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# Stobs Camp Project Quarter 1 Report

## April – June 2018

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### Executive Summary

During this period the project ran an excavation at two fortification practice trenches. Adult volunteers and school pupils were able to participate and learnt what it is like to be an archaeologist for the day. The first in a series of workshops to analyse and annotate Stobs postcards and photographs began in May. The Hut Search group resumed its activities and recorded two potential Stobs buildings at a site in the Ettrick Valley. Good progress was made on developing Stobs-related content for an interactive museum display and the Project Officer led a site tour and spoke to a professional society about the past, present and future of Stobs. Altogether 366 volunteer hours were recorded over the quarter.

### Introduction & Background

Stobs Camp was a military training camp prior to the First World War but then became an internment camp for German civilians and military and naval prisoners. It is internationally important as so much of it remains upstanding or visible. The local community and other stakeholders are keen to see the site properly recorded and receive adequate recognition.

The Stobs Camp Project is a community project being led by Archaeology Scotland (AS) co-operating with Historic Environment Scotland, Scottish Borders Council Archaeology Service, Live Borders Museums and Archives, Hawick Archaeological Society, Hawick Callants Club, Project Hawick, Borders Family History Society, University of Aston, Edinburgh Napier University, landowners and other organisations (including Youth Borders and Voice Of My Own), individual volunteers and local schools.



## Progress towards HES grant outcomes:

### **Outcome 2 – Management and maintenance of the historic environment is improved**

#### **Memorial stone**

In April the project team met a stonemason at Stobs to discuss plans to re-instate the memorial stone that stood in the former POW cemetery (Fig.1). An edition of the German POW camp newspaper “Stobsiade” describes the stone as standing two and a half metres high. It is believed to have been demolished when the bodies were disinterred in 1962. Today, the supporting plinth and the first course of stonework are still in situ (Fig.2). Planning permission is being submitted with Archaeology Scotland acting as the agent. It is hoped that the memorial stone will be unveiled during the Armistice commemorations in November.

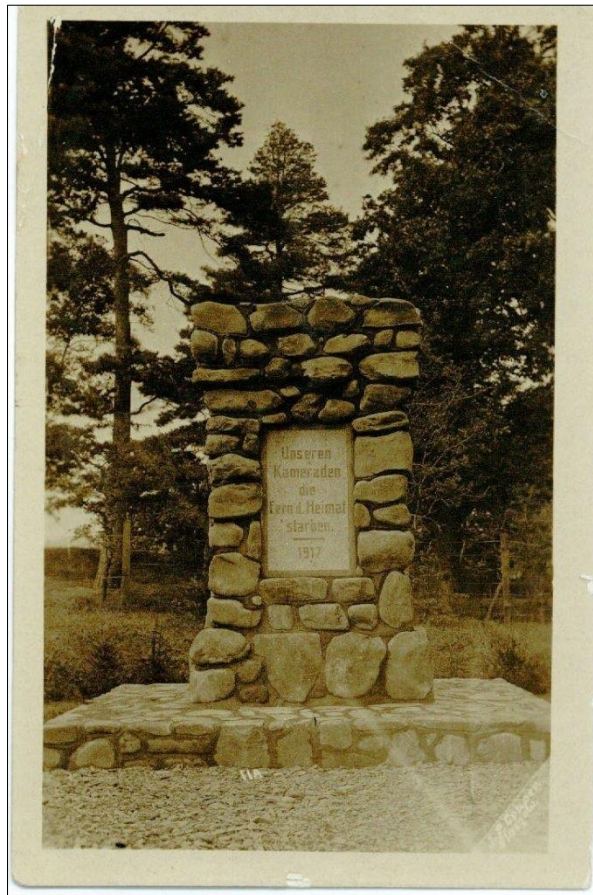


Fig.1. Memorial stone in the former cemetery, image from the First World War



Fig.2. Base and first course of stonework, Stobs cemetery memorial stone, April 2017

**Outcome 6 – Economic activity undertaken in and around the historic environment will be increased**

**Museum interactive**

In the last three months work has continued on developing the content for a Stobs-related interactive touchscreen with Hawick Museum. This will form part of a permanent War Room exhibition opening in November. The Project Officer is working closely with the museum curator. The work is now in the final stages and will soon be passed to the technical solution providers CMC Associates to populate the wireframe (Fig.3).



Fig.3. Early version of museum touchscreen landing page





**Outcome 7 – Conservation and/or archaeological skills are enhanced**

**Metal-detecting survey in fortification trench**

In early May a metal detecting survey was conducted over a practice trench or “fortification” prior to breaking ground. The fortification is shown in a postcard image produced before the First World War (Fig.4). This dating can be determined by the bell tents evident in the background. Only small finds were recovered including half a dozen empty cartridge cases, a 1911 coin and a small button (Fig.6).



Fig.4. Fortifications being dug by British soldiers prior to the First World War



Fig.5. Fortification trench, May 2018



Fig.6. George V penny dated 1911 and possible military cuff button, 4 May 2018





### **Excavation in fortification trench**

Between 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> May an excavation trench, measuring 4m x 2m, was opened on a section of the fortification trench (indicated in yellow in Fig.7). A further trench, also measuring 4m x 2m, was opened on a nearby man-made anomaly (indicated in red). Both trenches were positioned perpendicular to the fortification.



Fig.7. Location of fortification trenches, NW of the derelict Barns Farm, showing Trench A (yellow) and Trench B (red)

The specific objective of the investigation was:

- To determine the extent of the construction, depth and materials used
- To locate evidence of the soldiers who dug them
- To suggest a date of construction

These activities provided an opportunity for schoolchildren and local volunteers to be archaeologists for a day. They also provided volunteers with a great opportunity to learn more about their heritage and to stimulate interest and curiosity about archaeological sites.

Excavation of the trenches was undertaken with adult volunteers and pupils from Kelso High School (Fig.8). There were 19 volunteers on site each day. The excavation found no evidence that either



trench had originally been wood-lined. The investigation reached bedrock in Trench A and it is believed this would have impeded the soldiers when they were originally digging the fortification. In Trench B the bottom of the trench was reached at a depth of 0.25m. No significant finds were recovered in either trench. Both were back filled and closed. Section and plan drawings were made and the features were photographed with an SLR camera.



Fig.8. Volunteers and pupils from Kelso High School excavating the fortifications, 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> May 2018

**Outcome 11 – Existing and new audiences have opportunities to access and learn about the historic environment.**

**Postcard and photographic annotation**

In this period the project began annotating the large collection of images of Stobs Camp (Fig.9). The Project Officer had completed an exercise to scan 600 documents belonging to a local collector but it is estimated there are in excess of 1,000 cards, letters and ephemera to process. The first annotation workshop began in May and a series of follow-on drop-in sessions are planned throughout 2018. The task involves capturing information such as the subject, date, names, regiments and a description of the image. The data will be collected on a central register.





Fig.9. Volunteers annotating digitised scans of Stobs postcards, May 2018

### **Heritage Hero Awards**

Twenty-two pupils from Kelso High School were presented with Archaeology Scotland's Explorer Heritage Hero Award for taking part in the fortification excavations in May. The headmistress attended the presentations.

### **Youth and community engagement**

In April members of the project team ran heritage activities for a youth club in Hawick. Activities focused on the range of internet resources that can be used to learn more about local history and included an interactive timeline exercise to explore Scotland's human past.

The team were invited to Hawick in May by Live Borders Libraries and Archives to attend a community family fun day as part of the Borders Science Festival. The Stobs team and a volunteer from the project ran excavation and metal-detecting activities (Fig.10).





Fig.10. Borders Science Festival in Hawick's Wilton Park, May 2018

**Outcome 12 – Communities are empowered to take an active role in understanding and enhancing the historic environment**

**Hut Search Group**

Following a winter break the Hut Search Group re-convened to continue their work locating and recording Stobs buildings sold off in the 1920s and 1950s. In 2017 twenty-one potential huts had been discovered of which fifteen were still upstanding. Following a review of the current findings the group were granted permission to investigate two new buildings in Deloraine in the Ettrick Valley, Selkirkshire. Both were believed to have originated from Stobs. The purpose of the site visits is to record the structures and to identify possible links to Stobs. Data gathered will be submitted to the Home Front Legacy database and will also contribute significantly to the historical record. The first building investigated at Deloraine was an altered medium-sized Nissen hut with 4 dormer-style windows (Fig.11). It was found to be in a poor condition and is under threat from collapse.



Fig.11. Nissen hut at Wester Deloraine, visited May 2018

The second building was identified as an Armstrong hut now used as a cattle shed. It is understood that it was brought to Deloraine in the early 1950s (Fig.12). No original internal fittings were identified but a stencil stamp marked "India Office 5" was observed on the corrugated panelling (Fig.13). The building was considered to be in a fair condition.



Fig.12. Armstrong hut at Wester Deloraine, visited May 2018



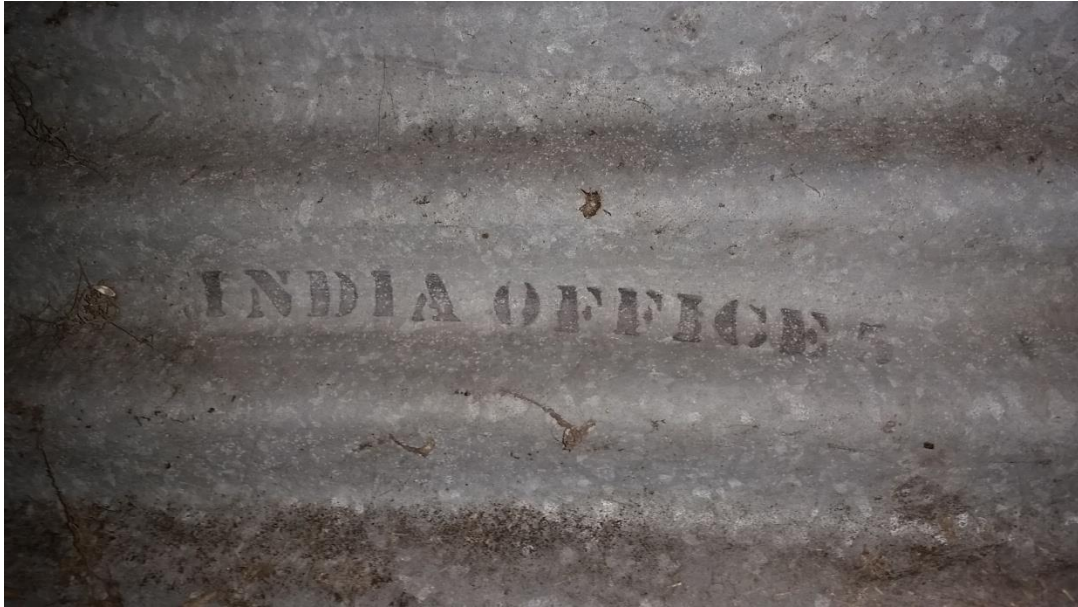


Fig.13. "India Office 5" stencilling, Wester Deloraine Armstrong hut, May 2018

Researchers at the Borders Family History Society continue to look for connections to prisoners, internees and British soldiers' families. They have completed the biographies for twenty-five individuals. These will be added to the timeline on the project website soon.

The Stobs Camp Project Twitter account now has 560 followers and tweets have reached many thousands of people.



### **Outcome 13 – People and communities enjoy the historic environment**

#### **Tour at Stobs**

Over 70 delegates on Archaeology Scotland's annual Summer School visited Stobs Camp over the weekend of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> May. The project officer led a short tour of the site and provided an article for the field excursion guide. He demonstrated how the project team is working tirelessly to understand the role Stobs played in the First World War and how they are sharing and commemorating Stobs and the people connected to it (Fig.14).



Fig.14. Archaeology Scotland Summer School trip to Stobs Camp, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2018

#### **Talk**

The Project Officer was invited back to speak to the Hawick Rotary Club on 24<sup>th</sup> May.

#### **Stobs theatre productions (also meets Outcome 14 – Collaboration across the sector)**

As part of the Stobs Camp Project's collaboration with Dr Stefan Manz's *Remembering Internment Camps* project a new theatrical play was produced by members of Edinburgh Napier University. The performance centred on two First World War German manuscripts in the care of Hawick Museum. The Project Officer helped source images, reviewed publicity material and assisted with promoting the shows. Productions were staged in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Hawick. All were sold out (Fig.15).





Fig.15. Stobs theatrical performance in Hawick, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2018

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June 2018