

The Tweeddale Society

PRO GRAMME INFORMATION

2011-2012

11th October 2011

WALTER SCOTT, HIS LIFE AND HIS LEGACY

Rhoderick Scott - a Guide at Abbotsford.

The Title is self explanatory.

Rhoderick Scott comes from a business background and his lecture will reveal how his interest in Scott developed. He is now a respected guide at Abbotsford House.

8th November 2011

MAYAS, MACAWS AND MAHOGANY •10 YEARS LIVING IN THE MAYA FOREST OF BELIZE

Chris Minty, MBE.

The Maya forest is the second largest contiguous humid tropical forest north of Amazonia. Battered by tropical hurricanes for millions of year, occupied by Maya Indians for thousand of years and logged for hundreds of years, this forest is a truly remarkable and resilient ecosystem. Despite this disturbance or maybe as a result of it, the Maya Forest today is ranked as one of the most important biodiversity hotspots in the world. Known throughout the region as La Selva Maya, the forest is home to over 400 critically endangered species and is considered a top priority for conservation protection by many international conservation organizations.

Chris Minty had flown into Belize many times prior to taking up his post as the new manager of Las Cuevas in 1997. However, all of his previous visits to this small Central American country had been for short field expeditions of a few weeks•duration. As he left a cold wet London in the early hours of a dark November morning he knew this trip was going to be different. Having spent the best part of the nineties as a soil scientist working with Prof. Furley at the University of Edinburgh, Chris often found himself up to his neck in foul smelling mangrove mud, digging soil pits in sun-baked savanna or scraping coral sands into collecting bags, therefore going to the rain forest was a real adventure and a great challenge.

On his previous trips he had not ventured much into the forest-covered heartland of the country; apart from a brief jungle survival course run by the British Army. Arriving at Las Cuevas on a hot, steaming day after a five hour bumpy Land-Rover journey was therefore his first real introduction into the depth of the Chiquibul Forest. Met by local Mayan Indians who showed him around, he became enchanted with the place and the people. **THE CHARLES MORRISON MEMORIAL LECTURE**

13th December 2011

"MILITARY LOW FLYING - IS IT ESSENTIAL.

Sq. Ldr. John Gilbert -RAF Community Relations Officer for Scotland

The presentation covers all aspects of low flying and the need for it.

John Gilbert was born in 1949 and joined the RAF in 1969 having spent two years in industry working for Dunlop, training to be an accountant.

After completing his officer training and graduating from flying training, he was posted to the V-Force and flew the Vulcan B Mk2 strategic bomber for 9 years. He was a member of No 44 (Rhodesia) squadron and was an instructor on No 230 Operational Conversion Unit.

Following his completion of the post-graduate General Duties Aerosystems Course in 1979 he was posted to the Aircraft and Armament Experimental Establishment at Boscombe Down in Wiltshire as the Search-water Radar Trials officer. Here he was responsible for the weapons systems performance trials of the radar and also carried out other tasks in support of the Falklands Conflict. At the end of his tour he was detached to VX-1 at the United States Naval Base at Patuxent River as a trials advisor.

In 1983 he was posted to the RAF Air Navigation School at RAF Finningley as the Officer Commanding the Navigation Specialist, Simulator and Standards Squadron. In 1987 he became the Squadron Leader Electronic Warfare (EW) Training in the Department of Air Warfare at the RAF College. During his time in this post he was responsible for the management and organization of, and lectured to, all the RAF EW courses. He also gave briefings and ran courses, up to 8 weeks in duration, in Malaysia, Singapore, Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt. He took over the post as the Officer Commanding Operations at the Electronic Warfare Tactics Range at RAF Spadeadam in Cumbria in 1989. He remained in this post for 10

years and was responsible for the safe operation of aircraft in Low Flying Area 13, which straddles the border between Scotland and England; he was also deputy Station Commander for this period. In addition to his primary duties he was also the Station Conservation Officer of the largest RAF station in the UK (only in area!) and during his last year, Spadeadam was the first RAF station to be awarded the Silver Otter for the best MoD conservation programme. During his time he was responsible for the IIP accreditation of the unit and became an IIP Panel Member for Cumbria.

In 2000 he was seconded to Defence Evaluation and Research Agency (DERA) as the Test and Evaluation Ranges Electronic Warfare Technical Leader based at RAF Boscombe Down.

He retired from the RAF in February 2001 to become the RAF Community Relations Officer for Scotland. He is married to Marie and they have 2 adult sons and one grandson.

14th February 2012

PEEBLES: KINGS, COVENANT AND CONSEQUENCES

Mr. Ronald Ireland

Ronald Ireland is a retired chartered surveyor. He has been interested in Scottish history since his youth and has lived in Peebles for forty-seven years. He is chairman of the Peebles Civic Society and a member of Historic Scotland. He is the author of *The Bloody Covenant*, published in 2010 by The History Press. The talk will cover some of the historical information about Peebles and Tweeddale discovered during researches for the book, *The Bloody Covenant*, focusing on the religious order before and after the Reformation of 1560, the signing of the National Covenant and the Bishops Wars during the first half of the Seventeenth Century and the Covenanting period known as *The Killing Times* which followed.

www.bloodycovenant.co.uk

13th March 2012

"THE IN-BETWEEN LAND: CLUES TO A LOST OCEAN AND THE COLLISION OF CONTINENTS"

Dr. Angus Miller

For Angus Miller Geowalks is a business and a passion. As an Edinburgh-based geologist he likes to share that passion by taking people on an exploration of Scotland's geology, helping them to discover the rich story of Scotland's rocks and landscapes. "geology with a human face"

Family holidays in the outdoors of Scotland and geology courses at Strathaven Academy were the start of an interest that led Angus to study geology at Edinburgh University from which he graduated in 1991. After a year out, volunteering with Scottish Conservation Projects in the Highlands, Angus went on to do a Ph.D. at Durham University, finishing in late 1995. As part of his studies he spent time investigating small earthquakes of the Hengill volcano in Iceland and was based for a time at the US Geological Survey in Menlo Park, California, a great chance to explore the mountain ranges, volcanoes and earthquakes of the area.

As a member of the team monitoring the erupting volcano on Montserrat in the eastern Caribbean he worked for two years at the Montserrat Volcano Observatory. As the eruption worsened the volcano had a catastrophic effect on the island and its small human population demonstrating to him the fascination and fear they cause and the challenges of communicating science to the general public.

Geowalks began on Arthur's Seat in 1998, using the story of this local volcano to explore the vastness of geological time and scale. Since then, his work has grown to include day walks and Geowalks holidays across Scotland, and activities with organisations such as the Edinburgh International Science Festival. Angus has also worked for interesting organisations such as the Scottish Earth Science Education Forum and the John Muir Trust, and he teaches adult education courses for the Office of Lifelong Learning at Edinburgh University. In his spare time he is Secretary of the Edinburgh Geological Society. And a dad!

www.geowalks.demon.co.uk

HALKETT HENDRIE MEMORIAL LECTURE

JOINT MEETING WITH PEEBLES ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

3rd April 2012

AGM and SOCIAL NIGHT