

4. Archaeological Survey in East Renfrewshire

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During the season of 1997 Susan and I embarked on a programme of archaeological survey in the East Renfrewshire area. The programme comprised the archaeological evaluation of the land associated with certain farms in Eaglesham Parish, and it is hoped that the survey will continue during the 1998 season. Many hitherto unrecorded archaeological features were found - corn stacks, mill lades, putative prehistoric circles, and one putative Iron Age house. Other work entailed the archaeological survey of the ruinous and abandoned farmsteads in the landscape. These were Mickle Binend, West Moorhouse, East Lochcraig, West Lochcraig, and Mid Moorhouse. Some of these farmsteads are on the Timothy Pont map of 1595. In between our survey work we completed two excavations.

The first excavation, a very minor one, was of a section of post medieval field drains (cundies) that had been discovered and surveyed. A section of turf cover 1 metre square was removed to expose the cap stone overlying the drain channel. Upon removal of the cap stone it was found that the channel's sides were of dry stone walling rising to three courses on each side, and supporting the cap stone. The bed of the channel was a course of small stones not exceeding 5 cm in diameter. The channel width was 0.4 metres. Having drawn and recorded the relevant information, we replaced the cap stone and cover.

The second excavation, that of a previously unrecorded dry stone construction some 50 metres from the working farm of South Kirktonmoor, was then undertaken. The walls of the structure were extant to the height of 1.1 metres at the North end, and 0.5 metres at the South end. We undertook the excavation because treasure hunters had breached the turf cover, and we wanted to record the internal features of the structure before any further damage was done. The fill of the structure appeared to be 20th century refuse, and so we decided to dig down to the extent of this 20th century waste fill. The fill contained much in the way of glass shards, glass containers, porcelain and metal fragments; some organic material was also extant. The material appeared to be that of both the domestic and business waste of South Kirktonmoor Farm, spanning a period between the 1890s and the 1950s.

From the content of the fill it soon became apparent that the artefacts found could give us an insight into certain of the preferences of, and materials used by, a farming family within the above dates. From the glassware found, it transpired that soft drinks were certainly high on the list of preferences amongst the farm's workforce. The company of A.G. Barr of Glasgow appears to have produced the most commonly used soft drink, closely followed by J. Orr Comrie, Springbank, Glasgow. Other soft drink bottles in evidence were those of Robertsons of Blantyre; G.P. Barrie, Globe and Company, Clark Scott, and Garvie all Glasgow manufacturers. Drinks of a more alcoholic nature were also represented, McEwans accounting for 70% of the bottles found. The names of James Aitken of Falkirk, Younger of Alloa, and Whitbread of London were also found on bottles. In the main, drinks of the distilled variety were represented by Walkers of Dalmarnock and Gordons Special Dry of London. A profusion of wine bottles littered the refuse; among them were nine champagne bottles, possibly representing a family celebration.

Of the other glass bottles, Gartons HP Sauce figured highly their bottles of green glass with green glass stoppers being extant throughout the fill: it seems that the farm's workforce had HP sauce with everything. Brylcreme jars of two types were also frequently found, in such quantities that one might deduce either that the workforce were very well groomed or that the cattle were the beneficiaries, the cows gleaming with the oily substance. Veno's, the producers of the lightning cough cure, were well represented, the quantity of bottles suggesting either that the farm's workforce had

very bad coughs or that the cattle received Veno's in an endeavour to dispense with veterinary bills. Sloans was another manufacturer who benefited from the sale of their Liniment; whether for domestic use or as a means of treating the farm's cattle, the bottles fairly littered the fill. Other companies represented in the list of household necessities were Bovril, with their high-necked brown glass bottles of 2, 4, and 16 ounce, OK Sauce, Oxo, Veno's Seaweed Tonic, Hall's Wine Tonic, and California Fig Syrup were common. Containers of a more personal nature were also discovered - white milk-glass jars inscribed Ponds Beauty Cream, and ladies' small perfume bottles declaring Zenobta.

Of the bottles containing work-related substances, Pynine for Ammonia, and Day and Son Gaseous Fluid were in great quantity. Judging from the medicinal bottles found, the pharmacist who dispensed for the farm was W.D. Aitcheson of Cathcart, and when he could not accommodate F. Sprite and Boots Cash Chemists of Glasgow were only too willing to oblige. The Veterinary that looked after the interests of the farm beasts appears to have been Mr. Hugh Degg MRVCS, of East Kilbride. The huge amount of milk bottles found within the upper layers of the fill indicates that the main product of the farm was probably milk; these bottles represented South Kirktonmoor Farm, SCWS, Scottish Farmers, Kinning Park Co-op, Armour Dairies, and Thomas Strang, Waukers Farm, Eaglesham. The identification of all glassware was by virtue of impressed marks on the glass, no paper labels being extant in the fill.

Glass shards from colourful Oil Lamp shades of various descriptions were also in the fill accompanied by their metal lamp bases found, if not together, then within close proximity to one another, almost as though they had been disposed of en-mass when electricity arrived at the farm. A great deal of household glassware in damaged condition was also found - from crystal to cut glass, including the remains of a Victorian glass epergne that at one time no doubt graced the table in the best room. The metal work found comprised the head of what was once a highly decorative hat pin of enamel on brass with a colourful amethyst faceted insert, ferrous metal pitchforks, basins, shovels, buckets, and at least one stove enamel metal kettle. Nine metal gin traps, several metal horseshoes, and several non-ferrous metal plaques inscribed John Gray, Prize Dairy Works, Stranraer, lay amongst several metal flat irons, and at least one box iron. An enamelled and decorated child's cup, a bicycle lamp of the carbide type, and the fancy metalwork of a cast iron grate in floral design, jostled with a great many other metal objects too numerous to mention. Of the pottery and china, shards littered the fill throughout. Fragments of the farm's best china, no doubt tearfully disposed of by the farmer's wife after breakage, were found. Wine jars of pottery that proclaimed, F.A. Watson, Wine Merchant, Eaglesham, Hugh Craig, Wine Merchant, Kilmarnock, Craig, Wine Merchants, Busby demonstrated that wine was in ready supply at the farm. Govancroft hot water bottles or Pigs were found, no doubt heralding the advance of electricity and the electric blanket. At least one large pottery vessel utilised to contain farm chemicals was discovered; it was stamped Gledhill and Dyson, Springfield Chemical Works, Glasgow. A great quantity of stoneware fat pots was in evidence, one depicting the raised relief of a figure of an American Indian Chief, while others proclaimed Govancroft. Early stoneware soft drinks containers extant proclaimed J. Orr Comrie, Springbank, and R. Barr, Falkirk (ginger beer); these - mostly in a damaged state - were in profusion within the fill, along with the remains of six brown or black glazed teapots. Blue and white plates were represented in damaged form, one bearing the famous name of Bells, and at least one plate of old Delft was retrieved, along with the remains of pottery bowls and other kitchen ware.

Of other interesting finds, the unused bowl of a clay pipe led to the somewhat fanciful speculation that, perhaps, this was the very one that a child of the farm used for blowing bubbles; and when a shaped marble fragment that resembled a peever, and a child's brass badge were found it seemed that the excavators were not being quite so

fanciful after all. Of the organic material found, little remained, save for several pairs of old fashioned women's and men's leather boots, all in fragmentary condition. Of the artefacts found too numerous to mention here, little of monetary value was extant, save perhaps for the brass bell that one time had adorned the milk cart rig as it trundled through Eaglesham Village, and this artefact was presented to the farmer. One worrying feature was that as we excavated our way through the fill no insect life was encountered; no beetle, worm, or any form of moving creature was seen, leading us to speculate on just what in the way of perhaps dangerous chemicals had been disposed of there. Even more alarming was the dust that rose from the fill mix - the dust that we excavators were readily breathing. However, as we are still presently among you, I trust that our health is not damaged too much.

The structure itself appears to have had several phases of utilisation and at present no definite conclusion has been reached as to its original use. Three qualified archaeologists have viewed the structure and their conclusions report an enigma. The structure has been surveyed and drawn in plan, and this along with the full excavation report will be passed to RCHMS, West of Scotland Archaeological Services, and South West Water. It is proposed that the structure will now be backfilled, in order to reconstitute the stability of the construction.

