



# Royal Archaeological Institute Newsletter

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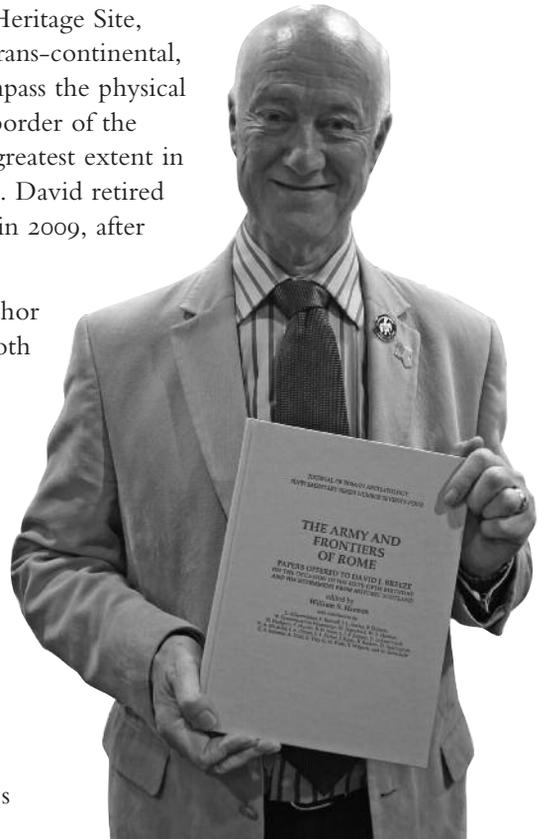
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## OUR NEW PRESIDENT • Frances Healey

David Breeze, who was elected President of the Institute at the 2009 AGM, was formerly Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Scotland. He is an Honorary Professor at the universities of Durham, Edinburgh and Newcastle and chair of the International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies. David prepared the successful bid for World Heritage Site status for the Antonine Wall and led the team which created the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site, of which the Antonine Wall forms a part, together with Hadrian's Wall and the *limes* in Germany. It is thus the first trans-national World Heritage Site, capable of becoming trans-continental, as it expands to encompass the physical remains of the entire border of the Roman Empire at its greatest extent in the second century AD. David retired from the Inspectorate in 2009, after forty years' service.

He is author or co-author of numerous books, both popular and academic, and even more numerous papers. His books include *Hadrian's Wall; The Northern Frontiers of Roman Britain; Edge of Empire, Rome's Scottish Frontier: The Antonine Wall; Roman Officers and Frontiers*; the fourteenth edition of J. Collingwood Bruce's



*Handbook to the Roman Wall; Historic Scotland: People and Places; Roman Scotland: a Guide to the Visible Remains; A Queen's Progress* (on the surviving buildings associated with Mary Queen of Scots); and *The Stone of Destiny: Artefact and Icon*. He has, in other words, always enjoyed and made time for research and, indeed, is still engaged in tracing his family tree, a project on which he embarked fifty-five years ago.

David was happy to be interviewed for the *Newsletter*.

*What drew you to Archaeology and, in particular, to the Roman military and frontiers?*

I knew from the age of 10 that I wanted to study history. I went up to Durham in 1962 to read modern history and was given Eric Birley, Professor of Archaeology, as my first tutor. He introduced me to archaeology and the rest, as they say, is history.

*How different was the Historic Scotland from which you retired in 2009 from the predecessor body which you joined in 1969, and were you responsible for any of those changes?*

In 1969 I joined a UK department. This was broken up in 1978 and since then I have worked for the Scottish Office, later the Scottish Executive. Within that framework, there have been several distinctive changes over the last forty years. When I joined there was just one piece of legislation that we had to acknowledge, the 1931 Ancient Monuments Act. When I retired there were balancing clauses in a whole range of statutes which resulted in considerable discussions between a wide range of state and quasi-state bodies. One signal advantage has been a move to a more integrated approach to the management of the countryside and a wider acknowledgement of the role of the historic environment within it. At the same time, spending on archaeology in Scotland increased enormously through the 1970s,

moving from about £1,000 a year to £600,000, starting the revolution which has continued through the creation of commercial archaeology in the 1990s. The other main change has been in relation to state-managed properties. The entry charge was minimal in 1969. This all changed following the Conservative victory in 1979. Pressure started and has increased to raise the revenue which might be made from encouraging more visitors to these properties. Interpretation has improved and guide books changed out of all recognition. At the same time, it would appear that the amount of conservation carried out to these properties has decreased, which may create problems in the future. In many ways, my task was to steer the Scottish Inspectorate through these waters, seeking more money, more staff, better ways of doing our work.

*As one who is an Honorary Professor at more than one university, how do you think the divides between the state, university, commercial and voluntary sectors in archaeology can be better bridged?*

There have been several attempts by universities to bring in outsiders as occasional lecturers, even to teach on some higher degree courses, but, at least in Scotland, these have not survived. At the same time, now that Inspectors no longer undertake excavations or similar work at their own hands, there is a necessity for them to keep their knowledge, experience and skills up-to-date. I suspect that the commercial sector can get too narrowly focused on each job and lose sight of the wider picture, while the voluntary sector tends to get left out in the cold. So one way forward might be to improve the communications between the different parts of the discipline – perhaps through focused seminars and discussions – and arrange more secondments between the members of the different sectors.

*What developments do you hope to see in the RAI over the course of your Presidency?*

The main task over the next year is to review life in the electronic age. The twin foci of this are to see how we can improve the flow of information to our members, bearing in mind that not all have internet access and that we have a successful newsletter and journal, and to present the

best possible face to the outside world so that we can gain new members. There is a feeling that the age span of the membership is getting increasingly weighted one way and we need to find ways of bringing younger members into the Institute. This is not impossible. If we all sought to recruit one new member we would be able to achieve more for all of our members.

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## GRANTS AND AWARDS

### AWARDS FOR THE PRESENTATION OF HERITAGE RESEARCH • Gill Hey

The RAI is one of the co-sponsors (and co-founders) of the Awards for the Presentation of Heritage Research, along with English Heritage, Historic Scotland, Cadw, the Northern Ireland Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Irish Environment and Heritage Service. We contribute £750 towards the prizes, and specifically that of the *£500 Under-30 Prize*; the main award is worth £1,500 and there is a runner's-up award of £500. These go to the speakers who demonstrate the most interesting and high-quality research, and also give the most lively and entertaining presentation. The finalists for the day are whittled down (by a judge from each of the sponsoring organisations) from a much longer list of applicants who provide a summary of their project.

Until recently, the awards have been held as part of the British Association's *Festival of Science*, but audiences have tended to be small and the event did not receive the publicity it merited. This year, for the first time, we held the awards at Current Archaeology's *Archaeology 2010* conference which was at the British Museum from 26 to

28 February. Your doughty Secretary was pleased to represent you again and is delighted to report that the new venue was a great success, with a larger and better-informed audience provoking interesting discussions during question times. The audience is also invited to score the presentations and their combined decision is given equal weight to that of the judges.

This year it was extremely difficult to choose a winner because the presentations were extremely varied but all good – and this led to a lively debate amongst the judges. As it happened, the view of the audience matched the majority view of the judges and helped us to come to a decision – just in time for the awards ceremony which was held in the function room of the Plough in Museum Street (excellent refreshments being provided by English Heritage).

The winning presentation was from a non-professional, Chris Yates, representing the South West Maritime Archaeological Group, who talked about *Bronze Age copper trade: evidence from a maritime environment*. The runner up was Brendon Wilkins talking about *Recently reported road deaths on the N6: 3500 BC to AD 1500* and the under-30 award went to Chantel Summerfield presenting *The archaeology of a soldier's identity in the twentieth century, uncovered through a comparison of*

*arborglyphs* (that's tree carvings!). But there were other excellent presentations, and expect to hear some of them in a forthcoming RAI lecture programme.

## BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGICAL AWARDS

Aimed at identifying the most impressive, innovative and imaginative archaeological endeavours of the past two years, the British Archaeological Awards are a showcase for

the best in British archaeology. The awards ceremony will form the opening event of the twentieth Festival of British Archaeology, and will be held on 19 July 2010 at the British Museum. Entries will be judged in the following six categories: Best Project, Best Community Project, Best Book, Best Representation of Archaeology in the Media, Best Discovery and Best Innovation. For further information see their website <http://www.britarch.ac.uk/awards>

## ROYAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE RESEARCH GRANTS

The Institute awards the following grants annually:

Tony Clark Fund Up to £500 for archaeological work and dating

Bunnell Lewis Fund Up to £750 towards archaeology of the Roman period in the UK

RAI Award Up to £5000 towards archaeological work in the UK

Please write to the Administrator @ RAI c/o Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, London, W1J 0BE for an application form.

Closing date for applications: 8 January 2011. Awards announced in April 2011.

## MASTER'S DISSERTATION PRIZE

The RAI Master's Dissertation Prize is a biennial prize of £500 awarded for the best dissertation by a graduate student at a British university. The winner for the years 2008 and 2009 is Elena Martelli of University of Reading for her dissertation 'Clay Saccarii (porters) from Roman Ostia: a study on commerce, social identity and cult'.

## GRANTS AWARDED FOR RESEARCH, 2010

Research grants for 2010 have been awarded to the following projects

Dr Dawn Hadley: West Halton post-excavation project

Dr Rachel Pope: Kidlandee Dean Landcape project

Dr Andy Jones: Bronze Age Settlements Bosiliack, Cornwall

Dr Tom Moore: Late Iron Age and Early Roman Bagendon, geophysical survey (Bunnell Lewis fund)

Dr Eileen Wilkes: Mount Folly Enclosure project (Tony Clark fund)

## RAI RESEARCH GRANT REPORTS

### BLASTHILL CHAMBERED CAIRN, KINTYRE

• *Vicki Cummings and Gary Robinson*

In June and July 2009 two trenches were excavated under the direction of staff of the Universities of Bangor and Central



*Excavation of the forecourt at Blasthill*

Lancashire, at Blasthill, a Clyde-style chambered tomb in southern Kintyre. One trench over the northern part of the forecourt revealed a well-preserved facade with in situ drystone walling in between the facade uprights. The forecourt had originally been paved, and a series of burnt deposits was found underneath the paving which may represent the clearance of the land surface for cairn construction. A Bronze Age bead was found on top of the paving, and the entire forecourt had been infilled with cairn material, effectively blocking access into the monument.

A second trench was opened across the body of the cairn incorporating the lateral chamber. This revealed a complex construction sequence, whereby the chamber was originally surrounded by a small circular cairn. This was later incorporated into a long cairn. The cairn itself seems to have been made of large 'core cairn' stones topped with turf and with smashed quartz scattered on the top. Roughly half of the chamber deposits were excavated and a quantity of early Neolithic pottery was found in situ, including a whole pot. Tooth enamel fragments were subsequently found in wet

sieving. Outside the chamber more pot sherds and a flint knife were found.

LATE IRON AGE AND EARLY ROMAN  
BAGENDON – GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY •  
*Dr Tom Moore*

The Late Iron Age complex at Bagendon, Gloucestershire is one of the most under investigated 'oppida' in Britain. Geophysical survey of the complex was aimed at contextualising previous small-scale excavations which have taken place within the complex and revealed a first-century AD 'industrial' area. These excavations are currently the focus of a post-excavation project.

This season, around 30 ha of the Bagendon oppidum complex was surveyed using high-resolution geophysics. This survey revealed that a banjo enclosure in the centre of the dyke system was associated with a large ditched 'avenue' which may predate the earthwork works and suggests the possibility of an earlier phase to the complex. In addition, occupation areas were identified in the valley including possible roundhouses, pits and enclosures which most likely

represent continuity of occupation from the areas excavated in the 1950s and 1980s. Together, the surveys illustrate the variation in activities which existed within the Bagendon complex. In addition, there appears to be a distinction between areas of occupation (along the valley) and areas reserved for other purposes, presumably stock keeping or arable farming, on the limestone plateau. The relationship between the enclosures, revealed in these surveys, and other linear features suggests, in particular, a possible emphasis on moving and corralling animals at the site. The elements revealed are providing clearer appreciation of the development of the Bagendon complex and its possible role in Late Iron Age society. Combined with examination of the earlier excavations this will provide a better appreciation of the site's place in Iron Age society and in the changes which took place immediately before and after the Roman conquest.

#### ECAVATIONS AT WEST HALTON (LINCOLNSHIRE) • Dawn Hadley

Excavations directed by Dr Hadley and Dr Hugh Willmott (University of Sheffield) at West Halton have sought to elucidate the nature of Anglo-Saxon and medieval occupation on what is now the village green. This occupation was focused on two Bronze-Age barrows; one survives while the other was flattened in the fourteenth century to make way for a building. Earlier resistivity survey had identified a square-ditched enclosure north of the barrow complex, and limited excavation indicated that the ditch was steep-sided and c.1 m in depth. In 2009 in the south-east quadrant of this enclosure, a number of early Anglo-Saxon buildings were excavated, including three post-built structures and a sunken-featured building. The base of the latter contained many animal bones, including a whole dog. The inside of

the enclosure was also peppered with hundreds of very small post-holes (c.10 cm in diameter and typically 23–30 cm deep) whose function was not immediately apparent, although they respected the locations of the buildings and, thus, appear to be contemporary. Very few finds were retrieved from the enclosure ditch, suggesting that it was backfilled quickly and was perhaps used to hold upright posts. This square-ditched enclosure is of a type that John Blair has associated with early Anglo-Saxon pagan shrines referred to infrequently in written sources of the seventh and eighth centuries, although many of the examples known from elsewhere were either identified only through survey or were excavated long ago. Dating of the enclosure will depend on detailed analysis of the little pottery recovered from the ditch, but it offers an important possibility of verifying John Blair's argument.

#### KIDLANDLEE DEAN LANDSCAPE PROJECT • Rachel Pope

The KDL Project examines the nature and chronology of Bronze Age settlement and land use in the Cheviot uplands, as a training excavation for the Universities of Durham and Liverpool, with local volunteers from the Northumberland and Coquetdale Archaeology Groups. The landscape consists of cairns, house platforms, and field systems, with later palisaded enclosures, cord rig, and cross-ridge dykes. 30,000sqm has been surveyed using EDM and GPS.

Excavation began on a decayed turf-walled roundhouse, preliminarily dated to the Early to Middle Bronze Age by a 'napkin ring' (cloak fastener) in the house wall. In 2007, attention turned to the associated field system, trenches across field boundaries revealing five separate episodes of construction, with test-pitting across the field plots to assess soil formation, and



*Excavations at Kidlandlee Dean*

geochemical and micromorphological sampling to gain an idea of how the plots were used.

In 2008, excavation of the house platform was completed. Archaeomagnetic dating samples were taken from the Phase 2 clay-lined hearth-pit and removal of the Phase 2 floor saw the ground plan of a primary stake-walled roundhouse revealed, following painstaking excavation with teaspoons. Despite torrential rains – with the team trapped in Kidland Forest for three days, after flooding and landslides prevented road access – work continued, with students hiking to site tools in hand.

Through the KDL Project we are gaining an understanding of later prehistoric use of upland landscapes: why and how they were settled, whether occupation was permanent or seasonal, and how this land use changed at the end of the Bronze Age.

MOUNT FOLLY ENCLOSURES • *Dr Eileen Wilkes*

Mount Folly, on the west coast of the South Hams, consists of three articulated enclosures within an extensive field system, identified through aerial reconnaissance and geophysical survey. In 2009, six weeks of fieldwork were followed by ongoing post-excavation analysis. All elements of the project are undertaken by volunteers directed by Dr Wilkes of Bournemouth

University. It is one of the largest community archaeology projects in the region.

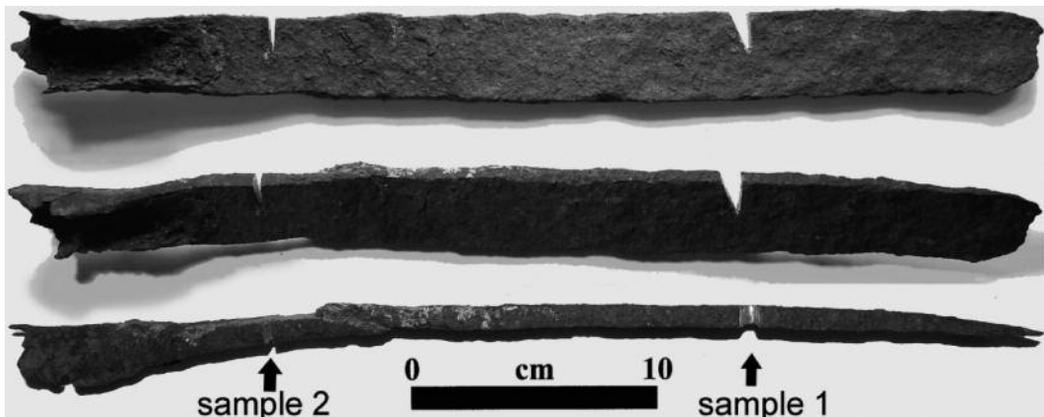
On site, work focused on further excavation of a terraced occupation area within one of the enclosures and the extension of the geophysical survey (magnetic gradiometry) that was very successful. The extent of the known field system around the enclosures was expanded into neighbouring fields – the edges have yet to be reached.

Post-excavation work commenced in the autumn. The volunteers produced copies of all site drawings and work started on the ceramic assessment. The group is greatly helped by Henrietta Quinnell, a renowned specialist in prehistoric ceramics, and Roger Taylor who provides petrological advice. Many of the sherds have carbonised residue adhering to their inner surfaces and we plan to send eight sherds for AMS dating this winter. The results of the ceramic assessment to date suggest the material at Mount Folly originated in southern Britain, France, Germany and Italy during the late Iron Age and Romano-British periods.

Post-excavation work is continuing and will proceed through the spring prior to further fieldwork and survey in 2010. The project participants acknowledge with gratitude the help and support of the landowner, Mr J. Tucker, the County Archaeologist and her team, and the Devon Archaeological Society.

AN IRON CURRENCY BAR FROM GRANSMOOR, EAST YORKSHIRE • *Peter Halkon, David Starley and Peter Crew*

In the early 1960s, the Granthams of Driffield discovered a 'currency bar' at Hill Farm, Gransmoor, during excavation of an embankment cross. Although the late Tony Brewster attempted to publish it along with associated Iron Age finds, it remained with



*The Gransmoor currency bar sampled (Photo: D. Starley)*

the Grantham's heir Peter Makey until its true significance was recognised in 2007. Although there is now evidence for a flourishing Iron Age iron industry in the Foulness Valley, this bar remains the only example in the region and one of the few from northern England. Currency bars, generally held to be forms of trade iron, have distinctly regional distributions, with about 1500 examples from Britain alone.

The bar's find spot bar, east of the valley of the River Hull opposite Wetwang Slack with its iron-rich cart burials, is significant, and a furnace, possibly of Iron Age date, was discovered further downstream at Thearne near Beverley in 2009.

After examination, the bar was analysed. X-ray fluorescence showed small peaks of arsenic and phosphorus but not manganese. Metallography showed that the bar had been crudely welded together and both pieces may have come from the same heterogeneous bloom. Overall the alloy used was phosphoric iron although the core of Sample 1 contained about 0.25% carbon, just enough to be classified as a steel. Sample 2 contained only about 0.1% carbon, insufficient to allow hardening by quenching. The Gransmoor currency bar was therefore typical; relatively little worked, high in phosphorus, low in carbon iron

alloy, suitable for a range of purposes. This may leave open the possibility of local production, but by no means confirms it.

Many thanks to Peter Makey for the loan of the bar and the interest he has shown.

LANDSCAPES OF THE ANGLO-SAXON CONVERSION: EXCAVATIONS AT LYMINGE, KENT, 2009 • *Gabor Thomas*

The report summarises the second year of open-area excavation within the precincts of the Anglo-Saxon monastery of Lyminge, reputedly founded (AD 633) by Æthelburga, daughter of King Æthelberht of Kent. This year's trench took in a 900m<sup>2</sup> window sandwiched between the larger of last season's excavation trenches and the southern boundary of the churchyard. The area, previously examined by a small-scale evaluation by the Canterbury Archaeological Trust, is located some 80m south of the Anglo-Saxon monastic church excavated by Canon Jenkins in the 1870s.

The excavations produced a spectacularly rich concentration of Middle Saxon occupation with more limited evidence for Saxo-Norman land-use. A sequence of major and minor ditched boundaries has provided key evidence for reconstructing the spatial organisation of the Middle Saxon settlement and its evolving relationship to the monastic

nucleus to the south. A spectrum of post-built timber buildings were recovered with distinctions in size and structural details denoting both domestic and agricultural uses; the former recall the diminutive ‘cells’ excavated at such Northumbrian parallels as Hartlepool. The occupation was peppered with rock-cut pits (over fifty in total) some forming distinct concentrations; those located within domestic compounds clearly served as latrines as indicated by dense

accumulations of digested fish bone and mineralised concretions, sampled extensively for environmental and micromorphological analysis. The excavations have enhanced the picture provided by the already extensive Middle Saxon artefact/bioarchaeological assemblages: notable finds included a folding balance, imported Frankish pottery and many examples of the bossed jars distinctive to East Kent, metalworking crucibles and more window/vessel glass.

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## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2010

CONFERENCE 24–25 April ‘Wales and the West during the Bronze Age’ at Cardiff; for details, see below

SPRING MEETING 21–23 May in Buckinghamshire, led by Mike Farley (details with this mailing)

SUMMER MEETING 3–10 July in Pembrokeshire, led by Headley Swain (details with this mailing)

AUTUMN DAY MEETING (details to be confirmed)

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## WALES AND THE WEST DURING THE BRONZE AGE: CHARACTER, COMPARISON AND CONTACTS, 24–25 April 2010 at the National Museum, Cardiff

There are still places available to attend this non-residential conference, sponsored by the RAI, Cambrian Archaeological Association, National Museum, Wales and Cadw. There will be twelve lectures over two days, with an optional reception and archaeology gallery viewing. Conference fee **£47** (£31 for one day) includes abstracts, tea & coffee. Optional catering package (two lunches and wine reception/gallery viewing) **£33**

(or pro rata). A full speaker listing and conference flier can be viewed at [www.royalarchaeolinst.org](http://www.royalarchaeolinst.org). For bookings and further information, please contact Caroline Raison, Meetings Organiser, 0116 2419595, e-mail [admin@royalarchaeolinst.org](mailto:admin@royalarchaeolinst.org) or by post to The Firs, 2, Main Street, Houghton-on-the-Hill, Leicestershire, LE7 9GD.

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## 155TH SUMMER MEETING ON ORKNEY, 4–11 JULY 2009 • Anne Holton-Krayenbuhl

The Summer Meeting was based at Stromness, in the south-west corner of mainland Orkney. From there we visited sites ranging in date from the Neolithic to

the twentieth century, on the mainland as well as on the islands of Rousay and Hoy. The Orkney archipelago is on the periphery of the modern world, but in the past, it has

played a more significant role, as we were to learn in the course of the week. The international importance of the Neolithic sites on Orkney was recognised in 1999 when these gained UNESCO World Heritage Site status.

The Meeting started on Saturday, 4 July, members having made their own way up to Stromness. Planning the journey had been a challenge in itself. There was a wide variety of routes and means of transport, all involving at least one transfer, and causing a problem for a few of the air travellers whose luggage failed to follow them to Kirkwall airport. Many of us met up in the early afternoon, in the departure lounge of the Scrabster to Stromness ferry. The sea mist that had formed halfway across the Pentland Firth dispersed as we sailed past the Old Man of Hoy and then it was time to get ready to disembark. Caroline Raison pointed out the Stromness Hotel, our base for the week.

The hotel was a solid-looking grey stone building backing onto a steep slope. This explained the apparently odd internal arrangements, with Reception on the first floor and access to the car park on the second. The dining-room on the first floor had French windows that led into the very steep garden, bordered with fuchsia bushes, a common feature in the local landscape. A few members lodged at the nearby Harbour View Cottage and at the Ferry Inn, even closer to the ferry terminal than the Stromness Hotel, with associated noise and occasional roudiness at times of ferry arrivals or departures. Jonathan Coad, President, and Hedley Swain, Meetings Secretary, already looked comfortably settled in as we arrived. At dinner on the Saturday evening Hedley welcomed us and warned of the daily challenges ahead. Sunday's would be to cross over to the Brough of Birsay, a tidal island, and return before the tide came in

again; he hoped he had read the charts correctly.

Sunday was warm and sunny and we started off with a walking tour of Stromness. Our guide explained how the town had developed in a somewhat haphazard way, as house plots with individual jetties were laid out along the shore. There appeared to be little standardisation so that the rear boundaries, now forming one side of the street, did not line up, but consisted of a series of doglegs. Development of land on the other side had been equally uneven and as a result, this street, roughly parallel to the shore, widened out and narrowed down in confusing fashion. We were taken along alleyways running steeply uphill between buildings that almost touched each other at eaves level. The morning ended with a visit to the Stromness Museum where exhibits on the Hudson Bay Company, Arctic whaling and the Pacific Islands illustrated the far-reaching contacts of Orkney in days when the archipelago was a major transit point.

In the afternoon we set off for Birsay and Gurness, with V & J Coaches who were to provide us with comfortable transport for the week. Kirsty Dingwall of Historic Scotland was our guide for the afternoon; Historic Scotland stewards contributed to the guided tour at both sites, and would do so on other visits to Historic Scotland sites. Brough of Birsay looked stunning in the bright sunshine which also brought out the salty smell of dry seaweed. The distinction between brough and broch was explained to us: the former referring to a naturally defended site, as at Birsay, the latter to a fortified defensive structure, as we were to see at Gurness. The Brough of Birsay had been a high status site for both Picts and Norsemen and the principal seat of the earls of Orkney in the eleventh century, if not earlier. The evidence for this consisted of



*Within the Broch of Gurness (MO'B)*

earthworks; remains of a twelfth-century church with claustral buildings were the only standing structures. We crossed the causeway back to the mainland to look at the ruined palace of the sixteenth-century Earl Robert Stuart, illegitimate son of King James V of Scotland. Our attention was distracted by the arrival of a yellow minibus advertising on its sides 'Haggis Adventures: Wild and Sexy'. Its young clientele didn't spend much time at the site. Then on to the Broch of Gurness overlooking Eynhallow Sound. We walked through the maze of chambers built around the central structure of the broch, the most complete known so far but gradually being lost to the sea. The problem of coastal erosion would be a recurrent theme during the week. In view of the unpromising weather forecast, Hedley arranged a paddle stop on a nearby beach.

As expected, Monday turned out grey, windy and showery. We visited the

Neolithic monuments included in the UNESCO World Heritage Site, and more. Our first stop was the Neolithic settlement at Skara Brae, on the west coast, and Ann Marwick of Historic Scotland introduced the site. The tour of the site took us along the roofs of the structures so that we looked down into these remarkable remains of stone chambers with stone furniture, central hearths and linking passages. There was an intriguing exhibition in the Visitor Centre including a bucket carved out of a whale vertebra, and a welcome cafeteria. We continued on to the Loch of Stenness, stopping at Unstan cairn on the shore of the loch. The entrance passage leading into the central chamber was low and narrow, and Caroline controlled numbers going in and coming out. From Unstan we could see the Ring of Brodgar and associated mounds brought into clearer focus as the sun briefly illuminated these sites. The Brodgar car park



*Skara Brae (AB)*

provided a fly-infested venue for our picnic lunch.

Our guide for the afternoon was Jane Downes of Orkney College. She showed us round the Ring of Brodgar and explained the monument within its landscape, noting that it had much in common with Stonehenge, not least the countless theories for its interpretation. Evidence for a settlement was being excavated nearby, the trench also providing shelter for some sheep. At Stenness, we saw another stone circle with a smaller diameter but taller stones, the reconstructed Neolithic settlement at Barnhouse, and Maes Howe. This was an imposing Neolithic mound with a large central chamber, visited by Norsemen in a later age; they had left their mark in the form of runic graffiti. We drove on to the Knowes of Trotty, a group of Bronze Age mounds at the foot of a hill overlooking the Loch of Harray. The site was at some distance from the road and some of the party remained on the coach. We walked past fields of sheep and cattle, and finally reached the site. As the sky turned blacker, Jane hastily summarised the findings from recent

excavations, and we rushed back to the coach as it started to rain. We had barely arrived back at the hotel than it was time for dinner – a breathless end to a day spent visiting major prehistoric sites.

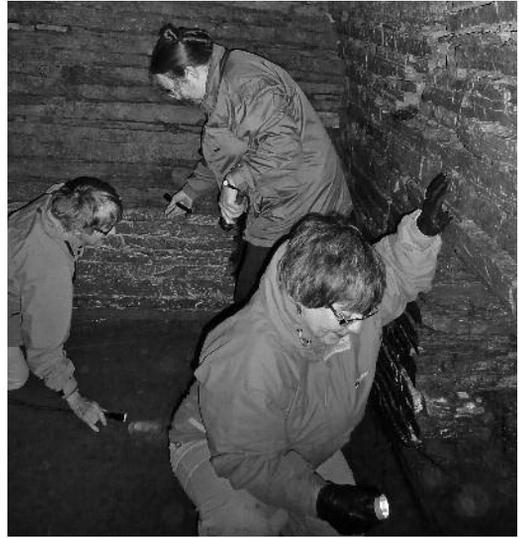
Tuesday's challenge was to reach Tingwall in time to catch the ferry to Rousay. The light drizzle felt increasingly wet as we waited for the ferry. We took shelter in the waiting room, providing us with the opportunity to read the notices informing us of the many local activities on the archipelago. The island of Rousay is roughly conical with a band of agricultural land along the coast, rising steeply to several peaks in a moorland landscape. The only road around the island marks the approximate boundary between the two types of vegetation. Julie Gibson, County Archaeologist for Orkney, met us on the pier and explained the itinerary: we were to drive anticlockwise round the island, a distance of some thirteen miles, stopping en route to look at some of the numerous sites.

Towards midday the sun came out and we stopped near Midhowe, on the south-west corner of the island and on the north shore of Eynhallow Sound. The path from the road down to the site was steep and some of the party preferred to opt out of this particular challenge. The corrugated iron building housing the cairn provided some shelter from the wind as we ate our packed lunches, entertained by a family of seals frolicking on the rocky shore. Inside the building, raised platforms provided a good general view of Midhowe chambered cairn, a structure measuring over 23 m in length with compartments on either side. Julie explained the construction of the cairn before we went on to the nearby broch, making a leap of some 3500 years in a few minutes. The broch stands on a low cliff, its defences formerly complemented by two ditches running from broch to sea. We then walked towards Westness at a brisk pace –

ferry timetables being kept in mind – and were shown sites formerly occupied by Norse settlers. There were two more stops on the way back to the ferry: a site being excavated on the beach, and the ‘double-decker’ tomb at Taversoe Tuick.

Kirkwall was the focal point of Wednesday’s excursion, beginning with the grain earth house on a dreary industrial estate in the suburbs of Kirkwall. This was an underground structure with a narrow access that could only be visited by two people at a time. A gentle drizzle set in as we waited for our turn in the queue. Then on to the major sites in the town centre where the museum, the cathedral, and the palaces of earl and bishop stand in a group either side of a comparatively busy road. Anne Brundle, Curator of Archaeology, welcomed us to the Tankerness House Museum, a sixteenth-century building with displays of artefacts from the many important sites on the Orkney archipelago, including some fine bone objects of Norse manufacture. We then crossed the road to St Magnus Cathedral, a small-scale version of more southerly cathedrals and built of pink stone. Earl Rognvald had undertaken to build the cathedral in honour of his uncle, Earl Magnus, if he gained the earldom, and construction started in 1137. The roofless remains of the two palaces stand south of the cathedral. That of the earl had been built in the seventeenth century for the Stewart family, while the bishop’s palace had been built in the twelfth. All that remained of the latter was the shell of an oblong range to which had been added a corner tower in the sixteenth century.

After lunch we had a choice. We could either visit Mine Howe some miles south of Kirkwall, or stay in Kirkwall with shopping opportunities for those who so wished. Those who chose the first option discovered a monument unlike anything seen so far.



*Inside Mine Howe (AB)*

Mine Howe is one of a group of mounds either side of a quiet road, the entrance being near the top of the mound. Once again we queued to get in, but as the party was smaller, it didn’t take so long. A vertical shaft took us down into the mound, with a ladder joining up with stone steps midway down. A narrow landing gave access to two horizontal passages, now closed, but these seemed to be the only features within the mound. When we reached the bottom, there was nothing special to see, no chamber, and not even a recess. Initially this was a disappointment but we then wondered if it was the journey into the earth (some twenty feet) that might have been the significant element. Then back to the modern world. The party regrouped in Kirkwall to visit the Highland Park Distillery on the outskirts of the town. Whisky production was not in progress at the time, so our guides described the various stages of the process as we walked through silent and dust-free buildings. The cellars with variously aged whisky casks and a general musty whisky smell was the nearest we got to the actual production process, apart from the tasting at the end of the tour.

Thursday included a ferry crossing and was therefore another particularly challenging day. We were on the road by 9 a.m. We stopped en route at Orphir, the site of one of the manors of the Norse earls and the setting for Christmas feasts and other events recounted in the Orkneyinga Saga. All that remains visible are the ruined apse of a round church in the corner of the modern cemetery and nearby earthworks, interpreted as the remains of the Norse drinking-hall of the saga. The Norse connection was underlined by the bilingual information board. We crossed over to Hoy and drove to the cliffs at Rackwick on the west coast of the island through a desolate landscape of steep eroded hills covered in heather, with some peat diggings by the roadside. This was compensated by the interesting flora and bird life, examined at closer quarters on the walk up to the Dwarfie Stane, a rare example of a Neolithic rock-cut tomb, in contrast with the stone-built tombs visited elsewhere. The interior of the tomb was small, with a short entrance and two small side chambers. Graffiti on the sides of the tomb included a line in Persian!

A brief stop at the Lyness Royal Naval Cemetery left us pensive. It also provided the introduction to the main theme of the day: the defence of Britain at and around Scapa Flow, from Napoleonic times to the twentieth century, presented by Jonathan Coad in his usual clear and well-informed style. We stopped for lunch at the Lyness Visitor Centre, one of the former base headquarters buildings, and saw photographs and exhibits of military material connected with the defence of Britain in these northern waters. In the afternoon we drove south-east to the nineteenth-century Martello Tower and battery at Hackness past green fields and habitation, and a solitary Art Deco foyer that was all that remained of a former cinema for the troops. Jonathan explained the origins of

the Martello Tower and its adaptation from the fortified structure at Cape Mortella in Corsica, which the British had taken after a long siege in 1794. We climbed steep external stairs to the first-floor entrance to the tower. The living quarters were on the first floor and we noted that they lay directly above the powder magazine in the basement. The associated battery complex looked more comfortable.

The return crossing was distinctly rough, and spray was flying onto the deck, but the wind was not strong enough to dispel the odours emanating from the dust-cart travelling back to the mainland on the ferry. When we returned to the hotel, we found Frank Horlbeck, a member for 55 years, who had come over from Kirkwall to join us for the evening. Still a keen photographer, but with less cumbersome equipment nowadays, he took pictures of the group. We managed to exchange news before the start of a musical entertainment provided by the West Mainland Strathspey and Reel Society – a dozen or so instrumentalists playing Scottish music – followed by singing to which the RAI was invited to join, having been provided with song sheets.

Friday's itinerary took us along the north coast of the mainland and south-east to South Ronaldsay. Once again, we drove past the World Heritage Site monuments around the Ring of Brodgar that had become a familiar feature of our journeys across the island. Caroline Wickham-Jones joined us for the day; she described how the Orkney archipelago had once formed a single landmass that seems to have subsided quite suddenly, with dramatic consequences for its inhabitants. Cuween Hill was our first stop, a chambered tomb set on a hillside overlooking the Bay of Firth. The chamber, a reduced version of that at Maes Howe with cells in the side walls, had yielded not only human remains but also some twenty

dog skulls possibly representing the tribal totem.

We drove on to Burray and South Ronaldsay, islands at the eastern mouth of Scapa Flow. They are now linked to the mainland by the three Churchill Barriers, built in World War II, to block the eastern access to Scapa Flow; their potential for civilian use as a causeway made it legally possible to complement the labour force with Italian prisoners-of-war, transported here in 1942 following Allied military successes in North Africa. These prisoners-of-war also built the Italian Chapel on Lamb Holm at the south end of the first Barrier. The chapel consists of two Nissen huts set end to end, with a simply decorated façade, but inside, it is a different world of Italian exuberance, the work designed by Domenico Chiocchetti, a church decorator in civilian life.

We continued southward, stopping at Cairns to visit an excavation in progress. The site lay on a steep slope, with remains of a broch overlain by a sequence of occupational deposits. The team of young dynamic archaeologists seemed unaffected by the cold wind as they trowelled, removed stony spoil or set up drawing frames. This had been an 'extra' on the programme, so we ate our (last) packed lunch on the coach in order to reach Isbister on schedule. There we crowded into the Visitor Centre and heard about the initial discovery of the 'Tomb of the Eagles', the name of the tomb deriving from the sea-eagles' talons discovered among the human remains there. Perhaps this was another totem creature, analogous to what had been observed at Cuween. We had a pleasant walk through farmland to the remains of a Bronze Age structure, and then towards the cliffs at the top of which lay Isbister cairn (the 'Tomb of the Eagles'), our final chambered tomb of the week. Matting on the ground enabled one to slide into the

tomb without getting muddy. Seals swimming in a dangerously rough-looking sea provided a rival attraction. It was also a last chance for the bird-spotters in the group, at the end of a week that had also been rewarding from the ornithological point of view – arctic skua, eider duck, puffin and black guillemot were some of the more exciting sightings.

We returned to Stromness mid-afternoon, providing some free time before the Conference Dinner which concluded with the presidential address; Jonathan summed up the highlights of the week and thanked all those who had contributed to the smooth running of the meeting; this included Richard Haes who had ensured that nobody was left behind in some isolated spot, by assiduously counting us back on the coach after each stop. Most of us then retired to the bar for a final sampling of the local whisky. The party dispersed on Saturday. Some had already left before breakfast, while a large contingent departed on the mid-morning ferry. The remainder had an opportunity to visit the Pier Art Gallery opposite the hotel, with its well-displayed collection of modern art.

In the course of six days we had looked at monuments spanning a period of some 5500 years, and benefited from the expert knowledge of our various guides. The remarkable density of sites on Orkney had enabled us to spend a greater proportion of our time actually visiting sites rather than sitting on the coach travelling from one site to the next, and the ferry crossings provided an additional dimension, enabling us to experience a mode of transport that had played such an important role in the past. The gentle pace of life and unspoilt landscape provided a refreshing change from the bustle and noise of southern Britain to which many of us were returning.

## AUTUMN DAY MEETING AT GREENWICH, SATURDAY 24 OCTOBER 2009 • Kathryn Stubbs

The Autumn meeting was spent in Greenwich Park. We met at the statue of General Wolfe next to the Royal Observatory and the Greenwich meridian, and although we never strayed far from the meridian, the meeting was wide ranging, covering the early history, Romano-British occupation, Anglo-Saxon burial ground, Royal palaces and park, as well as current proposals for the 2012 London Olympics. Our guides were Pieter van der Merwe of the National Maritime Museum, Anthony Quiney and Hedley Swain.

2009 was the International Year of Astronomy, and The Royal Observatory was the focus of the morning. Greenwich is one of the four World Heritage Sites in London, inscribed as of universal significance by UNESCO in 1997. Standing on the great Greenwich fault line, a splendid view of the Royal Naval Hospital, the Queens House, the river, City and central London is obtained from the vantage point of the terrace next to the Observatory and the 1930 statue of General Wolfe.

Commissioned by Charles II for the first Astronomer Royal, John Flamsteed, and designed by Christopher Wren in 1675-76, the Royal Observatory is an unusual building as it was designed as a residence and an observatory. Greenwich was chosen for the site of the observatory as the high ground within the park afforded a clear view of the sky away from the light and air pollution of London. At this time no accurate map of the sky existed, and it was thought that the calculation of longitude had an astronomical answer. The importance of longitude to nautical navigation, trade and commerce cannot be underestimated. Reliance on sea trade, newly established trade routes and the importance of gaining

new markets in America meant that improvements to navigation were essential for safe and speedy passages. The famous Longitude Act of 1714 promised a prize to the first person to calculate longitude, and many of the clocks built to attempt this, including John Harrison's H4 and his other sea clocks are on view in the Observatory.

The Observatory, now called Flamsteed House, has been carefully restored and gives a good impression of the isolated living and working conditions of Flamsteed and his successors. The main feature of the house is the large octagon room or Great Star Room, designed to house the large telescopes and 'year-going' clocks built by Thomas Tompion in 1676, used by Flamsteed to record observations and draw a map of the sky. To do this, a telescope was set up along the meridian, the north-south line, the position of the stars was observed and recorded and their movement measured against the meridian. A map was drawn by using these measurements and the clocks to measure the rotation of the earth.

It became clear that Wren's Observatory was not aligned exactly with the meridian, but was slightly to the west due to its construction on the foundations of Greenwich Castle. A new positional observatory was built in the garden, the first of a series of buildings, now called the Meridian Building, to house new telescopes. The single storey observatory buildings have distinctive roof shutters which were opened each night for observations and they represent a unique insight into how the Observatory changed to accommodate new and improved telescopes. Today, this and a complex of later buildings make up the Observatory.

In 1772–73, two pavilions were added to the Wren building. The new Physical Observatory begun in 1837 is now a handsome cruciform building designed by W. J. Neatby in 1895 with Doulton terracotta decorations commemorating notable astronomers, scientists and instrument makers. It was built with a central 50 diameter dome, to house a 26" refractor. The Altazimuth Pavilion of 1858 was extended in 1899 by the addition of a large distinctive dome, built to house a new 28" refractor, the largest conventional telescope in Britain at that time. The most recent addition is the Peter Harris Planetarium, by Allies and Morrison, completed in 2007.

The Greenwich Time Ball was added to the eastern turret of Flamsteed House in 1833. It drops from the top of the mast at 1pm each day, a time signal clearly visible from the surrounding area, and importantly, by navigators on ships on the river who used it to calibrate the ships chronometer. The original meridian line and the three successive meridians, of Edmond Halley, James Bradley and George Biddell Airey are all marked; the last was recognised as the Universal Prime Meridian of the world in 1884. The last meridional observation was made in 1954 when the growth of London, smoke and light pollution obscuring the sky prompted the move of the observatory to Herstmonceaux. World time, formerly set at Greenwich is now set internationally and co-ordinated in Paris.

The Royal Observatory has about one million visitors every year, and a recently completed £16 million redevelopment and expansion project including exhibition redesign and reconfiguration of the site, has altered visitor routes and enabled greater public access to the buildings and collections. The work was partly supported by Heritage Lottery Funding.

The afternoon was spent looking at some of the other features of the Park. Greenwich Park appears at first sight to be familiar landscaped seventeenth-century parkland, but on closer view an earlier and much altered landscape is revealed.

Romano-British remains have been identified at different times as a villa, a temple or shrine. Excavation has taken place in 1902, 1924/5, 1927, 1978/9 and by Time Team with the Museum of London and Birkbeck College in 1999. Evidence of structures including walls and surfaces, flue tiles and inscriptions have been recorded and coins dating to between 71 and 395 recovered. The site is thought to be a Romano-Celtic temple owing to its location on high ground close to a river, the high status finds and possible plan of the structure. The site is marked by a small area of red tessellated pavement, left exposed after excavations in 1903, surrounded by railings and a small plaque.



*A Romano-Celtic temple? (CvonP)*

The route of Watling Street from the Kent coast to London is projected across the park, but its exact route is not known. From the higher ground of the park, it is easy to imagine the vantage point of Greenwich, the view of Londinium in the distance and the route of the road crossing the lower and marshy areas towards the Thames.

An Anglo Saxon barrow cemetery of approximately fifty-four mounds and medieval ridge and furrow are visible in the more open ground in the south of the park.

The royal connections dominate the landscape since the confiscation of the Manor of Greenwich by Henry V from the Abbot of Ghent in 1414. The Park was enclosed with timber palings by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester in 1433, who built a palace, Placentia. The palace was altered and enlarged by Henry VIII, who also introduced deer into the park. Greenwich was favoured as it was on the river, had a park for hunting, and was close to the naval dockyards at Woolwich and Deptford. Elizabeth I took shelter under an oak tree which was standing until fifteen years ago; this and its successor, planted by one of her successors, can be seen.

The Queen's House, designed by Inigo Jones in the modern style of an Italian villa, was built for Anne of Denmark by James I, and completed for Queen Henrietta Maria in 1635. Following the restoration, Charles II planned a new palace designed by Wren and Sir John Vanburgh, and conversion of the park into formal grounds, with a long north-south axis and radiating avenues of elm trees and sweet chestnuts. The lines of the avenues and some of the sweet chestnuts can still be seen. The Queen's House, with its later additions and colonnades, is now part of the National Maritime Museum. William and Mary preferred Hampton Court for their residence and the Tudor palace

with new buildings by John Webb and Wren became the Royal Naval Hospital. Vanburgh succeeded Wren as Surveyor of the Royal Naval Hospital and built his own house, Vanburgh Castle, just outside the Park.

The Royal Naval Hospital and Queen's House with the observatory and the grand axis are an outstanding formal composition of buildings and landscape taking advantage of the river prospect and the steep rise of land from the river. The view from and to the river is renowned and familiar from paintings by Canaletto and Turner and the collection of buildings and landscape represent Britain's maritime importance.

At the south west of the park, a group of houses built in and on the edge of the park were visited. Firstly, the bathhouse and walls are all that remain of Montague House, built in the 1690s and occupied by Queen Caroline. Demolished by George IV, in 1815, after her death, the house is more



*Queen Caroline's Bath (CvonP)*

renowned now for Caroline's shocking behaviour, the 'tinsel and trumpery' decoration and parties, famed for their 'pandemonium games', than for architectural merit. Macartney House, built at the end of the seventeenth century, is well known as one of Sir John Soane's houses, as it was enlarged to his design in 1802–05. The house was occupied by the family of General James Wolfe who was an occasional resident here. The garden is now part of the Park. St Mary's Lodge was designed by John Nash in 1807–08, and is next to a new park entrance made in 1820. Ranger's House was extended in the 18th century, principally for the 4th Earl of Chesterfield.

Proposals to use the Park for the equestrian and pentathlon events of the 2010 London Olympics are causing concerns and it is to be hoped that this can be achieved sympathetically and in keeping with the nationally important buildings, the sensitive landscape and buried archaeology.

Lunch was taken at The Plume of Feathers, which is situated one second east of the meridian, the line of which is marked out in the road and on nearby buildings. Thanks are due to Pieter van der Merwe of the National Maritime Museum, Anthony Quiney, Hedley Swain and Caroline Raison for leading and organising such an interesting day.

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## MISCELLANY

### **Greenwich news**

In January 2010 it was announced that Greenwich would be renamed the Royal Borough of Greenwich, recognising its royal connections in the year of the Diamond Jubilee of our Patron Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Our member Professor Anthony Quiney has published *A year in the life of Greenwich Park* (2009, Frances Lincoln) which has many pictures of the park throughout the seasons.

### **'Free' Back issues of the *Archaeological Journal*.**

The Institute is giving away back issues of the *Archaeological Journal*, Indexes, Summer Meeting Reports, and selected off-prints and monographs. Recipients will be expected to pay packaging and postage costs. The items are available in limited numbers and will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. To see the list of volumes and/or to place your order, select the Back Issue Order Form from the website at

<http://www.royalarchaeolinst.org/documents/backissue.doc> or contact the Administrator direct for a faxed or posted copy of the form.

### **Gift Aid**

Despite previous notices of encouragement, it is still the case that less than a third of members have yet arranged for the Institute to receive gift aid. Under this scheme, if you are a taxpayer, the government will refund to the Institute, 25p in the pound of the value of your subscription. Members who pay the standard rate of tax and have filled in the Gift Aid Form have gained for the Institute a substantial sum. If you would like to help, please ask the Administrator for a form.

### **Subscriptions**

The current rates are: Ordinary member, £40 and Associate or Student, £20, with discounts when paid by direct debit; Life member £750 or £525 over 60.

### **The RAI Administrator**

We are delighted to announce that Sharon Gerber-Parfitt has been appointed as our new Administrator from mid-March, so you will see her at RAI events from the beginning of April. Sharon will be working with us half-time, as Caroline Raison did. Britt Baillie has regrettably resigned.

### **The RAI office**

The office in London is now manned only on the second Wednesday of each month between 11 am and 3 pm; otherwise, the telephone number for the Administrator is [REDACTED] her address is RAI, c/o Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, London, W1J 0BE and her email is [admin@royalarchaeolinst.org](mailto:admin@royalarchaeolinst.org)

### **Caption competition**

Please suggest a caption for this picture taken by Anthony Quiney during the paddling stop at the 2009 Summer Meeting on

Orkney (for meeting report, see above). Send your suggestions to the *Newsletter* Editor at the address below, as soon as possible please, so that the winning entry might be published in the next newsletter.



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## ROYAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

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