

DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND 2013

LOCAL AUTHORITY	Dumfries & Galloway
PARISH	Colvend & Southwick
SITE NAME	The Newbarns Project
NAMES OF CONTRIBUTORS	Liz & Alastair Penman
TYPE OF SITE	Two Neolithic Kerb Cairns and one E.B.A. satellite Kerb Cairn with inhumation and cremation burials in cists or boat-shaped cobbled graves. Later Iron Age, Roman civilian settlement, Anglian and Medieval occupation is evidenced on site.
NAME OF ORGANISATION	The Stewartry Archaeological Trust
NGR	NX 8812 5505

REPORT: NX 8812 5505: The NORTH CAIRN.

A twelfth season of excavation by volunteer diggers under the auspices of The Stewartry Archaeological Trust (Scottish Charity No: SC 040018) has continued during July and September. Previous excavation has been reported in *DES 2003, 44: 2005, 42: 2006, 48: 2007, 60: 2008, 51: 2009, 54-5: 2010, 52: 2011, 59: 2012, 56-7.*

Three further Early Bronze Age boat-shaped burials, with the bows of the boats pointing towards the east, which were identified in 2012, on the North Cairn were subject to limited excavation when it was found that a stone founded granite construction had been erected and set into the cuts within their joint perimeters. This later juxtaposition construction had one playing card corner surviving to the north and what appeared to be the remnant of a stone staircase to the south which was constructed within the central original boat burial. A row of stakeholes to the east of the cut hint at some form of fencing in the past most likely relating to the later feature.. Unfortunately heavy rain late in the season prohibited further investigation of this feature.

Further excavation immediately to the east of the above feature uncovered five more medium sized granite capstones which were removed by muscle power as opposed to JCB power. In each of them there was a larger stone set into a cist covering a cremation pit (Burials 72-76). Further excavation is required on these features to determine the reason for their location at this place as opposed to their inclusion within the postulated shrine area

The western end of the roadway into the above shrine feature was further investigated and yielded evidence of its having been an imposing entrance – the portal

or way to or from life and death with entry which could only have been made, travelling eastwards, from the waters of the loch. Mourners or funerals or both! Within the hypothesised shrine area, after the removal of a large capstone, a further boat shaped burial (Burial No 60) facing north to south was excavated immediately to the east of the E.B.A burial No 30 detailed in previous reports. Both burials shared two large cist side stones in common, those of Burial no 30 to the east and those of Burial No 60 to the west. This points to the fact that those two E.B.A burials must either have been contemporary or one – Burial No 60 – could have been later and the Prehistoric mourners found it to their advantage to incorporate part of the earlier existing burial (No 30) into the later one thus saving both stone and space in an area which may have been becoming overcrowded yet managing to contain it within the environs of the already designated graveyard. A further anomaly was the discovery of a shale stone bearing an incised cross on the upper level of Burial No 30. The incised stone would appear to have been pushed under the capstone of Burial 30 at a later date. This is the second such incised shale stone – an earlier find was a rogues tone found on the site in no particular context, but immediately adjacent the stone founds of a medieval building dated to the 13th century.

A heavily cobbled surface was found to have survived in the region of some later burials on the southern part of the cairn. Within this several capstones were in evidence and four of theses were lifted to reveal cobbled cists with cremation deposits set under larger stones. There was also evidence of a later drain having been inserted through the cobbled area.

LOCATION OF ARCHIVE & REPORTS

The Stewartry Museum, Kirkcudbright.

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