

Lecture Summaries 2001–2002

The evidence of finds for the circulation and use of coins in medieval Scotland

N M McQ Holmes

Edinburgh, 10 December 2001

The recording of finds of medieval coins from Scotland over the period 1978–2000 has enabled a number of tentative conclusions to be drawn about the geographical spread and use of coins across the country. The present study covers the period up to 1406, and is part of a continuing project covering coinage from the 1130s to 1603.

Very few coins pre-dating the introduction of the short cross series in England (1180) and Scotland (1195) have so far been found, and it may be inferred that coin use at most levels of society was not common, although the few finds are spread widely in geographical terms and there are many documentary references to the use of coinage for grants and rents. Between 1180/1195 and 1278/1280 – the period of issue of the so-called short cross and long cross issues in England and Scotland – the money supply grew substantially in both countries, and the frequency of finds confirms this and suggests that money was being used more widely and more frequently than previously supposed. In particular, the prevalence of cut halfpennies and farthings as stray finds indicates the use of coins for financial transactions as well as for accumulating wealth. English coins are found much more frequently than equivalent issues of Scottish kings, as a result

of the much greater volume of the English coinage and of continuous trade across the border.

By far the greatest number of medieval silver coin finds from Scotland comprise English pennies of the Edwardian era (1279/80–c 1322). They outnumber contemporary Scottish issues by a ratio of between 10:1 and 20:1 among hoards and individual finds. The Wars of Independence had little or no visible effect on the cross-border flow of coinage. The 1330s and 1340s saw few new coins minted, and some of the apparently Edwardian hoards and stray finds must date from this period.

In the second half of the 14th century English and Scottish groats and half-groats were minted, and those of Edward III and David II seem to have circulated together in Scotland in the late 1350s and 1360s, along with a great many of the old Edwardian pennies and some more recent ones. Successive weight reductions in the Scottish coinage from 1367 onwards were probably the cause of the apparent disappearance of many of the earlier and heavier coins from circulation. Hoards from the reigns of Robert II and Robert III contain mostly coins of the current king. An Act of Parliament from as late as 1467, specifying new values for groats of various earlier issues, does, however, appear to indicate that some coins minted before 1390 were still in circulation at that time.

It is clear that individual coin finds, and even individual hoards, cannot on their own be regarded as reliable evidence either for dating (beyond the provision of a simple terminus post quem for an archaeological context) or for the nature of the coinage in

circulation at the time of deposition. It is only by continuing to accumulate evidence and by re-analysing it that we may come to discern patterns of coin use.

Architecture, Nature and Magic: some house restoration projects in Scotland by Arts and Crafts designers

Annette Carruthers

Edinburgh, 11 February 2002

Focusing on the work of two important Arts and Crafts architects, W R Lethaby (1857–1931) and R W Schultz (1860–1951), this lecture covered in particular the alterations they carried out at Melsetter House on Hoy, Orkney, and at the Old Place of Mochrum in Wigtownshire. Their interventions not only transformed these neglected houses into comfortable and practical homes for lavish Edwardian country-house entertaining, but also incorporated into the fabric many elements inspired by their natural surroundings and the history of each place, along with universal ‘magic’ symbolism as described by Lethaby in his 1891 book, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* (later reissued as *Architecture, Nature and Magic*).

Lethaby was an English architect who built only six major works, including Melsetter House which was designed for Thomas and Theodosia Middlemore in 1898–9. His introduction to Orcadian building began with the consolidation of a small chapel on Eynhallow Island, and the architecture of Melsetter displays his interest in and understanding of historic forms and the traditional use of materials. Some features of the building can be related to work recorded by McGibbon and

Ross in their *Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland* (1887–92) and the Melsetter chapel wall incorporates a copy of an early cross slab found at Kirkhope, South Walls, in about 1887 and now in the National Museums of Scotland. Other parts of the house and its decoration reflect the surroundings of wind-swept islands and the sea, especially in the repeated wave patterns and the forms of upturned boats and symbolic anchors. Elemental symbols of earth and moon and stars reflect the idea, explored in Lethaby’s book, that ancient architecture expressed the concepts that its builders held about the world around them. In designing Melsetter, Lethaby invested it with his own convictions about building and embodied the religious, personal, and political beliefs of his clients into forms which were eminently suited to their location. While constructing anew for a modern way of life, he also enhanced the feeling of antiquity of the site as a place of habitation over many centuries.

As a friend and admirer of Lethaby’s, Robert Weir Schultz had many similar interests, although he was a Scottish architect trained in Edinburgh by Rowand Anderson, and his major clients were the third and fourth Marquesses of Bute. Schultz had also consolidated an early Christian chapel, St Blane’s on Bute, and he rebuilt a ruined tower house of about 1700 at Wester Kaimes, Bute, in the 1890s. His work at Mochrum was less extensive than this because the ancient towers had been renovated by the Newton Stewart architect, Richard Park, in the 1870s, but much of the interior was refurbished and the gardens were completely redesigned between 1903 and 1912. Designs for panelling and decoration show an understanding of Scottish traditions and incorporate motifs specific to the Butes and to the Fourth Marquess who married in 1905. In the cobbled courtyard and the walled gardens Schultz also brought in ideas from *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, which he had read with excitement when it was first published. Both courtyard and gardens are

criss-crossed with paths, playing with Lethaby's notion of the 'delight and mystery inherent to the idea of a boundary or centre', while the walls are capped by large ovoid stones like eggs, 'the natural symbol of creation' and of 'resurrection and new life', an appropriate idea for a garden and for a house recreated from old foundations. In bringing such symbolism to bear on the adornment of a house hidden away in an inaccessible part of the country, Schultz, like Lethaby, demonstrates the importance given by Arts and Crafts architects to domestic architecture and illustrates Lethaby's view that 'Architecture is building touched with emotion'.

The archaeology of gardens and designed landscapes in the National Trust for Scotland

Robin Turner

Edinburgh, 8 April 2002

'Gardens archaeology' is still a relatively uncommon area of study in Scotland, yet the work of the National Trust for Scotland over recent years has shown how effective the use of archaeological techniques can be in conjunction with those of other disciplines.

Gardens archaeology covers the study of designed landscapes as well as formal gardens. Like so-called 'buildings archaeology', it is about much more than just archaeology. Gardens archaeology is the application of archaeological techniques in combination with those of several other disciplines, to help provide an understanding of the history of gardens and designed landscapes: their chronology, form, artistic development, and an insight into the lives of the people who once populated them – below as well as above stairs.

That gardens archaeology has not really taken off in Scotland to anything like the extent it has south of the border is partly to do with resources, but also because the benefits have not often been demonstrated. The NTS can offer many examples which show the value of this often highly rewarding area of study. Many of these examples arose from work related to developments, but the Trust has for the past 10 years also been commissioning what we term Historic Landscape Surveys. These surveys provide key baseline information about our gardens and designed landscapes, and involve a variety of information-gathering techniques, including: prospection for physical features or their traces; topographic survey; written descriptions of features; dendrological and botanical studies; extensive documentary and cartographic research; and, critically, the *analysis* of all this information to provide an understanding of the place and of how it worked and changed in the past. In a Historic Landscape Survey we also look for an evaluation of significance, which will help inform future management priorities and developments. Carrying out such surveys is particularly important for gardens and designed landscapes, because these are living, ever-changing places which can seldom be fossilized in the way that some other cultural heritage features can.

Archaeological techniques applied to gardens have the potential to reveal information that can transform our understanding of the significance of single features, groups of features and even landscapes. Gardens archaeology can reveal well-hidden features, but it can tell us much more:

- about earlier archaeology protected by or even used within landscapes – from the Neolithic tomb at Crarae to the relict rig and furrow at Drum;

- about gardens great and small – from the tiny planticrues on St Kilda and Fair Isle, to the grand parterres at Pitmedden;

- about gardens of different periods – through the geophysical traces of 17th-century

Drum, to the 20th-century water garden at Hill of Tarvit;
 it can give us clues about the artistic philosophy of these places, often designed for spiritual refreshment – as at Hornel’s Japanese garden at Broughton House;
 details of horticultural technology — in the amazingly complex vinery at Culzean;
 evidence of the people who once populated the landscape – through artefacts, accounts, paintings and photographs;
 and information about how these places worked – from the ice pond at Crathes, to the school playgrounds behind 27–29 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh.

Three case studies – from Culzean, Holmwood House, and Newhailes – were used to demonstrate contrasting approaches to conservation. All have produced invaluable information through archaeological study; this new knowledge has been instrumental in deciding how to manage these historic places.

Our historic gardens and landscapes are precious assets but they are very exposed to change and degradation. The fruitful gardens archaeology work of the National Trust for Scotland will continue to be an important area of activity. By example and advocacy, we hope to demonstrate to others that this is a proper and worthwhile thing for everyone with similar responsibilities to do.

Hardinxveld, 5500–4450 cal BC. Recent excavation of two hunting-fishing sites in the wetlands of the Rhine Delta, The Netherlands

Professor Leendert P Louwe
 Kooijmans, Hon FSA Scot

Edinburgh, 10 June 2002

Late Glacial river dunes, locally known as *donken*, in the Dutch Rhine delta, now for the

greater part covered by Holocene river sediments and peat, have attracted prehistoric people as settlement locations to exploit the rich wetland surroundings. Since the 1960s quite a number of Neolithic sites, like the Hazendonk, have been discovered and more recently, in 1994, two Late Mesolithic sites were found near Hardinxveld during the systematic hand coring prospection of a new railway line. The dunes have their tops at 5 and 4m below present day Mean Sea Level and the archaeological refuse deposits on their slopes reach down to 10m below MSL. For the proper excavation of the sites special techniques were required like the injection of an impermeable layer at -20m, iron sheet-piling down to this level, a pumping system and specially developed equipment for large scale wet sieving. Two trenches were made, 16x24m and 16x28m, covering a representative section of dune top, slope and of the adjacent former marsh zone.

The importance of the sites lies in the wet preservation of organic remains from a period for which this material is lacking all over Europe outside Southern Scandinavia and the Baltic. The sites, moreover, are well-stratified, covering the period 5500–4550 cal BC, a trajectory starting in a pure Mesolithic and ending in an evolved stage of Neolithization, parallel to the Bandkeramik-Rössen sequence of the loess zone, 150km to the south. Three main phases could be separated off (5500–5100–48/4700–4450 cal BC).

The dimensions of the sites (between 1600 and 400m² in the various phases), large pits, some interpreted as the remains of dwellings with sunken floors, the quantity and diversity of flint, antler and bone artefacts and the presence of female and juvenile human remains amongst the discard, and some formal burials of humans and dogs are considered sufficient evidence to view the sites as base camp residences for several complete households. The zoological spectrum shows a rather specialized subsistence, with a central role for wild boar hunting, beaver and otter trapping,

and pike fishing. Many arguments place the use of the sites in the winter season: the ratio of grown and shed antler of 1:5; the absence of juvenile mammals (especially red deer); the presence of hibernating winter fowl; the absolute dominance of pike, to be correlated with fishing in the spawning season and the quasi absence of 'summer fish' like Sturgeon, Salmon and Grey Mullet. The mere presence of this pattern, on sites covering many centuries, points to a very systematic seasonal cycle of the communities involved. In this aspect societies were very similar to those of the contemporaneous Ertebølle Culture.

The artefacts have, in contrast, a distinct and original mark, which is especially obvious in the rich antler industry. Unperforated T-axes dominate, together with short unperforated sleeves and a diversity of implements on tines. Scarce decoration include the *pointillé* motif, known from French dredged finds. Wooden implements from the earliest levels include a dug canoe (lime, 5.50m), long and slender paddle blades (ash), fragments of bows (elm), an axe shaft (ash) and a fish trap fragment.

In the course of time some shifts in site function and material culture can be observed. In (the end of) phase 2 (5000 cal BC) point-based pottery document the very start of the Swifterbant Culture, a modest number of bones of domestic animals (cattle, pig, sheep and goat) reflect connections with agrarian communities, presumably on the upland, there are clear indications of cultic deposition in which *inter alia* these bones played a part, and there are scarce summer indicators (Sturgeon, Purple Heron, a few juvenile red deer bones). In spite of an intensive search no cereals were attested. So the idea of a very gradual process of Neolithization has been confirmed and documented. It seems that the function of the site shifted in the course of time from a winter base camp to a more subordinate facility for settled agrarian communities, which is in line with the interpretation of later Neolithic sites in the delta, like the Hazendonk.

Connections with the upland hinterland of the sites are documented in the sources of flint and rock, which predominantly lie to the south, as far as Belgian Limburg (Wommersom quartzite), South Limburg (Rijckholt flint) and the Ardennes (rock), but by Blicquy type of pottery in phase 2 as well. We can conclude that the Hardinxveld sites, and their artefact assemblages, represent southern communities, as reflected in the Later Mesolithic by the distribution of Wommersom quartzite.

Louwe Kooijmans, L P in press 'The Hardinxveld sites in the Rhine/Meuse delta', in Larsson, L et al (eds) *Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on the Mesolithic in Europe, Nynashamn September 4–8 2000*. Oxford.

Scottish instrumental music 1603–1707

Evelyn Stell

Edinburgh, 11 November 2002

This general survey of the wealth of material contained in Scottish instrumental music manuscripts of the 17th century began by drawing attention to the close connection with Scottish music which was manifest in the early days of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. Articles on music by William Tytler of Woodhouselee, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Society, appeared in early issues of *Archaeologia Scotica*, and the 1803 and later editions of *The Scots Musical Museum* by James Johnson and Robert Burns were dedicated to the Society by Johnson.

The nature and identities of the collectors and owners of the manuscripts were reviewed. The contribution of the Scottish nobility was especially important. Their manuscripts included the collections of *aficionados* such as Sir Robert Gordon of Straloch, Sir John Skene of Hallyards, Sir William Mure of Rowallan

and the Maule family of Panmure. In addition, several music-books have survived which belonged to various young ladies of the nobility who were struggling unwillingly to acquire the veneer of accomplishments necessary for their main purpose in life, which was to make an advantageous marriage.

Manuscripts belonging to professional musicians include the music of two of Scotland's most important composers, Duncan Burnett, the Glasgow music-master, and John McLachlan, the Edinburgh virtuoso violinist, who was also a paid performer at civic occasions. A few books belonging to dance fiddlers have also, quite amazingly, survived, their tattered and stained condition giving an indication of the fast and furious pace of these occasions where the wine flowed free.

The instruments for which the music was set showed that among the nobility at any rate, lute, cittern, mandore and viol were fashionable, while the conspicuous lack of any written music for harp or bagpipe confirms that the aural tradition still prevailed with these most Scottish of instruments. The violin was unique in its use by all classes and its enormous repertoire, which ranged from the elegant compositions of the French and English courts to the lively and often bawdy dance-tunes played by tavern fiddlers.

The manuscripts themselves reveal much about musical literacy and education. Generally speaking, the script of young ladies is

definitely inferior to that of their male counterparts, showing where educational priorities lay, even in the upper classes. One notable exception, however, is Lady Jean Campbell of Loudoun, later Countess of Panmure, whose musical talents were brought out by the best masters. Good teachers were in demand, and their own music script often appears in books belonging to different families, showing how widely patronized they were. One script in particular, that of the unknown 'Panmure scribe', appears in manuscripts belonging to the Kers of Newbattle and of Cavers Carre, as well as several of the Panmure books. Its owner, from his acquaintance with the music of the court of Charles II, is presumed to be an Englishman and possibly one of the court players. He was apparently suffering from a progressive illness, as his writing shows an ever-increasing tremor, which actually helps to date the manuscripts!

The review concluded with an examination of the distinctive and attractive tonality which gave Scottish traditional music its 'Scottishness', and which took 17th-century London by storm. Modality and 'gapped scales' were considered, together with the possibility that the formation of this style of music was largely due to features of the traditional instruments used. Music illustrations were played on tape and keyboard.