

X. Necrology

Graham Ritchie

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The Scottish archaeologist J. N. Graham Ritchie (b. 1942) was a graduate of the late Stuart Piggott's Dept. of Archaeology at Edinburgh University. He contributed a joint obituary of his teacher to the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* (Ritchie & Watkins 1997).

An Investigator with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, the main field recording body of that country, Graham Ritchie had joined the organisation in 1965 and ended his career with it as Head of Archaeology. His main contributions were to the great survey of Argyll – the region in the west of Scotland facing the Irish Sea and the Atlantic – published in seven parts 1971–92 and synthesised in a volume edited by him in 1997 (*The Archaeology of Argyll*, Edinburgh). Graham Ritchie also produced a number of field guidebooks and overviews of Scottish archaeology, often co-authored with his wife, the archaeologist and editor Anna Ritchie.

Also while at the Royal Commission, Graham Ritchie had shared responsibility for the organisation and presentation of the public archive of archaeological (and architectural) research in Scotland, the National Monuments Record. Historians of British archaeology will know of his paper in the festschrift volume for the prehistorian Euan Mackie, about the variety of excavation archive material and some of the more unusual ways that such material has been preserved and discovered (Ritchie 2002).

Graham Ritchie (along with the late Ernest Marwick) had earlier made exemplary use of older illustrations and accounts of now-vanished parts of the monument-complex when publishing his 1973–74 excavations at the Neolithic site of the Stones of Stenness in Orkney (Ritchie 1978). Another 1970s paper of Graham Ritchie's demonstrated the value of unpublished archive material for understanding a site. He and Anthony Rutherford drew on all the Seventeenth and Nineteenth-century archive sources for an important burial site of the Fifth/Sixth centuries AD (re-using a Bronze Age standing-stone and cairn), near Edinburgh (Rutherford & Ritchie 1975).

A later study looked at the work of two early 20th-century archaeologists – a surveyor and a photographer – on a particular stone circle in north-east Scotland (Ritchie 1998a), as a contribution to the understanding of past recording of prehistoric sites. More recently, he returned to the subject by looking at the approaches involved in the re-erection of prehistoric standing stones, giving a demonstration of the importance of record-keeping of such changes, in a paper for the volume in honour of the British prehistorian Derek Simpson (Ritchie 2005).

A major re-discovery of excavation archive material, later donated to the National Monuments Record, was the catalyst for a joint reassessment and final report on an earlier prehistoric site at Knappers on the north bank of the River Clyde west of Glasgow, an excavation which had provoked much controversy at the time that it was carried out in 1937–39 (Ritchie & Adamson 1982). Graham Ritchie later produced a full-length account of its excavator, the prehistorian and controversialist Ludovic McLellan Mann (Ritchie 2003b).

Earlier, along with his colleague Diana Murray, he had written an appreciation of the great 1930s campaign of monument excavation and preservation on the Orkney island of Rousay run by Walter Grant (1886–1947). The paper (Reynolds & Ritchie 1987) arose from a visit to see the surviving archives, then still in private ownership but soon presented to a public body.

Another Royal Commission project with which Graham Ritchie was involved, to produce a hand-list of the Pictish (early Mediaeval) sculptured stones of Scotland (published 1994, revised and enlarged 1999), paid careful attention to the history of the recording of Pictish sculpture from the Eighteenth century onwards. Graham Ritchie gave a lecture, one in a series published by a major regional museum devoted to such material, on the subject of Recording Early Christian Monuments in Scotland, which looked at some of the methods of illustration and some of those who illustrated them (Ritchie 1998b). In it, he considered the ways the recording reflects how we interpret each monument today. At about the same time, he explored the illustration of one particular sculptured stone through the observations of different illustrators, 1726–1903 (Ritchie 1997).

The 2000 Rhind lectures for the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland were on the subject of 'Presenting the Scottish Past'. These lectures reconsidered and re-evaluated figures whose contribution to Scottish historical and archaeological studies have shaped public understanding and professional practice; three of the four archaeologists discussed were lectured on by Graham Ritchie, at that time the President of the Society (Ritchie 2003a & b).

Sadly, Graham Ritchie died in April 2005. His contributions to the history and historiography of archaeology deserve wide notice (hence this brief contribution).

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