in the Orkney Islands

Ann MacSween

*Summary of a paper presented at The World Ceramics Congress, held in Florence in June 1994, for which the author received a Young Fellow's Bursary from the Society.*

The paper presented the results of the analysis of the assemblage of Neolithic Grooved Ware from the settlement site of Pool on Sanday in the Orkney Islands. The site, a settlement mound eroding into the sea, was partly excavated by Dr John Hunter of Bradford University between 1983 and 1988 on behalf of the Scottish Development Department. The mound is composed largely of tip-like deposits which constitute the outcast residues of hearths and contain pottery, stone artefacts and ecofactual material in a finely layered stratigraphy. Two main periods of occupation were identified, the earlier being Neolithic (4000–2000 BC) and the later being Iron Age (AD 400–800).

The Neolithic pottery assemblage from Pool comprises 10,000 sherds, representing a maximum of 1900 vessels. Three phases of Neolithic activity were identified. The earliest occupation horizons were uncovered only in a small area of the trench, and 275 sherds were recovered, including the only examples of round-based 'Unstan' bowls in the assemblage.

The second-phase deposits produced 61% of the total assemblage. There are no examples of round-based bowls from this phase. 'Baggy' vessels with angled sides narrowing to a tiny base are common, but the assemblage is dominated by vessels with flat bases and angled walls. Decoration, which was by incision into the vessel walls, includes dots, chevrons and wavy lines.

The 3500 sherds from Phase 3 are generally thinner-walled, the commonest vessel type being a bucket-shaped vessel with straight or slightly angled walls; the exterior surfaces are often slipped. The baggy vessels of Phase 2 are no longer evident. Although there is some incised decoration, more deeply cut than the incisions on the Phase 2 pottery, applied decoration including ladder, lattice, trellis and fish-scale motifs is dominant; scalloped and notched rims appear for the first time.

Certain differences in fabric were obvious from examination of the three groups of pottery. Most of the Phase 1 pottery is untempered, but some shell-tempering (evidenced by voids) and rock-tempering were noted. Nearly all the Phase 2 vessels were made from a fine clay and were shell-tempered. The shell would have acted as an inert filler, as all the pottery was low-fired. In Phase 3 there appears to have been a decrease in the use of finer clays, with a corresponding increase in the use of rougher clays and rock-tempering.

Even with this visual difference, elemental analysis, by X-ray Fluorescence analysis and Inductively Coupled Plasma Spectrometry, failed to distinguish the fabric groups. In some cases, even where there was visible rock temper, the elemental analysis for a tempered and an untempered sherd was similar. The hypothesis was that the rock-tempered pottery was tempered with siltstones and sandstones: in effect a 'solidified' form of the clay itself. It became apparent that the analytical techniques being used were too sensitive for the material being analysed. Analysis of a number of clay samples from the same location indicated considerable variation in the composition of the clay beds.

Thin-section analysis carried out on samples of pottery and a range of clays from the area proved more useful than elemental analysis in advancing our understanding of changes in the fabric sequence for the Neolithic occupation of the site. A clay survey was carried out in the

vicinity of the site and samples were taken for comparison with the pottery. These were fired on return to the laboratory and a range of clays suitable for the manufacture of pottery was identified. The clay survey was useful as it led to a better understanding of the range of clays which may have been available to the potters, and it also provided a 'standard' against which to match the sherds and thin sections in deciding which of them were tempered and which were made from untempered clay.

It was possible to determine, from the rock fragments present, that the pottery could have been produced on or near the site. The untempered sherds and clay samples were found to contain quartz (mainly monocrystalline), iron-rich 'opaques', feldspars (plagioclase, orthoclase and microcline) and, in most cases, mica. The main component was quartz, the majority of samples containing a mixture of rounded and angular grains. Where rock-tempering had been used, the thin-section analysis confirmed the identification of the temper as sedimentary rocks, either siltstone, sandstone or mudstone. In some cases the temper appeared to be in the form of mixed gravel, while in other cases it is more likely that one piece of rock was crushed and added. The use of shell or calcitic material was indicated by voids.

In addition to the identification of the minerals, point-counting and grain-size analyses were undertaken. Point-counting added little that could not be determined by eye, the cluster analysis producing a 'tempered' and an 'untempered' group. Twenty-five pottery samples (six from Phase 2 and 19 from Phase 3) and nine samples from the surrounding area were then chosen for grain-size analysis. Fifty grains were measured in each section and the frequency of each 'class' (increments of 0.023 mm) was recorded. For each sample of 50 quartz grains, a cumulative frequency graph was produced and the graphs were compared statistically using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test which tests dissimilarity at the point of maximum difference between the cumulative frequencies. The clays were found to divide into two groups corresponding to secondary or boulder clays, and primary clays from the cliff section. Primary clays were used in both Phases 2 and 3, but the use of the boulder clay was only evident in the samples from Phase 3.

Prior to detailed analysis of the stratigraphy of the pottery from Pool, the hypothesis was that the two types of pottery (incised and applied-decorated) were functional aspects of one assemblage, but the clear chronological difference, coupled with the striking difference in pottery technology between Phases 2 and 3, indicated that they are distinct assemblages. As well as a shift from shell tempering to rock tempering in Phase 3, a preference for boulder clays rather than primary clays was also noted. The ceramic changes from Phase 2 to Phase 3 are matched by a change in the nature of the tips identified in the mound, indicating a hiatus in settlement, although the site's dating is not precise enough to indicate its length. A period of several decades, which would be long enough for the adoption of new potting techniques, would not be detected by radiocarbon dating.

Although Grooved Ware assemblages with incised and applied decoration have been identified on other sites in the Orkney Islands, Pool is the only site at which the two are clearly distinct assemblages, rather than *different elements of one assemblage*. At Pool, the incised-decorated pottery of Phase 2 is closer to the round-based, Unstan bowl assemblage of Phase 1 (in terms of fabric and method of decoration) than to the applied-decorated Grooved Ware of Phase 3; this may represent a development of pottery manufacture on the site, whereas the combination of changes in the fabric, method of decoration and morphology of the Phase 3 assemblage suggests radical change, perhaps a temporal break followed by the resettlement of the site by a different community.