

## **Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists' Society, Volume 32, 2019**

This volume of the East Lothian Transactions could be seen as a 'reinterpretation of history' issue, because it challenges the views of some highly regarded specialists. The front cover has a reconstruction drawing of an ancient building at Doon Hill, Dunbar, prepared by Cambridge archaeologist Dr Brian Hope-Taylor. Dr Hope-Taylor excavated the site during the period 1964-6, when he identified the building remains as of Dark Age Anglian origin. For some time afterwards his findings were regarded as significant evidence for the presence of Angles in East Lothian. Over the years his interpretation has sometimes been challenged, but in the new East Lothian *Transactions* Professor Ian Ralston's article seems definitive in confirming the building as very much older, of early Neolithic origin (early fourth millennium BC).

Another highly regarded specialist whose findings are challenged in this volume is WFH Nicolaisen, author of the standard work on *Scottish Place-Names*. Nicolaisen considered that the Scottish placenames Tynninghame and Whittingehame belonged to the earliest period of Anglo-Saxon immigration into Britain, on the basis that in their original form they had an 'ingaham' ending, with an extra vowel between 'ing' and 'ham'. However, in his article 'New Thoughts on Old Place-names: Tynninghame and Whittingehame', Alan James challenges this interpretation, both on philological grounds and because of the fact that 'ingaham' names are rare in the north of England, more usually found further south. For many years Nicolaisen's finding was considered to be part of the evidence for early Anglian ingress into Scotland, but James's interpretation casts doubt on this. The Nicolaisen interpretation was for long cited in works of popular history, such as Historic Scotland's *Angels, Fools and Tyrants* (1999) as well as in archaeological publications.

Less confrontational in nature, but nevertheless defining as a significant reinterpretation of history is Helen Robertson's 'A Medieval Palace Revealed: Haddington's historic royal residence' which sets out evidence for the former existence of a royal building in central Haddington between St Mary's Church and Nungate Bridge. This contrasts with an illustrated fragment of a long-demolished building in Court Street, at one time believed to be the remains of a royal palace. The other articles in Volume 32 include 'Two Old English Place-Names: Haddington and Clerkington', by Liz Curtis, and 'From Old to New: the creation of the present village of Tynninghame', by Joy Dodd, both of which link, in different ways with Alan James's Tynninghame/Whittingehame article. *Don Martin*.