

Report of Lecture to Dunse History Society

27th November 2023

The Dunse History Society was much entertained and informed by a lecture on The Mesolithic Occupation of Southern Scotland presented by Dr. Kristian Pederson of Edinburgh University on 27 November. This lecture provided the earliest source of information about the Borders that the society has experienced. The glacial ice sheet formed during the Ice Age 20,000 years ago wiped out all archaeological evidence. Deglaciation revealed the first evidence of habitation. After the Ice Age there was no vegetation therefore no animals and the land had to be recolonised. The North Sea was dry land. Populations existed in several southern areas and as the ice retreated the population moved northwards. Scandinavia and the British Isles were the last areas to be populated. Evidence of tools found for killing animals which are of a structure common to several areas and therefore of common origin have been found across Scandinavia and the British Isles. They were hand tools used to stab down on animals probably from a boat or at a crossing. Also evidence of spears but none for archery. Caribou bones have been found and reindeer bones at Edrom. Other animal remains found include elk, oryx, bear, beaver, red deer, wild boar. Links with Scandinavia are clear however with the deglaciation about 11,000 years ago comes sea level rise and the UK becomes increasingly insular. Few people lived in Scotland at this time and the first farmers eliminated these hunter gatherers. A Stone Age research project based around Paxton and Ladykirk will link with colleagues in Scandinavia to look at population connections across this area.

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