

MEDIEVAL OR LATER RURAL SETTLEMENT DISCUSSION GROUP
SECOND MEETING - SATURDAY 22ND JUNE 2002

BIGGAR AND GLENOCHAR BASTLE HOUSE/FERMTOUN

25 people attended this meeting.

Sarah Govan welcomed everyone to the meeting, in the absence of John Atkinson, Chair of the Medieval or Rural Settlement (MoLRS) Working Group, who had been unable to attend at the last minute.

No formal agenda was set for the meeting, although a number of people were asked to offer brief presentations about their MoLRS related work.

Jack Stevenson, RCAHMS – the role of the National Monuments Record of Scotland
He detailed the role of the NMRS and pointed to three main areas where they can offer help to researchers:

- They can give advice on the use and interrogation of the record
- They can lend equipment, such as plane tables
- They can provide film for recording purposes, and help with necessary photocopying of original material to ensure that copies are lodged with the NMRS archive.

He was concerned to emphasise that they would like everyone to submit copies of their survey results and wanted to expose the myth that work by volunteers isn't good enough. Even the simplest recording of a site is better than no record at all.

He recognised the importance of interacting with everyone who is studying and recording pre-improvement settlement, and would welcome any feedback, particularly concerning any future involvement.

He detailed some recent developments, such as the web development of CANMORE and the interactive map element known as CANMAP which has recently gone live. These can be found on the website www.rcahms.gov.uk. And a hardcopy leaflet is also enclosed for information.

There then followed some discussion on the following topics

- The NMRS website, value of the information available and issues of access to the information
- The role of Discovery and Excavation Scotland as a mechanism for reporting current research for everyone.
- The role of Global Positioning System (GPS) technology and potential for support.

Sarah Govan gave details of a proposed training day to cover basic mapping and recording techniques, which was welcomed by the group. She agreed to send further details when arrangements had been made.

Pam Judson, Council for Scottish Archaeology

Pam was asked to talk about fundraising issues, and how voluntary groups could improve their funding base. A key message was for the group to consider who has money, what it is for, and what do they want in return for giving it away.

Some discussion followed, and looked at the following:

- Large time investment required by individuals. PW noted that for a successful application c. 80% of time is research and 20% actually asking!
- The potential role of the CSA in providing support for member societies.

Tam Ward, Biggar Museum Trust

Tam set the scene for the field visit to the Glenochar bastle house, its associated settlement and its regional context . He noted that despite extensive research and survey, they have not been able to identify any settlement that is earlier than 1600. He concentrated on his work on sheep buchts, three sided enclosures which have puzzled many researchers, but which he has identified as structures related to the close herding of sheep. This prompted some interesting discussion about the nature of the sites and the opportunity for further research.

Following lunch, the meeting moved on-site to look at the consolidated township remains, which stimulated further discussion. Unfortunately discussions was curtailed somewhat by the appalling weather conditions, and the meeting concluded with brief thanks to all who attended, and special thanks to Tam for his enthusiastic and stimulating interpretation of the remains.