

INNOVATIVE LEARNING WEEK

- a diary

by Amy Cannon
Year 1 Scottish History



DAY 1: 19th February - Prehistoric Landscape at Kilmartin Valley, Argyll

(school of History, Classics and Archaeology)

DAY 2: 20th February - 'Getting inside your marker's head': Essay writing workshop

(school of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences)

- 'Sucking blood, eating brains: Vampires and Zombies as Cultural Products'

(school of Social and Political Science)

- 'Expect the Unexpected: PhD research in Celtic and Scottish Studies'

(school of Literatures, Languages and Cultures)

- 'A Harlot's Progress': Film screening

(school of History, Classics and Archaeology)

DAY 3: 21st February - 'Scotland since 1914: A Changing Nation': Visit to National Museum

(school of History, Classics and Archaeology)

DAY 4: 22nd February - A Visit to Stirling Castle

(school of History, Classics and Archaeology)

DAY 5: 23rd February - A Visit to Hadrian's Wall

(school of History, Classics and Archaeology)

DAY 1 - 19th February 2013

Prehistoric Landscape - Kilmartin Valley, Argyll

We arrived at Achnabreck early Tuesday morning; the first of many activities planned for the day. Then followed our arrival at Kilmartin Village, where we stopped for lunch and had an opportunity to look around the beautiful church, and within its grounds, stone carvings.



Cairns of Dal Riada

We then travelled to the site of Templewood and its surrounding area to observe the Cairns of Dal Riada, and finally to Dunadd - Seat of the Kings - and prepared for the journey home.

I learnt that,

- Achnabreck was one of the most important ritual landscapes in Scotland.
- Kilmartin Village was the home of stone carvings.
- Templewood and the Cairns followed circular patterns and placements including the surrounding mountains
- Dunadd was the centre of a communication network and was one of Scotland's most important ceremonial centres; inauguration of the kings of Dal Riada.



View over Kingdom of Dal Riada

I particularly enjoyed visiting Dal Riada. In our first semester, we were taught about the incredible history of this important place, and it was a great feeling to actually be there.

I also made a new friend during this trip!

The beautiful Kilmartin church



DAY 2 - 20th February 2013

'Getting inside your marker's head' ~ Essay-writing workshop



Dugald Stewart in the sun

This workshop took place in the Dugald Stewart building. Our instructor gave us a challenge to re-order an essay that had been dissected. We then went through the structure of a good essay and then went on to mark two essays; one good, and one... not so good. I learnt first

and foremost that I should never

mark essays. I also learned some great structural techniques for theoretical assignments and made another new friend in the process!

'A Harlot's Progress' ~ Film Showing

The film was shown in the Teviot lecture theatre. Dr. Adam Budd gave a brief introduction, and once the film had finished, there was opportunity for discussion about events happening at the time. The film depicts a young lady from York who travelled to London, and became tangled in a prostitution ring. The artist, William Hogarth, paints the prostitute throughout her life, and even after her death, to show her progress through life. Through the film, I learned a lot about 18th century British social history; much financial gain in the 18th century was as a result of expanding prostitution. In 1730 there were 103 brothels in Covent Garden alone, and 6 million gallons of Gin were drunk in 1760!

The overall experience was hugely enjoyable, although it was a very emotional film which emphasized unpleasant situations that still occur in everyday life today; poverty, economic crisis and abuse.

'Sucking blood, eating brains': Vampires and zombies as cultural products

This talk took place in the Chrystal Macmillan building. It began by questioning the typical features of Vampires and Zombies. We then discussed our own favourite vampires and zombie figures, (mine being Damon Salvatore from the Vampire Diaries). We watched a number of extracts from monster film, such as Vamp. I learnt SO much. I learnt that vampires and zombies are incredibly and closely linked to humanity and following this, came to understand why the 'monster' genre travels so well within the present industry. I thoroughly enjoyed our discussion on what the 'monster' may be; one common thought being those things we fear most about ourselves, and as a result, we channel these 'things' into monsters. I also liked the discussion of the similarities and differences between vampires and zombies, and the origins of such entities in different cultures.

Expect the Unexpected: PhD research in Celtic and Scottish Studies

The PhD talks took place in the Celtic and Scottish Studies building in George Square. There were seven speakers in total, all with a unique presentation. In the Urban Clearances

presentation given by DJ Johnston Smith, I learnt that in 191 families were evicted in Edinburgh during 1968. From Stephanie Carter's talk, I learnt that the National Museum of Scotland possesses only 11 of the chessmen pieces found on the Isle of Lewis, whilst the British Museum has 78. Every single presentation given was very interesting, and the varieties in topics reminded me that there is so much we still don't know about our past. I particularly enjoyed the presentations given by Annie Macloed Hill; Annie played beautiful recordings of evangelical song, and as a Welsh speaker I could still notice a few lyrics and pronunciations, even though I don't speak Gaelic!

DAY 3 - 21st February 2013

Scotland - A Changing Nation:
visit to Museum of Scotland

At 3pm we met at the North entrance of the National Museum of Scotland. Dr. Alexander Murdoch led our group on a tour around the Early Modern Scotland sections of the Museum. There were five sections within the Early Modern Scottish period; War, Industry, Daily Life, Voice of the People and Leaving Scotland.



Entrance to National Museum

I learnt so many things during one hour! For instance...

- The idea of women doctors was more acceptable in the early 19th century than in more recent times;
- The marine engineers at Pearl Harbour were trained at the University of Strathclyde!

I also learned that..

- As late as 1951, 43% of Scottish households didn't have a bathroom, and 33% shared a toilet.
- In the poorest postcode areas of Scotland, the life expectancy is 64.4 years old, which is lower than the life expectancy in Lebanon, North Korea and even the Gaza Strip (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2006).
- Ravenscraig Steel Works was the last operating Steel Works in Scotland. It produced its last baton of steel on 20th June 1992.



The whole afternoon was fab! I hadn't had the opportunity to explore this particular section before. I would certainly recommend a visit; there's a whole wealth of information about Scottish life from times that are still within living memory.



Automotive construction in Scotland: The 1973 Hillman Imp on display was built in Renfrewshire

DAY 4 - 22nd February 2013

A Visit to Stirling Castle

We left at 9.30 sharp, calling at Bannockburn en-route. This was unfortunately under reconstruction. At Stirling Castle, a tour guide took us to Argyll's lodgings, a 17th-century building situated a few hundred yard from the Castle that housed nobility. After the tour, we were briefly shown around the castle and grounds, after which we were given time to further explore the castle and visit Stirling town centre. The bus stopped at the Wallace monument and Cambuskenneth Abbey en-route back to Edinburgh.



I had never been to Stirling Castle, Bannockburn, the Wallace monument, or Cambuskenneth Abbey previously, so it was a learning curve all day!

Portrait of Archibald Campbell, 4th Earl of Argyll



Dining room in Argyll house



Among The most notable things I learned...

- The 1st Earl of Stirling, William Alexander had connections with Canada, and Canadian symbolism is seen on the crest of the Argyll building.
- Tulips were a growing symbol of fashion and wealth, hence the great number of tulips plates on display around the building.
- Stirling castle was always a royal castle, and always belonged to the monarchy; it functioned both as a fortress and a residential home.
- It was the baptism place of James VI, and James VI reconstructed the abbey that sits within the castle grounds.
- Although having studied James III previously, I had no idea that he was buried, with his Queen, at Cambuskenneth Abbey.



Diagram showing the extensive gardens in the grounds of Stirling castle; remnants are still clearly visible today

DAY 5 - 23rd February 2013

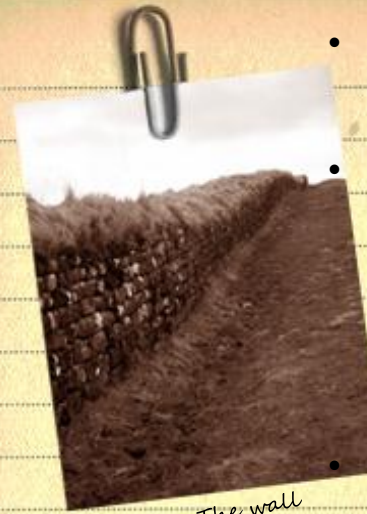
A Visit to Hadrian's Wall



The group climbing Hadrian's Wall

After leaving early in the morning, we visited Chesters Roman Fort, Hadrian's Wall, where we looked specifically at a section that was excavated by a team lead by Edinburgh's own Professor Jim Crow, and Corbridge Roman Town.

- I learnt that water was used as a state of display, as in, 'we look after our citizens because we have water' - Corbridge had an ornamental mini-fountain in its grounds.
- I also learnt that just because (at Corbridge) the buildings were beneath the surface of the road, didn't mean that Romans were hobbits! A direct quote from Professor Crow:



The wall

- Corbridge was a supply base to the Roman frontier in its time and dates back to the time of Agricola
- During the 1850s-1860s, John Clayton purchased the lands surrounding Hadrian's Wall to produce a private archaeological estate, and over time, exposed lengths of the wall to the public, while preserving it.
- Originally, the wall would have been 15ft, making it a substantial barrier of defence, but over time, it has decreased in height.

What I liked the most: The views!

They were incredible.

The visit also inspired me to do a little further investigation into the facts I had learnt throughout the day; for example, I have been researching the times of Agricola. I am also considering using archaeological evidence to support my arguments in future essays!

'Just because the buildings are below the surface of the road, it does not mean the Romans were hobbits!'

-Jim Crow at Corbridge



Tombstone with carving of boar - reminded me of my sister's Pug dog!

As a first-year undergraduate, I didn't know what to expect, although I was eager to take advantage of what the week had to offer; and I'm glad I took every opportunity possible, because it was a great week, and I had no idea I would learn so many interesting things over such a short space of time. I look forward to next year, to see how much more I can challenge myself.

On balance, would I participate in Innovative Learning Week 2014?
Absolutely.

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