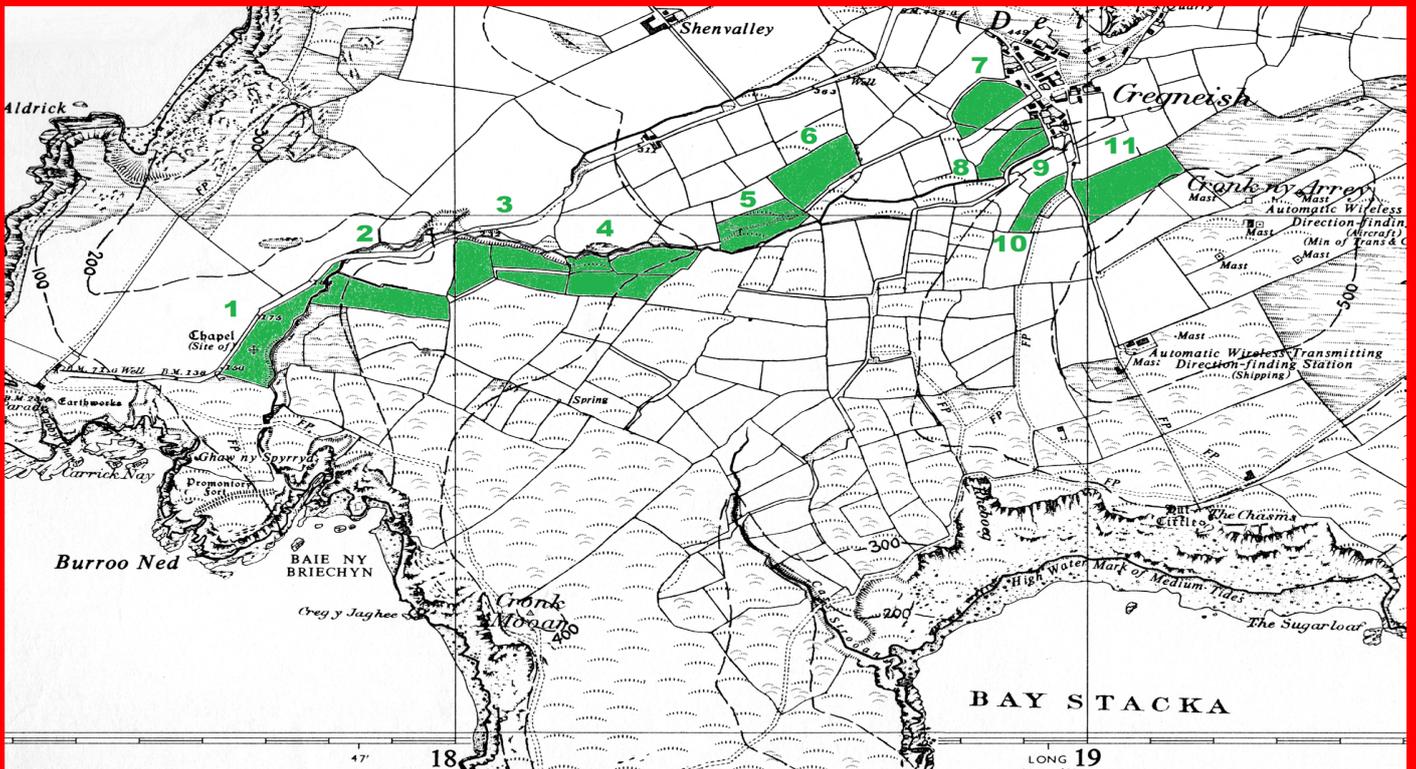


ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES 2023

Edited by

David Allwood and Peter Davey



OCCASIONAL PAPERS ON MANX ARCHAEOLOGY 1, 2023



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Editorial

These *Notes* were originally assembled for the recently published *Isle of Man Studies* volume 18, 2023, to follow our similar contributions in each of the volumes in the journal's new format since 2014. Although typeset and proof corrected, they were withdrawn at a very late stage. Because the next issue of the journal would not be for at least two years, the present writers decided to publish the *Notes* separately. In order to do this they created a title called 'Occasional papers on Manx archaeology' (OPMA) which has now received its own ISSN number, so that other archaeological material might, where appropriate, be published in the same way.

These *Papers* will be produced and circulated online in a format that would allow a hard copy to be produced if any recipient needed one. The URL for these *Notes* is: http://www.curraghec.org/OPMA/1_2023.pdf. We have created a provisional circulation list but will be pleased to send copies to anyone interested. If you know of anyone or institution who should be on that list, please tell us know.

If you have any occasional pieces of writing about Manx archaeology that you would like to be included, please get in touch with one of us.

The illustration at the head of this page is by Normal Sayle and was originally intended for *Studeyr's Manninagh*.

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Archaeological fieldwork and research summaries 2023

David Allwood and Peter Davey

Andreas: SC 41508 99811

Thirty flints were recovered from a field near the centre of the village which was being prepared for the construction of a housing estate. Towards the southern end of the site the topsoil had been removed in preparation for road construction. The flints were widely distributed within the unconsolidated sandy sub-soil. There were three primary flakes, 12 inner flakes including three calcined ones, 2 blades, three tools (i.e., reworked) and seven cores including one with two opposed platforms. There were three pieces of naturally fractured flint pebbles. One of the cores and a blade appear to be of early Mesolithic type and one notched-butt flake together with some of the inner flakes and two of the cores appear later Mesolithic. The retouching technology of the long edge of a knife suggests a Neolithic date.

In addition, a single sherd of Rainford-type 17th-century speckled ware was found. The finds are retained by the owner.



Figure 1. Record photograph of a group of flints from the Andreas site.

Thurot Cottage road, Andreas: NX 43054 00901

Eleven flint fragments were found near the site of an old late glacial river bed on the east side of the road. This is an area where flint pebbles occur naturally in the drift and five of the pieces have been fractured naturally. The remaining six include two cores, four inner flakes, one of which formed part of a narrow blade and another retouched to form an end scraper. These finds are retained by the finder and owner.

Ballacosnahan, Patrick: SC 2497 8181

Introduction

In 2003 a collection of finds, made by a metal-detectorist, were brought to the attention of Manx National Heritage (MNH) and became known as the Glenfaba Hoard. Weighing around 1.5kg, it consisted of 464 silver pennies, 25 silver ingots and one plaited silver arm-ring. It was a unique find on the Isle of Man in terms of the size, content and the ties with the island's rich Viking history. Despite the fields having been very thoroughly searched and no further coins or metalwork being found, the actual location of the hoard was not revealed at the time to protect the privacy of a nearby elderly resident.

The collection was unearthed with fragments of a lead jar in a small pasture about 18 inches below the surface in a place which had no known archaeological sites. So on that basis, to ensure the completeness of the find and that there were no related archaeological structures, the Centre for Manx Studies were charged with carrying out an excavation and geophysical survey.

The excavations and geophysical survey

The excavation took place in the spring of 2003 and began with two trenches and the geophysical survey of three 20m grids, the purpose of which was to collect any remaining archaeological

evidence, and to examine its context. The excavation confirmed that the hoard and parts of the container were complete and that there were no other metal finds. The modest geophysical results revealed a structure whose alignment and construction is typical of an early medieval chapel or keeill.

The artefact assemblage consists of a Mesolithic flint missile head from the vicinity of the lead vessel, a number of flint flakes and chunks, a small group of nineteenth-century type ceramics and an unglazed Manx granite-tempered ware sherd dating to the fifteenth-sixteenth century.

Associations with coin hoards and keeills are well-attested on the island. For example, in the publication of the 1972 Kirk Michael hoard Cubbon and Dolley list six other Manx sites with this apparent relationship (Cubbon and Dolley 1980, 10). To these can be added the 1982 Peel Castle hoard found very close to the foundations of a contemporary keeill (Freke 2002, 132-6) and now the Ballacosnahan find.

Hoard list

The Anglo-Saxon content equates to 79 coins ranging from the 990s to the early 1020s. Seventy of these pennies are of Æthelred II and cover four different types. The other nine are from Cnut, which were produced between around 1017 and 1023. There were 326 Hiberno-Scandinavian coins from Dublin, 20 of which are Phase I (c.995-1020), and 306 of Phase II (c.1020-35). The Hiberno-Manx coins are more recent, of the 42 examples, 30 are of a known Hiberno-Scandinavian/Manx type, of which few examples had been previously found, but 12 coins of which are of a completely new type. Contained in the find are 11 imitations of Cnut's type, referred as Scandinavian - 'Irish Sea' coinage. It is thought they are a product of a separate mint, active around 1020, somewhere in the Irish Sea region. Five coins of an imitative type are classed in this grouping but are unidentifiable from the die stamp images. The final coin from the hoard is a single Scandinavian imitation of an Æthelred' type. The die has been identified from a mint in southern Scandinavia, thought to be Lund in Denmark. The silver bullion of one arm-ring and 25 ingots are notable in a Manx context. Previous silver bullion finds on the island hoards have consisted of arm-rings. The Glenfaba ring is a

plaited (six-rod) arm-ring. The 25 ingots are of a standard Viking Age type and the estimated silver content is high, 83-100 percent.

Context

The Glenfaba hoard is one of the largest collection found on the island, other finds, from Kirk Michael and Peel Castle, are smaller, but comparison is useful since they date from a similar period. The hoard's importance, apart from its size, is its diverse content, it is near mint condition due to the lead container, and not many collections include Hiberno-Scandinavian (Dublin) material. Recent hoards, which all date to the eleventh century, indicate a wealthy, major economic trading centre here on the Island. This is supported by the number of coin hoard finds recovered on other islands, on Viking-sea routes in the region, which are significantly smaller than the Isle of Man; it indicates the central Irish Sea position the island held and was a hub for Viking - Age trade in the tenth-eleventh century. The coins are thought to be from five different mints, this differs from hoards in neighbouring countries where the coins tended to be for local use. Traders on the Island were ready to trade with all their neighbours. Alongside the coins were silver ingots (hack-silver), another form of currency used alongside coins. This indicates international trade and use for large transactions or for certain goods.

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Mound C, Cronk Guckley, Berk Farm, Kirk Michael (HER No 857): SC 3123 8945

Four seasons of excavations in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2022 have been carried out as part of the *Round Mounds of the Isle of Man* project led by Dr Rachel Crellin (University of Leicester) and Professor Chris Fowler (Newcastle University). These follow geophysical survey in 2016 by the same project including ground penetrating radar and 3D laser scanning, and magnetometry. The excavation phase at the site was completed in the summer of 2022. The work has been funded by Manx National Heritage, Culture Vannin, and both universities with financial support from the Isle of Man Steam Packet.

The excavations have confirmed that Mound C is an Early Bronze Age burial mound. The mound is roughly 20m in diameter, consists of two distinct layers, is c. 1m thick from turf to the bottom of the lowest mound layer at its highest point, and has buried and preserved a prehistoric soil layer which is another c. 30cm thick at its deepest point. Below this is further evidence of activity that includes material culture dating to the Ronaldsway Late Neolithic period. The mound layers consist of dumps of different earthen material. Over a thousand pieces of flint have been recovered from these layers. The primary burial at the site consists of a large, deep oval pit containing an inhumation burial, surrounded by a frame of cobbles. The individual was buried wearing a jet spacer plate necklace and bracelet. Following this, twelve deposits of cremated remains were interred at the site over a number of years, these include deposits within a cist, six within inverted ceramic urns, one unurned, one in a large upright bowl, and one in an inverted collared urn in a cist which disrupted the periphery of the mound, two within the cairn material. The mound was elaborated with cairn material, of slate and quartz, and in some areas a discontinuous kerb of slates has also been uncovered. The buried prehistoric soil contained sherds of Ronaldsway Late Neolithic pottery, and is richer in phosphorous and clay content than the mound layers. Below the buried soil, cut into the natural are a series of pits and postholes that provide evidence of Neolithic activity pre-dating the burial mound.

The site provides evidence for Mesolithic presence, Neolithic activity, and Early Bronze Age

burial as well as the construction of a mound in at least two phases.

Interim reports for the 2017, 2018, and 2019 seasons are available from the project directors or the project website:

<https://roundmounds.files.wordpress.com> .

The excavation of the site is now complete and the directors are beginning work on what is expected to be a lengthy post-excavation process given the scale of the findings. The jet spacer plate necklace from the dig is currently on display in the Manx Museum.

[Rachel Crellin and Chris Fowler]

Bishopscourt, Kirk Michael and Ballaugh: Robert Curphey's proposed English Civil War fortifications

The original designation

One of the monuments listed in Government Circular 243/78 is 'Remains of seventeenth century fort in the grounds of Bishopscourt'. This listing refers to two distinct garden features: a ditch and a low earthen mound.

These two features were first described as fortifications by R A Curphey, who was both history teacher and amateur fortifications enthusiast. He made the case for them in articles published in 1974 and 1976.

Based on the 1974 paper, the two garden features in the grounds of Bishopscourt were listed as English Civil War fortifications in two major texts on the Civil War (Harrington 1987; 1992). Harrington recently confirmed that he had relied entirely upon Curphey and had never visited Bishopscourt.

Fairfax, Chaloner and Daniel King – assessment of primary historical sources

To understand Bishopscourt during the 1650s and 1660s, material relating to Lord Fairfax, James Chaloner, and the Seventh Earl of Derby has been reviewed. This work included a visit to the British Library to examine the Daniel King sketchbook and correspondence between Lord Fairfax and James Chaloner, which confirms that King was the artist.

The absence of any mention of fortifications at Bishops court in either King's sketchbook or Chaloner's writings, both of which had a clear focus on the defensive capabilities of the island, further brought Curphey's interpretation into question.

Civil War expert visits to Bishops court

Two recognised, published experts with archaeological experience in the interpretation of English Civil War earthworks were invited to visit the site in November 2022. They were Professor Ronald Hutton, senior Professor of History at the University of Bristol and David Flintham a leading archaeologist in this field. Flintham also undertook comparative site visits to Ballacurry, Andreas, and Peel Castle where he confirmed the arrowhead bastion as being of Civil War design.

Combining the results of the geophysical surveys and archaeological test pits carried out earlier in 2022, with their own observations made on site and elsewhere on the island, the visitors each produced a report. Both concluded that the ditch and mound lack diagnostic features of English Civil War-period fortifications, and that they did not find evidence to support Curphey's theory.

Research into the history and archaeology of Bishops court is ongoing.

Copies of Hutton and Flintham's reports have been lodged with the HER at Manx National Heritage.

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[Pippa Pemberton, *Heritage Consultant, Bishops court*]

The Calf of Man: cSC1666

In September 2005 the Centre for Manx Studies carried out a preliminary archaeological survey of the Calf. A small number of artefacts and other

finds were recovered as follows:

- SC 15549 64969 (plot 2380) flint blade from a rabbit hole
- SC 15549 64969 (plot 2380) fragment of unworked flint from a rabbit hole
- SC 15350 65144 (plot 2363) heavily patinated worked flint from a rabbit hole some 39m above sea level
- SC 14944 65518 (plot 2349) nine fragments of unglazed earthenware from the north-west corner of the plot, near the lower lighthouse
- SC 1561 5623 (2370) broken flint blade from rabbit hole on the western edge of the plot
- SC 16228 65998 (plots 2357 and 2357) large Ailsa Craig microgranite pebble from the quarry at 92m above sea level
- SC 1509 6566 (plot 2351) two roofing slates from Eilean Eísdeal (Easdale Island, Argyle) from a building in the north-west corner of the plot.

The archive of the survey including field notes and records are held in the Manx Museum (MS 14146.20).

Fieldwalking at Cregneash, 1994 and 1995

Background

As part of a wider archaeological survey of the Meayll peninsula undertaken by the Centre for Manx Studies between 1993 and 1996 fieldwalking was carried out in an area south of Cregneash village in which many pasture fields had been freshly ploughed. Eleven fields were walked in March and April 1994 and April 1995. The following note is intended to provide an overview of the findings. Other elements of the survey have been published elsewhere (Johnson 1999, Woodcock and Crellin 2016; Davey 2017).

The location

The fields are spread out over around 1.5km running nearly west to east as far as a point some 200m to the south of the village and have been numbered from 1 to 11 on figure 1. All except the first field were the property of Manx National Heritage. The details of each field, their 1st edition OS 25" plot numbers, grid reference for a central point, Manx Museum accession numbers and date of collection are as follows (table 1).

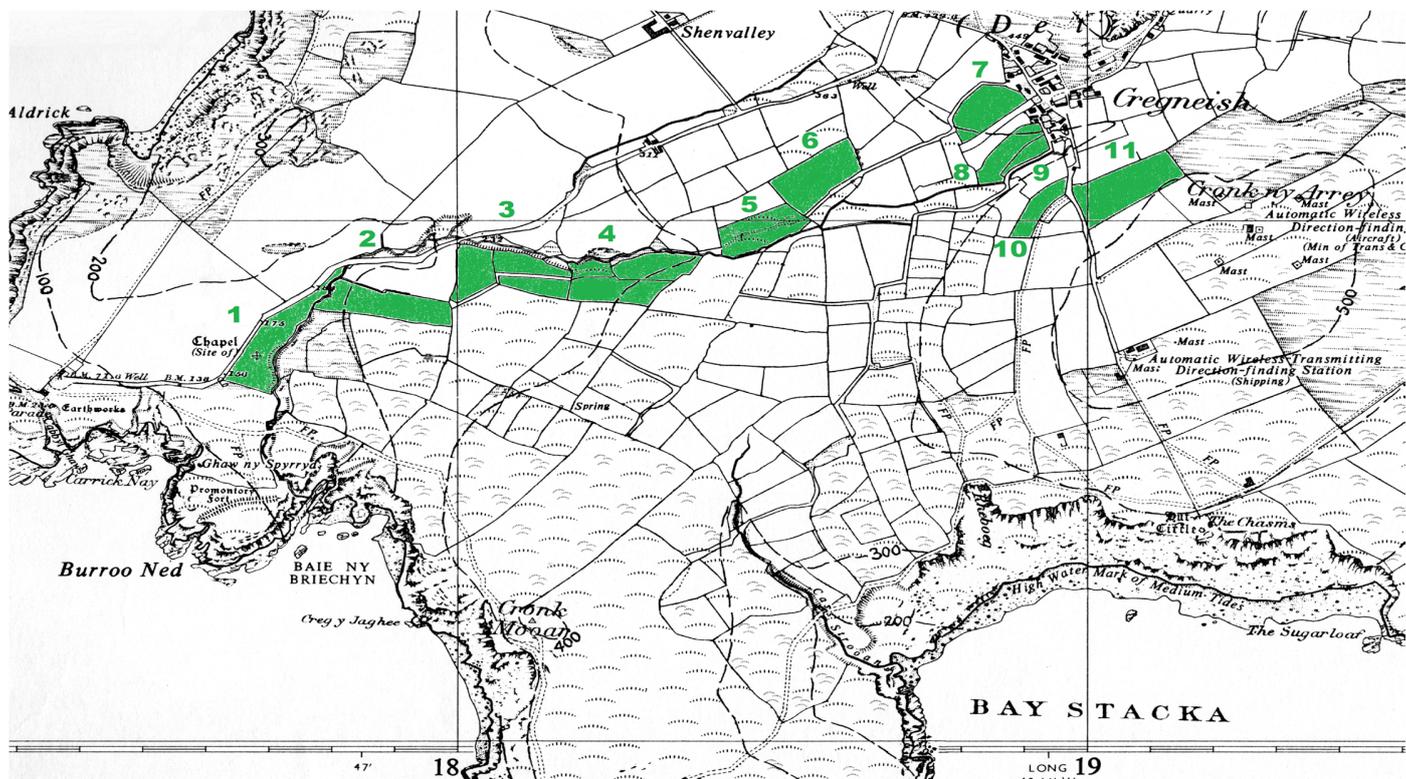


Figure 1. Fieldwalking at Cregneash, 1994 and 1995

Fig 1 Plot	Grid Ref centre	MNH Acc	Date
1	1719	SC 17680 66739	1994-0018 13/04/94; 1994-0019 14/04/94
2	2058, 2064	SC 17832 66854	1995-0111 16/04/95
3	2070, 2075, 2072	SC 18029 66903	1995-0110 12 and 13/04/95
4	2078, 2080, 2081	SC 18225 66903	1995-0112 17 and 18/04/95
5	2085	SC 18475 66976	1995-0113 18/04/95
6	1987	SC 18573 67085	1994-0008 12/03/94; 1994-0009 7/04/94
7	2003	SC 18837 67213	1995-0114 20/04/95
8	2006	SC 18878 67139	1994-0010 05/04/94; 1994-0017 12/04/94
9	2009	SC 18915 67138	1994-0012 05/04/94
10	2013	SC 18921 67029	1994-0013 05/04/94
11	2023	SC 19065 67070	1994-0016 05/03/94

Methodology

The majority of the fields were gridded, two were walked in parallel lines, the object being complete coverage of the surface of the field. The finds were recorded by 10m square or transect number. Three additional finds were recovered on the 11th and 12th of April 1994 during visits with students to the promontory fort on Burroo Ned. They came from Plot 2278, the field east of Ghaw ny Sperryd (SC 17638 66506; MNH 1994-0015 and 1994-0016) but are not included in the table below.

Finds

The following table (2) provides a summary of the

finds by plot listing (from left to right) sherds of prehistoric pottery, medieval pottery, post-medieval pottery, clay tobacco pipes, flint flakes, tools, cores and quartz pebbles. More specific details of the types involved can be found in the site archive.

The main features of the finds assemblages are the presence of prehistoric occupation debris almost everywhere, 20% of which are tools and including five small, degraded pottery sherds in two different fields which are probably of Bronze Age date. Three of the fields produced seven sherds of medieval pottery, at least four of which from two differ-

Fig 1	Plot	Pre	Med	P/M	CTP	Flakes	Tools	Core	Quartz
1	1719	0	0	82	0	31	21	2	54
2	2058	0	0	288	13	57	1	0	0
3	2070	0	0	136	0	22	2	0	0
4	2078	0	0	267	5	15	0	0	0
5	2085	0	0	13	0	18	1	0	0
6	1987	0	0	242	6	24	4	0	0
7	2003	1	0	305	3	8	1	1	0
8	2006	0	2	557	8	14	22	0	0
9	2009	0	4	301	2	5	4	0	0
10	2013	0	1	102	0	0	1	0	0
11	2023	4	0	278	4	10	3	0	0
Totals		5	7	2571	41	204	60	3	54

Table 2.

ent vessels are from thrown, imported green-glazed jugs, one is a fragment of Manx granite tempered ware and the other Manx smooth ware. Post-medieval pottery and clay tobacco pipe fragments, especially that dating to the late 18th and 19th centuries is ubiquitous. A number of earlier single sherds are worthy of note: 17th-century slipware from field 8, 17th-century North Devon slipware from field 9 and Rainford 17th-century speckled ware from field 11. A number of fields produced good quality white salt-glazed stoneware and creamware from the mid-18th century. In addition to these finds, many fragments of 19th-century glass, pieces of animal bone and lumps of slag and coal were recovered throughout the area surveyed but are not included in the table above.

Discussion

The 2,945 finds from these fields demonstrate pre-historic activity throughout the area. The flint finds have not been subject to specialist examination, so the precise periods involved remain unclear. The medieval and early post-medieval finds are concentrated in fields close to Church Farm, confirming that this was likely to have been the focus of settlement in that period. These finds do not indicate either poverty or remoteness in relation to the material culture elsewhere on the island, including Peel and Castletown. The later finds are widely scattered, probably because they were distributed over all the ploughed area with night soil.

Field 1 is of particular interest as, according to the 1st Edition of the Ordnance Survey, it is the site of

a keeill-site (Rullic y lag shliggah). Today all that can be seen is a re-erected standing stone at SC 17690 66717 and Bruce states that there are no other visible features that could be connected with the keeill or its burial ground (Bruce 1968, 65-6). In addition to over 50 worked flints the field produced 54 quartz pebbles which are not found in the local drift – there were none from any of the other fields - and which must have been collected from the shore. As they are a common feature of keeill sites their presence especially in the southern part of the field tends to confirm the traditional view of this site.

Details of the methodology and finds are retained in the survey archive held in the Manx Museum at MS 14146.20 (PJD).

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