

NORTHERN ARCHAEOLOGY



Volume 17/18 (special edition) 1999

THE JOURNAL OF THE NORTHUMBERLAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

'We were always chasing time.'

Papers presented to Keith Blood

Edited by Paul Frodsham, Peter Topping and Dave Cowley



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THE NORTHUMBERLAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

THE NORTHUMBERLAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP (NAG) exists to provide opportunities for members of the public to take part in archaeological activities relating primarily to the study of the archaeology of Northumberland and surrounding areas. NAG undertakes its own fieldwork projects and occasionally supports other projects undertaken by members. A lecture programme, social events and a series of excursions are organised each year, and members receive *Northern Archaeology* which is published annually. *Northern Archaeology* is also available by subscription to non-members.

MEMBERSHIP. All enquiries about membership should be addressed to the Membership Secretary at the address below. Membership for 1999-2000 costs £12 (single), £15 (joint or family) or £2 (student or unemployed, not including a copy of *Northern Archaeology*).

NORTHERN ARCHAEOLOGY is the NAG journal and includes a variety of papers concentrating principally on the archaeology of Northumberland and adjacent areas. Occasional special editions are published to cover particular themes. All communications regarding contributions to the journal should be addressed to the Editor at the address below, or c/o Northumberland National Park Authority, Eastburn, South Park, Hexham, NE46 1BS. All potential contributors are encouraged to consult the Editor as early as possible when considering the preparation of a paper (please note that *Northern Archaeology* is prepared for publication on a home computer and all contributions should be submitted on disk in a suitable wordprocessor format). Enquiries about back numbers (many volumes are still available, though some are now in very short supply) should be addressed to the Secretary at the address below.

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Foreword

Keith Blood has given sterling service to NAG over the years, including a spell as President. His professional expertise has been essential to the success of NAG fieldwork projects, and all 'Naggers' wish him a long and happy retirement. Needless to say, he will be expected to allocate a substantial portion of his newly acquired free time to future NAG projects: something that will hopefully continue to bring him much pleasure for many years.

This volume has been collated specially to mark Keith's retirement (in December 1998) after 35 years as an archaeological surveyor for the Ordnance Survey and the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments (England). The title of the volume, *'We were always chasing time'*, is based on a quote that Keith has been heard to utter on numerous occasions, reflecting the quantity and variety of ancient sites with which he has been involved over the years. That the volume originated in a phone conversation between Cambridge and Edinburgh is appropriate; Keith's career as a field archaeologist has taken him across the length and breadth of England and Scotland.

Keith joined the Archaeology Division of the Ordnance Survey in 1964 and remained there until its closure in 1983, transferring to the Newcastle office of RCHM(E). There have been quantum leaps in the use of survey technology during the course of his career. From the optical square ('Popeye') and 30m tape that underpinned so much of the work of the OS Archaeology Branch, to the most advanced electronic theodolite and satellite positioning systems in use with RCHME, Keith has mastered them all. He has happily passed on his skills to junior colleagues and friends, and it will be clear from many of the contributions to this volume that one of his great personal strengths is his considerable skill as a teacher.

Throughout his long career three factors have remained constant, although undoubtedly tested at times, and these are reflected in the following papers. Firstly, he has always been approachable, and the range of contributions here shows that he makes friends wherever he goes. Secondly he has the ability to focus on the importance of the job in hand - providing high quality surveys of archaeological monuments - and believe in the value of what he is doing. Thirdly, and no less importantly, his sense of humour (well illustrated by his dogged enthusiasm for Hull City Football Club) has been a major ingredient of many successful field projects over the decades.

The papers in this volume are eclectic and are drawn from widely dispersed areas. The authors include some of Keith's former OS and Royal Commission colleagues, professional academics, local authority and freelance archaeologists. The contributions, however, contain two clear strands: the first comprises papers dealing with the nature of the archaeological record; the second those concerned with field monuments and their place in the landscape. These two strands characterise Keith's career and interests as an archaeological surveyor and it is with the greatest of pleasure that we offer them to him.

*PF - Hexham
PT - Cambridge
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The cover design is by John Stevenson (RCAHMS). The lower image is taken from a plan of the Honister Slate Mines in Cumbria produced by a RCHM(E) team including Keith - Crown Copyright, English Heritage. The other image is a plan of Kiphedir broch in Sutherland drawn by Keith on 6th October 1976 - Crown Copyright, RCAHMS.