

Celebrating archaeology in Scotland

# 2023



# Welcome!

We want a Scotland where archaeology is for everyone! A place where the study of the past offers opportunities for us now and in the future to discover, care for, promote and enjoy our rich and diverse heritage, contributing to our wellbeing and knowledge and helping to tell Scotland's stories in their global context.

In this magazine, bringing together articles and comments from people and organisations across the archaeology sector, we celebrate how Scotland's Archaeology Strategy is being delivered across the country.

Ring of Brodgar - one of the sites visited by delegates of the Orkney Symposium.



Image © ScARF

Image © xxxx

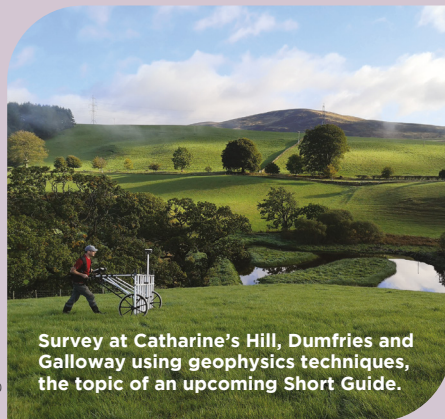
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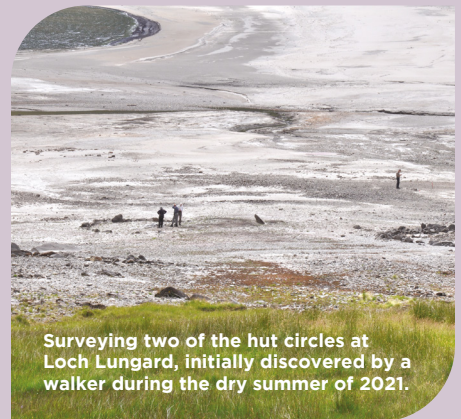
Stone circle at Machrie Moor.



Image © ScARF



Survey at Catharine's Hill, Dumfries and Galloway using geophysics techniques, the topic of an upcoming Short Guide.



Surveying two of the hut circles at Loch Lungard, initially discovered by a walker during the dry summer of 2021.

Image © Roland Spencer-Jones

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Image © ScARF

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Image © Archaeology Scotland

### Developing a model for student training at Holyrood Field School

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Image © Holyrood Field School





**W**ELCOME to Celebrating Archaeology in Scotland 2023. This is our sixth issue, and marks the eighth year of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy. That we can fill another issue with updates from exciting and innovative projects is testament to the hard work of many people across our diverse, collaborative sector.

Our vision is always to make archaeology matter, and we hope that after reading this issue you will agree that our sector is fulfilling its collective potential to be positive force for change.

This year we welcome the launch of *Our Past, Our Future: The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment*. Scotland's Archaeology Strategy began the year after the launch of its predecessor – *Our Place in Time*, Scotland's first national strategy for the historic environment.

We're now eight years into the life of the SAS and the arrival of *Our Past Our Future* is a good prompt to reflect on where we are.

Celebrating Archaeology in Scotland 2023 marks the start of that journey, and its themes are the priorities of *Our Past Our Future*; Delivering the transition to net zero, empowering resilient and inclusive communities and places and building a wellbeing economy.

I hope you enjoying reading about some of the projects undertaken across Scotland that clearly demonstrate that archaeology is for everyone and that Scotland is a place where the study of the past offers opportunities for us now and in the future to discover, care for, promote and enjoy our rich and diverse heritage, and to be celebrated in a global context.

Andrew Heald,  
Chair of Scottish Strategic  
Archaeology Committee

 @heald\_andy

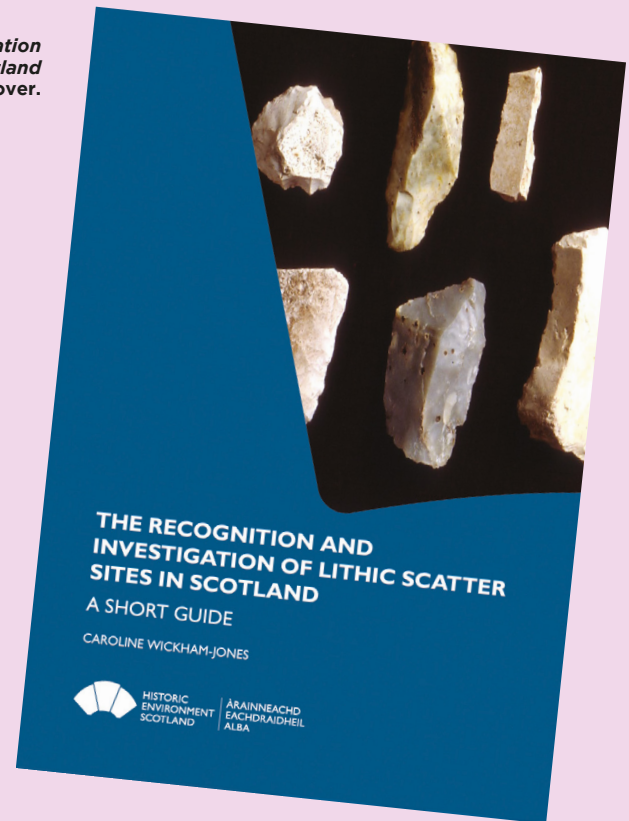


**WELCOME  
2023**



*The Recognition and Investigation of Lithic Scatter Sites in Scotland Short Guide cover.*

Working together to broaden the impact and public benefit of archaeology.



## DELIVERING ARCHAEOLOGY

**At the end of last year, Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and Scotland's Archaeology Strategy launched The Recognition and Archaeological Investigation of Lithic Scatter Sites. This is the first of our Archaeology Short Guides series, aimed at a range of people investigating and recording Scotland's Archaeology.**

We hope that this guide on Lithic Scatters will be the first in a series that will provide guidance on a range of different topics related to Scottish Archaeology. You might remember that we talked about our plans for the new Short Guide series in last year's annual review. The guides are intended to be brief but informative, around 30 pages in length, well-illustrated and, as much as possible, written in accessible language. Each will be peer-reviewed, with feedback being sought internally and externally. Expert authors will be sought from within HES and across the wider sectors. They will cover a range of subjects including sharing information about cutting-edge scientific techniques and looking forward to considering possible future developments.

### **Practical guidance for all**

HES and its predecessor bodies were known for their trusted, authoritative guidance, such as the Technical Advice Notices. We hope that this new series will be just as successful. The delivery plan for Scotland's Archaeology Strategy commits that HES will lead on creating standards and guidance and fill recognised gaps in advice. Working closely with our partners in the delivery of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy, we launched The Recognition and Archaeological Investigation of Lithic Scatter Sites at the beginning of 2023.

### **Identifying and recording Scotland's rock art**

This year also saw the launch of Investigating and Recording Scotland's Rock Art. It follows on from the successful Scotland's Rock Art Project, which supported communities to explore Scotland's rich legacy of prehistoric rock art. This included work at the newly discovered prehistoric rock art at Dunchraigaig, Kilmartin, which is Scotland's earliest known animal carving. This short guide builds on the experience built up during the project to create an accessible how-to guide for community groups and others interested in exploring Scotland's Rock Art resource and takes them through site discovery, recording, and archiving and sharing information.

### **Understanding geoarchaeology**

The next Short Guide will be authored by Dr Vanessa Reid on the subject of Geoarchaeology, which will look at how archaeological practitioners can use geoarchaeological techniques to better understand site formation and occupation. Vanessa drafted the new guidance as part of her NERC-funded PhD, which was supported by Historic Environment Scotland, with assistance from HES's Archaeological Science Manager, Dr Lisa Brown. The guide has an original and Scotland-specific angle, making use of existing resources via signposting. The primary focus of this guide will be to provide practical advice on geoarchaeological sampling of Scottish sites, which can be used by anyone working in the sector. In addition, it outlines different ways that these samples can be analysed by experts, and the information that you can learn. This will be complemented by Scottish case-studies, demonstrating a range of applied techniques.





**Left: Gradiometer survey  
at Machrie Moor Standing  
Stones, Isle of Arran.**

### **Guidance for geophysics in Scotland**

At the same time, HES's Heritage Research Service is working with sector partners on new guidelines for the use of geophysical survey for archaeology. No Scotland specific guidelines currently exist so the team is building on the existing ClfA and European Archaeological Council guidelines to write the document. The document is aimed at both professional and community archaeologists and will provide them with guidance to help undertake, report and archive geophysical surveys to a high standard. Other possible future titles include methods of archaeological dating and the archaeology of illicit whisky stills.

If you are aware of areas in Scottish Archaeology where technical advice is lacking, where we have expertise we can share, or where you think there is a demand from community groups, or if you are looking for a long-term output for a project you are working on, please get in touch with us at:

[archaeologystrategy@hes.scot](mailto:archaeologystrategy@hes.scot)

### **Managing change**

Historic Environment Scotland's Managing Change guidance series is now up and running again – and has just published updated guidance on Fire and Historic Buildings. The Archaeology Strategy has a key role in helping to identify priorities for new and updated guidance, with representation on the programme board. Managing Change and Archaeology Short Guides both need to reflect the key issues and pressures on the historic environment. The key to this is getting the right advice to the right audience in the right format. The Managing Change team will be engaging with stakeholders across the sector and beyond to make sure the guidance enables good decision making in the face of the crises our society faces. You can read more about how they're approaching the climate and nature crises in particular in Pointing the Way to the Future – a short statement that aims to start a big conversation.

*Kevin Grant and Kirsty Owen,*

**Historic Environment Scotland**



## In Depth

**The sea holds many secrets about our maritime heritage from shipwrecks to drowned landscapes. The records, maps and objects documenting these are scattered across hundreds of different archives, museums, libraries and galleries.**

They help tell stories including that of colonialism, slavery and immigration. Industry also needs to know about wrecks in planning offshore windfarms and other developments. In turn, their surveys help add valuable knowledge to our records and archives.

**HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND IS DELIGHTED TO BE A PARTNER IN UNPATH'D WATERS, A GROUND-BREAKING THREE-YEAR RESEARCH PROJECT THAT AIMS TO UNITE THE UK'S MARITIME COLLECTIONS.**

### **Toward a National Collection**

In 2020 UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) launched Towards a National Collection (TaNC). TaNC is an ambitious programme to create a national collection of the UK's museums, libraries, galleries and archives through cutting edge digital technologies. To help deliver this vision, TaNC ran an open competition for innovative, collaborative projects to develop new audiences and explore cross-searching collections. Barney Sloane of Historic England took up the challenge bringing together 26 organisations from England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man involved in marine heritage. Joining the national heritage agencies are a range of partners and experts from museums to universities including the Glasgow School of Art and the University of St Andrews. Until now there has been no single record of our maritime heritage across the UK. Historic Environment Scotland gives advice to Marine Scotland on defining Historic Marine Protected Areas.



# UNPATH'D WATERS: MARINE AND MARITIME COLLECTIONS IN THE UK



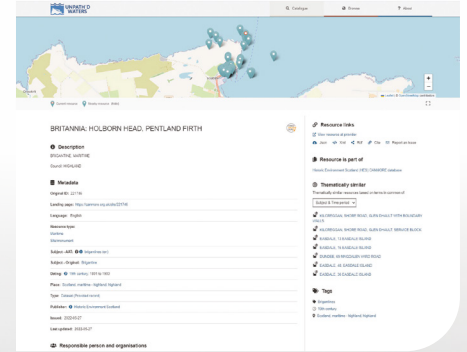
Canmore has information about approximately 28,000 wrecks and reported losses as well as the rich archaeology along our coasts, and we are part of the Marine Environment Data Information Network (MEDIN) Historic Environment Data Archive Centre. Our Properties in Care Collections and museums across Scotland have objects related to our use of the sea over time. Elsewhere in the UK information about marine heritage is similarly scattered across national heritage agencies, museums and archives. There are also active programmes of research on individual wreck sites, including on finds from the *Mary Rose*. Analysis of remote sensing surveys and commercial data help identify wreck sites or explore the submerged landscape of Doggerland in the North Sea.

### The importance of vocabulary

Unpath'd Waters has several related activities exploring the depth of the UK's marine heritage.

As a national record HES contributes information about wrecks to Aggregation and Characterisation which brings together data from different organisations into a single searchable website: the Unpath'd Waters Portal developed by the Archaeology Data Service, University of York. A key challenge in bringing the data together in a single portal is being able to cross search data from different providers.

Different organisations use different words to classify the sites, objects and wrecks in their database and there is no single agreed list of terms. To overcome this challenge each provider has mapped the terms they use in their databases to a common vocabulary provided by the Getty Art and Architectural Thesaurus. Users may also search by location or time, where the date of a wreck is known. The same vocabularies are an invaluable resource for another aspect of the project: Artificial Intelligence for data enhancement, linking and exploration.



There is a wealth of knowledge in both paper and digital formats and systems but until now this has not been easily accessible. Through innovative digital techniques it is now possible to explore – or mine – these sources for untapped knowledge, including dates associated with individual vessels. The results can then be fed back into the relevant national record and onto the Unpath'd Waters portal.

### Research benefits

HES and anyone working in marine heritage will also benefit from other aspects of research being undertaken. We will have a much better understanding of how remote sensing and commercial survey data can help find and identify wreck sites or explore submerged landscapes. We can learn from new techniques used to investigate people and the sea and apply the lessons learned from engaging new audiences through digital technologies.

Please visit the [Unpath'd Waters website](#) for more information.

*Julian Richards,*  
**Archaeology Data Service**

*Peter McKeague,*  
**Historic Environment Scotland**

Crail Harbour.

Above: Britannia Unpath'd  
Water record.



Right: Discussion group.

Below: Plenary.

Below right: Grantown Society stall.



## Highland Heritage Day

**Highland heritage organisations, museums, community trusts with heritage projects, and independent heritage projects were invited to a networking day on 4 March 2023 at Dingwall Academy and Dingwall Library.**

The day was funded by Historic Environment Scotland (HES). A steering group from Archaeology for Communities in the Highlands (ARCH), North of Scotland Archaeological Society, Museums and Heritage Highland, Highland Archaeology Services and Wardlaw Mausoleum planned the day and devoted considerable time to organise the event, helped by several volunteers.

### Working together

Around 130 people from 60 organisations came from throughout the Highlands, with HES providing travel expenses, and most bringing a stall to showcase their work. In the morning there were small groups to discuss common problems facing heritage organisations, thoughts on how to address these, and ways to collaborate with one another. In the afternoon five workshops were run addressing issues of volunteering, engaging with the community, climate change, organisation sustainability, and funding.

There was a great atmosphere to the day, as people networked, discovered organisations and project inspiration, and shared their successes and failures. Everyone agreed that this event should be repeated, and the steering group is already planning a follow up day for the public, to take place on Saturday 23 September at Dingwall Academy. Links to the workshop presentations and a summary of feedback from the day can be found on the [ARCH website](#).

*Susan Kruse,*  
**ARCH**







Treasure Trove Officer, Carl Savage, at a finds day in Dumfries Museum.

## Making Treasure Trove fit for the future

**In April 2023 it was announced that a robust review of the Treasure Trove system would be undertaken by the King's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer department.**

The growing popularity of activities such as metal detecting, field walking and magnet fishing has increased the number of artefacts being found by members of the public, and the review will ensure that the Treasure Trove system is sufficiently equipped for the future.

### Addressing the backlog

The current team is progressing through the backlog of finds created by the pandemic, with the support of three extra members of staff, bringing the team total to six. Outreach events across Scotland have also re-commenced so keep an eye out for us at your local museum!

Appointments for the review team and further information on the scope of the review will be announced in due course.

We encourage all stakeholders to contribute their thoughts.

*Emily Freeman,*  
**Treasure Trove**

## Grants from the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Fund Investigations into Scotland's past

**The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland announced in April 2023 that it has awarded a total of £26,251 to 15 archaeological and historical projects exploring more than 10,000 years of Scotland's past, many of which will make direct contributions to Scotland's Archaeology Strategy.**

### Colouring the past

One project, the 'Colouring the Neolithic: searching for pigments in Scotland's prehistoric rock art' will seek to "revolutionise our understanding" of the Neolithic by searching for evidence that rock art was not always plain stone. The researchers were inspired by the evidence of colour on structures and artefacts in Orkney and examples of paintings over carvings in sites on the continent.

Dr Joana Valdez-Tullett, Prehistorian, Rock Art Specialist and Technical Specialist at Wessex Archaeology, and Dr Louisa Campbell, Lord Kelvin Adam Smith Leadership Fellow in Archaeology at the University of Glasgow, will use rock art examples housed in Scottish museums to develop a pioneering approach to search for these 5,000-year-old pigment traces. The pair began their research on the Isle of Bute in the Firth of Clyde this summer.

Additional Society grants have been awarded to projects which will investigate traces of the earliest human populations on the Isle of Skye, and to students in the Scottish Archaeological Forum who are coordinating a new conference on 28-29 October 2023 in Aberdeen, which will highlight efforts to address the under-representation of marginalised groups within archaeology.

### Research support

The Society supports high-quality research and publication relating to Scotland's past by making several grants and awards available annually. The grants are open to everyone, and the deadlines are 30 April and 30 November each year.

Find out more on their [website](#).

*Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*



Dr Campbell and Dr Valdez-Tullett at Lubas, Isle of Bute (above) and Bute Museum (left).





Craft Fellow Rob Thomson working on a turf house at National Trust for Scotland's Glencoe Creel House.

**OUR PAST, OUR FUTURE IS SCOTLAND'S NEW HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY. IT WAS FORMALLY LAUNCHED IN GLASGOW IN JUNE BY CHRISTINA MCKELVIE, MINISTER FOR CULTURE, EUROPE AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.**

# OUR PAST, OUR FUTURE: THE NEW STRATEGY FOR SCOTLAND'S HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

**The Strategy - 'OPOF' for short - was developed through conversations and consultation with people across Scotland. The development process was led by Historic Environment Scotland, but we worked closely with the Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS), The Scottish Government, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and other key partners.**

The new Strategy is all about the difference we want the historic environment to make. The previous strategy - *Our Place in Time (OPiT)* - set out broad thematic areas to guide collective action, and twelve indicators of success under these. *Our Past, Our Future* more actively sets out a mission for us to work towards, along with targeted priorities and outcomes to shape action.

#### **Celebrating Scotland's diversity**

The approach of the new Strategy came partly from the recognition that some of the challenges we faced over the life of *OPiT* - the COVID-19 pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, and the declaration of a climate emergency - called for a different way of doing things. But it was also a response to something we heard time and time again from people throughout our consultation: the historic environment is a rich resource for Scotland, and we can and should do more to recognise and celebrate the outcomes it helps to realise.

Between HES and BEFS, we ran 18 workshops across the country as part of our engagement and consultation activity.

These were attended by 191 organisations and 649 individuals. We worked hard to widen the conversation beyond the core heritage sector at these events, bringing in policy and decision-makers with interests in areas such as economic development, health and wellbeing, and nature conservation. We also ran bespoke, targeted sessions to ensure we heard from a diverse array of voices, with specific sessions working with youth groups, LGBT+ groups, survivors of gender-based violence, Kurdish women refugees, and representatives of the Traveller community. Workshops covered the issues and challenges people were facing in their work with the historic environment, what people wanted from the new strategy, and what success might look like.

From this engagement activity three clear priority themes emerged. The first was our need to move rapidly to net zero whilst also protecting the historic environment from the impacts of climate change. The second was to enhance the role that the historic environment plays in local communities, including how decisions surrounding it are made, and how the organisations that work with it are supported.

The third was to maintain the economic and wellbeing benefits that the historic environment brings to Scotland, while also ensuring that those benefits are realised sustainably.





**Participant at Scotland's Historic Environment Forum (SHEF) held at Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh**

**A shot from the Grassroots Building: From Past to Present and Future project.**

*“Our mission is to sustain and enhance the benefits of Scotland's historic environment, for people and communities now and into the future.”*

Cutting across these priorities were two vital themes that touched on multiple areas of work: we must be more inclusive in our practice, so that the historic environment reaches a more diverse range of people. And we need to renew our focus on skills, so that everyone working with the historic environment – including volunteers as well as paid staff – has the skills they need for the future. These cross-cutting themes helped to give shape to the outcomes under each priority area, and the measures of success we identified for them.

#### **The Strategy's Priorities:**

- **Delivering the transition to net zero.**
- **Empowering resilient and inclusive communities and places.**
- **Building a wellbeing economy.**

#### **Archaeology and the new strategy**

What role can the archaeology sector play in helping to achieve our mission for Scotland's historic environment? Archaeology can clearly deliver against all three priorities, and through Scotland's Archaeology Strategy we've already seen many excellent initiatives that give us a strong base to build upon. Archaeologists have built up a vital body of knowledge on the impacts of climate change on our heritage, whether on individual sites or monuments, or whole landscapes or coastlines. Continuing to build on the work of organisations like SCAPE will inform the decisions we make about how to manage the impact of climate change on our heritage. It can also help communities to understand and learn from the unavoidable loss of much-loved heritage.

Communities have also been at the heart of some of the most exciting archaeology projects of recent years. A wealth of evidence now shows that engagement in archaeology creates health and wellbeing benefits for participants. But we also know that – just like the rest of the culture sector – we need to work harder to increase the diversity of people benefiting from these experiences. Archaeology is also a great way to engage people not only with the past, but with the future they want to see for their local areas.

Understanding how people have managed land, or how built and natural environments have changed in response to human occupation, management, and development, can be a great way to help people think about the future they want for the places they live in.

And all this is before we get to the cutting-edge scientific techniques used across the archaeology sector, the innovations being piloted to adopt new technologies or ways of doing things, or the way that digs and their finds have served to transform the tourism experience in places such as Orkney.

So much good work takes place across Scotland each year. The Strategy will help to channel this activity and align action so that we can realise maximum impact from our work. However, just because the Strategy sets priorities doesn't mean that initiatives or activity that don't immediately align to these new goals will stop. Every day work undertaken in the historic environment sector – research, decision-making, community engagement – will continue, and forms a vital base on which the Strategy itself will build.

#### **Owned by everyone**

Like *Our Place in Time, Our Past, Our Future* isn't a government-led document. It's owned by everyone and relies on people and organisations across Scotland getting involved and taking action. Collaboration will therefore be key, not only to delivering activity but also to identifying the right way to move forward, and who should take responsibility for key work packages. At HES, our role isn't to dictate who should do what, or to do it all ourselves. Instead, it's to facilitate conversations, and to support and help people to deliver the new strategy. To do this we'll be revising and renewing the working groups set up to support *OPiT* and creating new ones where necessary. We'll also be working to increase support for activity at local and regional levels, so that delivery works with – and meets the needs and aspirations of – local communities.

You can find out more about delivery – and how to get involved – through the new Strategy's website.

*Ben Thomas,*  
**Historic Environment Scotland**



Increasing knowledge,  
understanding and  
interpretation of the past.

# ENHANCING UNDERSTANDING

THE ROLLOUT OF REGIONAL  
RESEARCH FRAMEWORKS  
CONTINUES APACE WITH  
THREE NOW AVAILABLE  
AND THREE IN PROGRESS.

**Making knowledge discoverable, accessible, and reusable is key to Aim Two, and the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland continues to lead on delivery of this part of the Strategy. Funded by Historic Environment Scotland, the Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (ScARF) project continues to manage and update existing frameworks as well as help create new research frameworks across Scotland.**

## Regional Frameworks

The rollout of regional research frameworks continues apace with three regional frameworks available and three projects currently in progress.

Our final symposium for the Scotland's Islands Research Framework for Archaeology (SIRFA) project was held in Orkney at the end of March 2023. It was three years since our previous event in Shetland and it was great to bring so many people together again to discuss the archaeology of Scotland's Islands. The final framework for the three island groups of the Western Isles, Shetland and Orkney will be released in 2024.

Work on the South-East Scotland Archaeological Research Framework also got back underway at the end of 2022, with the early prehistoric to the early medieval chapters due to be launched on the ScARF website in November 2023.

Our newest framework to get underway is for the Clyde Region. We will be working with partners at West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSaS), Archaeology Scotland and the University of Glasgow across the local authority areas of Inverclyde, Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, West Dunbartonshire, East Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire, and South Lanarkshire. While this region covers only around 4% of Scotland's land mass, it is home to roughly 30% of its population. This new framework has ambitions to work more closely with people who live in the region, especially those who have never been involved with heritage projects before. We hope it will be the most inclusive research framework to date with a focus on communities and place. Keep an eye on our website for news about our start-up events and roadshows which will be taking place across the region.

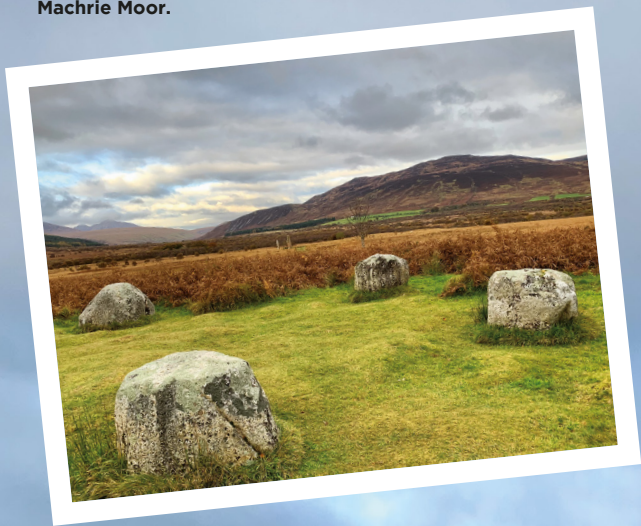


Bar Hill on the Antonine Wall.





Right and this page:  
Stone circle at  
Machrie Moor.





We are looking forward to setting up and rolling out the final regional framework projects over the next few years to complete the jigsaw and fully update the national ScARF with the latest research.

### **Thematic Frameworks**

Last Spring saw the addition of two new thematic frameworks to the ScARF website. The first was the research framework for the Antonine Wall World Heritage Site, which will play a key role in stimulating further research and promoting the long-term care and protection of the wall and its immediate setting.

The Boyne to Brodgar project, exploring the significance of Neolithic monuments across Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland, also found a new home on the ScARF website. Not only will this ensure that the current resource is secure and can be updated in the future but will encourage new and continued interest in the fascinating Neolithic evidence found between Orkney and The Boyne Valley.

We are also working on a Royal Society of Edinburgh funded project – the International Network for Contemporary Archaeology (INCAScot) – to develop a research framework for Contemporary Archaeology. This will explore how contemporary archaeology can be better incorporated into archaeological practice in Scotland.

Finally, the Archaeological Science Framework is also being gradually updated. This year, the focus is on dendrochronology and other parts of the science framework will continue to be worked on to complement the regional research frameworks.

### **Support for Research**

ScARF also continues to support students and early career researchers to undertake new research and attend conferences and events to share their work. This year we awarded 17 bursaries for people to attend events including the Theoretical Archaeology Group conference in Edinburgh and the Association of Environmental Archaeologists Conference in Glasgow.

Successful bursary recipients are asked to write a short case study for the ScARF website, and these are a great way to showcase some of the new and cutting-edge research being undertaken in Scotland to help answer some of our key outstanding research questions.

Remember you can follow us on Twitter (@ScARFhub), Facebook and Instagram (@ScARF\_scot) or get in touch (scarf@socantscot.org).

To find out more visit our [website](#).

*Helen Spencer,*  
**ScARF**



Visitors to Callendar Park on the Antonine Wall.



## Orkney Symposium held to inform Scottish Island Research Framework for Archaeology

**In March of this year the final Scottish Island Research Framework for Archaeology (SIRFA) symposium was held in Orkney. Over 150 delegates gathered in Kirkwall to discuss current gaps in archaeological knowledge relating to Orkney's past. Following on from the Western Isles and Shetland symposia in 2019, this final event rounded off the public consultation phase of the SIRFA project.**

The Symposium was officially opened by Neil Gray, Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development, and Graham Bevan, Council Convener from Orkney Islands Council. Throughout the weekend delegates attended sessions according to their specialisms and interests, scrutinising research questions submitted in advance by wider stakeholders. The rich discussions were recorded and meticulously documented by an amazing team of notetakers – PhD students and Early Career Researchers who received bursaries from the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland to attend.

### Discussions in the Field

Not content with merely discussing Orkney's archaeology, the weekend also included fieldtrips to key sites and landscapes. The symposium kicked-off with a day trip to the island of Hoy, where delegates visited the Scapa Flow Museum, the Burnmouth Bothy, and the Dwarfie Stane. Later in the week, delegates visited the Ring of Brodgar, within the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site, and participated in a walking tour through Kirkwall, taking in the Bishop's Palace and St Magnus Cathedral.

Many thanks to all the chairs, delegates, field trip guides and notetakers who took part. Team SIRFA are now working away with all the information and ideas shared during this busy three-day event which will contribute to the Orcadian section of the final island research framework. Thanks to students and staff at UHI Archaeology Institute who supported the event and project partners at Orkney Islands Council. SIRFA is supported by ScARF and funded by Historic Environment Scotland as part of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy.

*Mairi MacLean,*  
**Scotland's Islands Research Framework for Archaeology and UHI Outer Hebrides**



**Standing Stones in the Ring of Brodgar.**

**Below: Bursary recipients at the SIRFA conference in Orkney.**

**Visiting the Ring of Brodgar as part of the SIRFA symposium.**





## Open Access Books Free for All

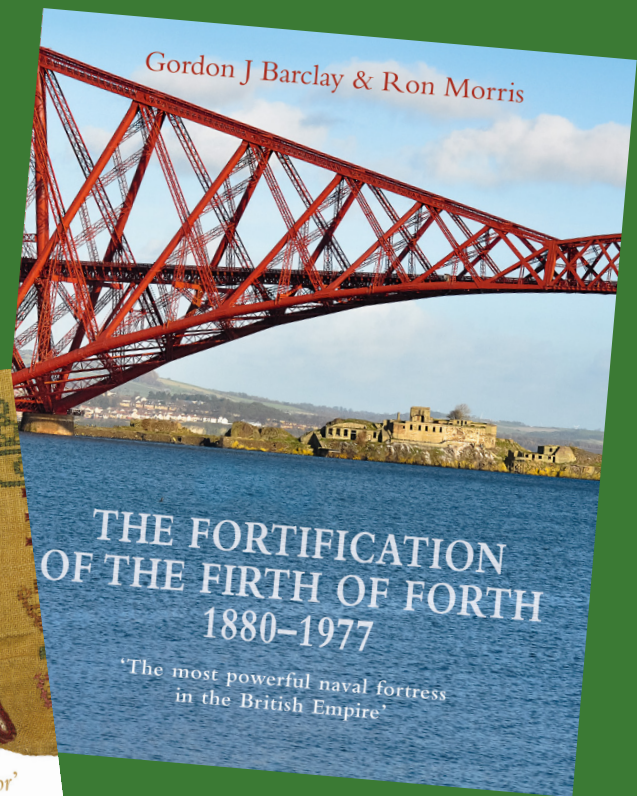
To improve our collective understanding of Scotland's past, the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland has made twelve of their books – many no longer available in print – accessible on their [Open Access E-Books platform](#).

Averaging downloads of over 1,500 per month, this collection provides in-depth, peer-reviewed research free to all.

Society of Antiquaries of Scotland

'Remember Now Thy Creator', *Scottish Girls' Samplers, 1700-1872* by Naomi E A Tarrant.

*The Fortification of the Firth of Forth 1880-1977*, by Gordon J Barclay and Ron Morris.



## South East Scotland Archaeological Research Framework

**The South East Scotland Archaeological Research Framework (SESARF) covers the local authority areas of the City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian and the Scottish Borders.**

It is led by the South East Scotland Archaeology Partnership (SESAP), the local archaeology services of East Lothian Council, City of Edinburgh Council, and Scottish Borders Council, in partnership with ScARF.

### SESARF in 2023

Work on SESARF has picked up pace during 2023, with several period chapters nearing completion after consultation and work by period specialists. We are grateful to all the people who have put in time to work on SESARF, and for those who have responded to the consultations offering ideas for research questions.

A one-day symposium was held on 20 May in Edinburgh. It was well attended by people from across the heritage sector, including commercial archaeologists, academic researchers, students, community heritage groups and local and national government agencies.

The discussions were fascinating and wide-ranging and gave much useful input to creating the research agendas and questions for SESARF going forward.

### Launching Soon

The initial chapters of SESARF will be launched at this year's Edinburgh, Lothians & Borders Archaeology Conference which will take place on 18 November at Queen Margaret University, Musselburgh.

*Stephanie Leith,*  
**East Lothian Council**

Background: Whitecastle hillfort in East Lothian and the stunning view across to Fife.

Volunteers excavating the earliest waggonyway in Scotland, East Lothian.





## **SS Explorer: Plotting a course to conserve a historic marine research vessel**

This year, Wessex Archaeology's marine archaeology experts have been working alongside members of the SS Explorer Preservation Society to complete a condition survey of a former Fisheries Research Vessel now in Leith Docks, Edinburgh as part of a Conservation Management Plan.



SS Explorer moored in Leith Docks in the sun.

Left: Triple expansion steam engine within SS Explorer's engine room.





**SS Explorer main steam winch from the trawl deck.**

**SS Explorer was launched in 1955 – one of the last steam driven trawlers built in Scotland at the famous Aberdeen yard Alexander Hall & Sons. It carried out cutting-edge marine research for 30 years, before being decommissioned in 1984 and sent to the breaker's yard. Initially saved by Aberdeen Maritime Museum, a second close call with the shipbreaking yard eight years later led to the formation of the SS Explorer Preservation Society who managed to get the ship to Leith in 1994, its former port of registry, where it has been ever since.**

#### **Inspiring Vessel**

The dream of the SS Explorer Preservation Society is to renovate the vessel to be a museum exploring Scottish engineering, the development of marine science and telling the story of the ship and its crew, while inspiring the next generation of scientists, maritime historians, and engineers. It was imperative as part of preparing the foundations of this plan to understand the current condition of the ship and to assess its significance. A thorough investigation of the history of the *Explorer* followed by a condition survey of the compartments, decks and other spaces around the ship has therefore been commissioned, with training in condition assessment completed with society members.

For many of the team it was an opportunity to take an even deeper interest in a vessel they knew well, with some taking the chance to investigate parts of the ship they had never been in, while others applied their intricate understanding of complicated compartments, such as the engine and boiler room. The resulting survey will be used to identify the compartments that are most at risk in terms of their fabric and condition and will assess the overall significance of each compartment in telling the story of the *Explorer* or demonstrating its functionality or history. This will prioritise the compartments of the ship to be conserved, alongside its extensive day-to-day maintenance.

Highlights from the survey:

- Recording the engine and boiler room, any engineer's dream, which contain a vast array of original mid-20th century equipment as well as the tools and stores to maintain it.
- An in-depth look at some of the more restricted or inaccessible compartments, such as the alternator room, forward lower store and fishrooms. These revealed vital stories about the *Explorer* and together make up the unique functions of the ship.
- Assessment of the laboratories and scientific equipment onboard
- An examination of the varying accommodation standards on the vessel and how they reflect social structures of the time.

The next stage of the work assessed the significance of the *Explorer*. This was done by appraising its physical fabric which represents its role as a functional vessel and its history, and through the associational links which the ship, its crew and its work. This identified extensive international links thanks to the port calls the *Explorer* made across the North Atlantic and the eminent scientists who cut their teeth on the ship before heading off around the world.

#### **Conservation for the Future**

The final stage of the Conservation Management Plan is to use the information gathered in the condition survey and significance assessment to identify threats to the ship and develop policies to mitigate those threats. For these policies an action plan for the sustainable management of future conservation and maintenance works will be written. The results of this work will be presented to the wider public as part of a day event celebrating *SS Explorer* in November. For more details on this event, please contact [mail@theexplorer.scot](mailto:mail@theexplorer.scot)

The *Explorer* is open to visitors over the age of 16 (due to restrictions on entry to Leith Docks) and the society are always keen to give visitors a tour of the vessel. To find out more and to book a tour please have a look at our website. You can also find out more about volunteering onboard and developing your engineering skills.

A friend of the ship has also put together a photo tour, presenting some of the stories about the *Explorer* and its crew, which can be found on Twitter @TheDreadShips

*Ben Saunders,*  
**Wessex Archaeology**



News stories

OUT & ABOUT

Surveying vegetation threats to Blantyre Priory

Clutha Archaeology Group was formed in 2020 during the COVID-19 lockdown by a group of people who had volunteered with the Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership between 2016 and 2019. We wanted to continue participating in archaeological projects.

Investigating Local Nature Reserves

We are currently investigating the heritage of the newly designated Local Nature Reserves in South Lanarkshire, working closely with the Countryside Ranger Team, with the aim of informing the management of the sites. We started with the Blantyre, Bothwell and Uddingston Local Nature Reserve and one of the interesting sites we explored was the site of Blantyre Priory. Blantyre Priory (Canmore ID 44890) was founded between 1239 and 1248 and was a community of Augustinian canons. It stands on top of a cliff above the River Clyde, directly opposite Bothwell Castle.

Its walls are ruined now with trees growing over the site. This is a scheduled monument and part of the Bothwell Castle Grounds Site of Special Scientific Interest. Clutha Archaeology Group carried out a survey of the site in spring 2022 and produced the plan below, detailing the trees threatening the walls.



In November 2022, representatives of South Lanarkshire Council, Historic Environment Scotland and NatureScot visited the Priory to discuss the removal of trees and production of a management plan. Two of us went along too to see how the different agencies dealt with the heritage issues, natural and cultural.

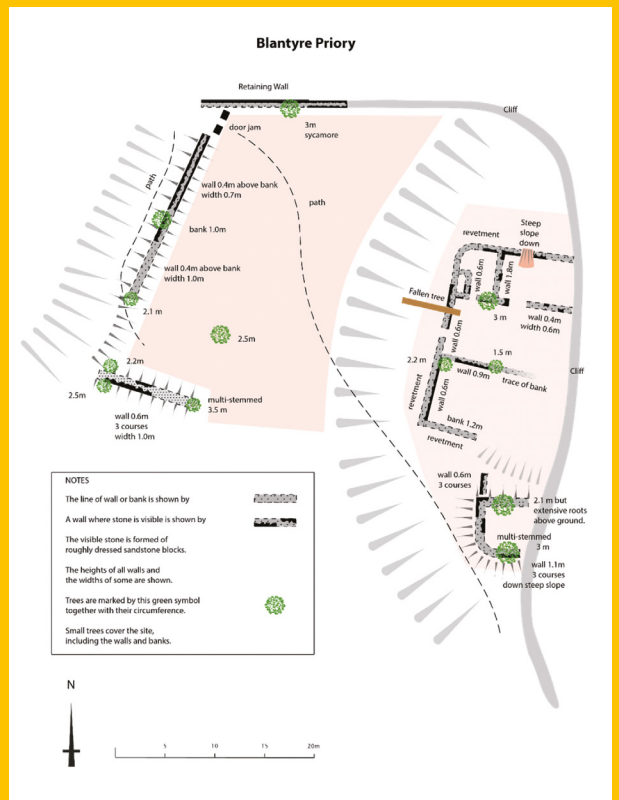
Ailsa Smith, Clutha Archaeology Group

Top right: Internal wall of the priory.

Above right: Tree growing out of retaining wall.

Below: Clutha members surveying the site in spring 2022.

Right: Plan by Ed Smith of the Blantyre Priory site with vegetation threats.



Images © Clutha Archaeology Group

Image © Ed Smith



## Field Survey on the Isle of Seil

At the invitation of owners Mr and Mrs MacAskill, a team comprising members of Archaeology for All (ACFA)/Arc-èolas do na h-uile and Luing History Group (LHG) carried out a field survey on Balvicar Farm on the island of Seil south of Oban, Argyll and Bute.

The farm is situated on the east coast of the island and is dominated by a ridge that flanks the western extent of the land. Elsewhere the ground is low lying, undulating and shows signs of cultivation in the form of rig and furrow.

Below: Curious observers.

Right: Volunteers undertaking survey work.

Bottom right: Volunteers surveying a 19th century house.



Images © ACFA

### Crofting

Most of the recorded archaeology, some 30 features in number, relates to crofting activities from the 18th and 19th centuries evidenced by the stone footings and foundations of dwellings and related structures.

However, two structures have their walls upstanding to roof height having been abandoned as late as 1916. Within one of these structures two worked stones were noted in a dividing wall. These are thought to be door-pivot stones likely taken from the nearby early chapel (Canmore ID 22598). It is also speculated that a possible base for an ecclesiastical cross, situated exterior to the building, originated from the same source.

Other highlights include what is believed to be a long cairn and, nearby, a circular mound and ditch. The cairn, much robbed, is speculated to have been about 30m in length and is possibly Neolithic in date. The mound, also robbed, measures some 3.5m in diameter and has a possible ditch and related earthen banks surrounding it. Whether it is Bronze Age in date or not remains to be seen.

### Additional surveys

Survey work was also carried out on adjoining Winterton and Cuan farms along with small areas of land at Kibrandon Farm and Kilbrandon House. On the latter a possible toppled standing stone was recorded.

Dugald MacInnes,  
ACFA



## Antonine Wall Comics

Enjoy two free online comics celebrating Scotland's Roman history.

Created by local schools along the Antonine Wall in partnership with Magic Torch Comics as part of the Rediscovering the Antonine Wall project, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund Scotland.

*Antonine! Rediscovering the Antonine Wall* and *Over the Wall* can be found through the Magic Torch Comics [website](#).

Right: Artwork from 'Antonine' by Katherine Hemmings.



Images © Magic Torch Comics



## News stories

Volunteers undertaking excavation.



Image © UHI

## Community Recording at Sgeir nam Portan, Kildonan

**Archaeologists at UHI Archaeology Institute based in Uist have been recording a prehistoric site exposed on one of South Uist's many eroding beaches. The site was originally identified as part of the SCAPE Trust Coastal Zone Assessment surveys and is currently identified as a High Priority at Risk Site.**

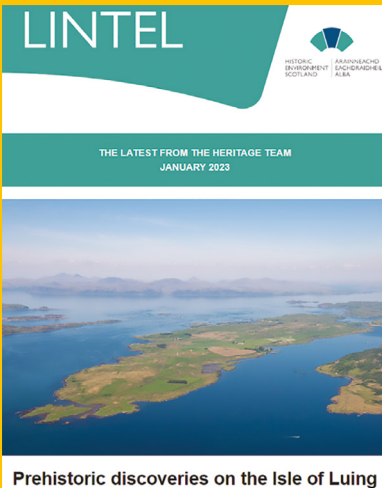
### Community involvement

Working with members of the community, excavations revealed midden deposits which appear to have accumulated against a shallow stone revetment. The midden produced large quantities of animal remains, mainly cattle and sheep, but also deer represented by bone and antler remains. Pottery and lithics are both well represented within the midden. A highlight was the recovery of a beautiful stone bead, seemingly comparable with examples from the Ness of Brodgar in Orkney. A single Late Neolithic indicative radiocarbon date was obtained from an articulated cattle metatarsal from within the midden.

### Analysis

Professor Jacqui Mulville, Cardiff University, is currently examining the faunal assemblage. Initial analysis suggests some interesting anomalies when considered alongside other Neolithic sites in the region. The assemblage itself is substantial and the bone extremely well preserved with the potential to provide new information on later Neolithic diet and animal husbandry practices. The size of cattle represented by the assemblages also currently stands out in comparison with other Scottish sites of a similar period – these appear to be intriguingly large animals. We are currently in the process of establishing the site's potential and significance whilst assessing this against its vulnerability, with a mind to continuing our research at Sgeir nam Portan next summer. The excavation was supported by SnBM (Sealladh na Beinne Mòire) Community Fund. Thanks also to Dr Hugo Anderson Whymark and National Museums Scotland for funding the radiocarbon dating.

*Rebecca Rennell,*  
**University of Highlands and Islands**



Prehistoric discoveries on the Isle of Luing

## Hungry for more heritage news?

**Sign up now to get Lintel, the Historic Environment Scotland Heritage Directorate newsletter, straight to your inbox every three months.**

Keep up to date on our upcoming events, surveys and consultations.

From newly discovered burial grounds to building restorations, and even the occasional crime story, Lintel will give you the inside scoop!

Visit the HES website for more information.

**“ BY TAGGING YOUR CONTENT WITH #SCOTARCHSTRAT YOU CAN JOIN A NATIONAL CONVERSATION ABOUT HOW SCOTLAND'S ARCHAEOLOGY STRATEGY IS MAKING ARCHAEOLOGY MATTER. ”**



## The Iron Age Hut Circles of Loch Lungard

The dry summer of 2021 considerably lowered the level of Loch Mullardoch in the central Highlands of Scotland. A walker going into its remote west end, on the shore of the previous Loch Lungard, came across several circular structures. Although he wasn't an archaeologist, he was nevertheless impressed, took some photos, and then alerted the authorities.

### NOSAS is on the case

Once we were alerted to these features, a small team from the North of Scotland Archaeological Society (NOSAS) mounted an expedition to investigate and survey the structures which could soon be re-covered by the waters of the loch. The journey to get to them included driving to Mullardoch Dam, followed by a 7km boat ride, and then an hour's walk.

### A Prehistoric Site

The team identified four, possibly six, hut circles at the site called Allt Nead. Two of them had identifiable hearths and paved floors. The reservoir had stripped all soil from them, revealing just stone and gravel. They looked pristine. Intriguingly, at the site, they also discovered a previously unknown cup-marked stone with 29 simple cups. This rock art is usually ascribed to the Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age, so were the hut circles contemporary with this, or of a later date? The site lies near the watershed of a route that links the west and east coasts. Was this route important in pre-history? How long were the dwellings used for, and what was their purpose in this remote area?

Right: Walking from the boat towards Loch Lungard.

Below: One of the hut circles, perfectly preserved.



### What date was this settlement?

Hoping to find dateable material, the team then undertook a limited excavation of one of the hut circles, focussing on the hearth and a trench by the outer stone wall. The CARD Fund generously provided radiocarbon dating for two pieces of carbonised wood, from each of the trenches. The results were intriguing – one Early Iron Age, one Middle Iron Age – providing evidence of domestic use at least at these times.

Please visit our website for more information.

*Roland Spencer-Jones,*  
**North of Scotland  
 Archaeological Society**







## Recording Boats in Munloch Bay Harbour

**A derelict harbour comes back to life, for a weekend at least.**

### An important back story

Munloch Bay is a finger of estuarine water on the northern shore of the Moray Firth. Inside the Bay, a silted overgrown harbour has an important history. A quarry just behind the harbour produced the fine red sandstone from which Fort George was built following the Jacobite rebellion of 1745-6. For some years boats used the harbour to transfer stone across the Moray Firth to the fort's building site. The story of the harbour and its link to the Fort is told in a North of Scotland Archaeology Society (NOSAS) blog.

### A working harbour re-emerges

Since the 18th century, the quarry and its harbour have been used less and less. It was last used about fifty years ago and the harbour had silted up. The Estate on whose land it sits has done work recently to remove many of the trees that had fallen into it.

However, the gloopy mud of the harbour bottom still contained boats that had decayed and died there. Wouldn't it be good to clean out even more of the overburden of sticks, logs, and debris so that we could identify and record those boats?

### A busy weekend

NOSAS and the SCAPE Trust decided to join forces for a weekend in April 2023 to do just that. This followed a previous liaison in June 2022 when we together surveyed the Avoch fishing boat graveyard just around the corner from the harbour, in Munloch Bay. This time we waded through the gloop of the harbour to release the skeletons of four boats from the overlying mud and debris. It's hard to date the boats but from the artefacts within it, we think one boat is likely to be 18th century.

We also did a more accurate recording of the dimensions and construction of the harbour itself, allowing us to re-create the way that boats had come in, been loaded with stone, and then sailed out again.

Please visit our website for more information.

*Roland Spencer-Jones,*

**North of Scotland Archaeological Society**

## Thurster Community Dig for Celebrating Archaeology in Scotland

**A community excavation project in Caithness at the site of the former Thurster Tower. That Tower has to be here... somewhere!**

### Things coming together

Based on historical evidence and cartographic sources, Thurster Tower was probably located on the high ground just above the sea, east of Thrumster, south of Wick. Thrumster happens to have a fine primary school and to be the base for Yarrows Heritage, an archaeological charity. Put those two together, add an interested national archaeologist, and we have a community dig.

### Background history

From the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD, Caithness was under Norse rule. However, during the 11<sup>th</sup> century Scottish kings had an increasing influence. By the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Scottish lords were building castles and towers, with the earl of Caithness and Sutherland probably building the tower house at Thurster in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

The tower was destroyed in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, and nobody is quite sure now where it might have been.

### Ready, steady, go!

Andy Heald, Director of AOC, has a long connection to Caithness and was keen to get involved with a prospective dig. There was a rectangular building that caught our eye in a field reputed by local knowledge to be the site of the Tower. Could this probably early-19<sup>th</sup> century building be built on the remains of a castle? So, in April 2023 Yarrows Heritage, plus volunteers, and schoolchildren, spent nine days in glorious sunshine peeling away the layers.

### Schoolchildren contributing

With Thrumster Primary School being so close, the pupils were able to come almost every day. They were brilliant, making a real contribution to the dig by identifying a significant wall.



**Andy Heald, of AOC, pointing out the archaeology so far.**

They became aware that, day by day, more of the archaeology was being revealed.

### Summary

So, we found an interesting vernacular building, built in at least two phases, with the lower, earlier phase being the finest construction. And below that? We hope to go back next April to find out. And, of course, we eagerly await the post-ex.

*Roland Spencer-Jones,*  
**Yarrows Heritage**





## Viking-Age Runestone Unveiled at New Edinburgh Home

**In March, a 1,000-year-old Swedish runestone was unveiled at its new home on the University of Edinburgh campus.**

### From Sweden to Scotland

Dating from around 1010–1050 AD and originally from Uppsala in Sweden, the stone was carved by a Runemaster named Erik. Not much is known about him, but from what's carved on the stone it is known that the stone was “raised in memory of Hjalmr, his father” and that Erik wanted to display his Christianity, which wasn't common in 11th century Sweden.

The runestone was gifted to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1787 by Sir Alexander Seton of Preston and of Ekolsund.

The Society presented the stone to the proprietors of Princes Street in 1821, who were looking to improve the Gardens. There it stood, below the parapet of the Esplanade, for nearly 200 years. Inaccessible to the public and with no interpretation of the stone provided, its history was forgotten. Ordnance Surveys in the 1950s and 1970s even suggested it was fake.

### Interpretation

In 2013, Eva Åkerman and Thorvaldur Arnason visited the Society, explaining that the runestone had come from Eva's family farm at Lilla Ramsjö and they wanted to see better interpretation for it.

In early 2017, Dr Alan Macniven, senior lecturer in Scandinavian Studies, offered to relocate the runestone at the University of Edinburgh. The Society supported the City of Edinburgh Council in proposing the relocation and transferring ownership of the stone to National Museums Scotland, which was agreed the same year.

With funds secured from private donors and various charities, the Society received Scheduled Monument Consent to excavate and remove the runestone in December 2017.

To find out more about the runestone's journey, a video with storyteller Svend-Erik Engh is available on the Society's YouTube channel.

### Edinburgh University & Society of Antiquaries of Scotland

*Edited by Mike Elliot,*  
**Historic Environment Scotland**



**Top: Runestone and display panel, October 2022.**

**Middle: Runestone in locked enclosure in previous location, October 2016.**

**Bottom: Runestone unveiling event, March 2023.**





**Left: A simple, but elegant and poignant headstone with a distinctive Scots orthography.**

**Below: Local volunteers and students relaying the road to the reception building, exposing the early modern, or perhaps medieval, church.**



## Goings-on at Govan Old

**Work on refurbishing Govan Old Church resumed in 2022 after a pandemic hiatus and Govan Heritage Trust seized the opportunity to reinvigorate the long-term archaeological project.**

The dig was linked to the construction of a new, fully accessible entrance and visitor facilities for the A-listed building which houses the Govan Stones collection of Viking Age sculpture. This phase of the refurbishment is hoped to be completed in time to take advantage of a new bridge over the Clyde which will connect the Riverside Museum to Govan. Not only will these works make the church more accessible, but they will also make it more sustainable and comfortable. Newly fitted out commercial space will generate a steady income and a water-source heat pump drawing from the Clyde will make it warmer. This heat pump is believed to be the first instance of such technology being used to heat a historic building of such a scale and it is hoped it will serve as a flagship to other historically sensitive, large-scale structures.

### Excavations

Excavations on the west side of the nave in September were designed to mitigate the impact of upgrading the approach to the new entrance. Here the most prominent features were a succession of redundant, and active, services and drains. Although mundane these features proved engaging to a team consisting of local volunteers and Glasgow University students working under the guidance of Clyde Archaeology.

Even more intriguing were sections of in situ masonry from the 18th century, or possibly earlier, church surviving below the services. The quality and significance of these structures and deposits is such that further investigations are planned for 2023.

### Stones below the turf

In addition to the excavations, a comprehensive probing survey of the churchyard was initiated, which has located and recorded many gravestones buried under the turf. These include previously unknown head stones as well as some of the famous Govan Stones which had become 'lost' over the past 50 years. The success of the public archaeology programme derives from generous support from the Govan Townscape Heritage Initiative and the University of Glasgow.

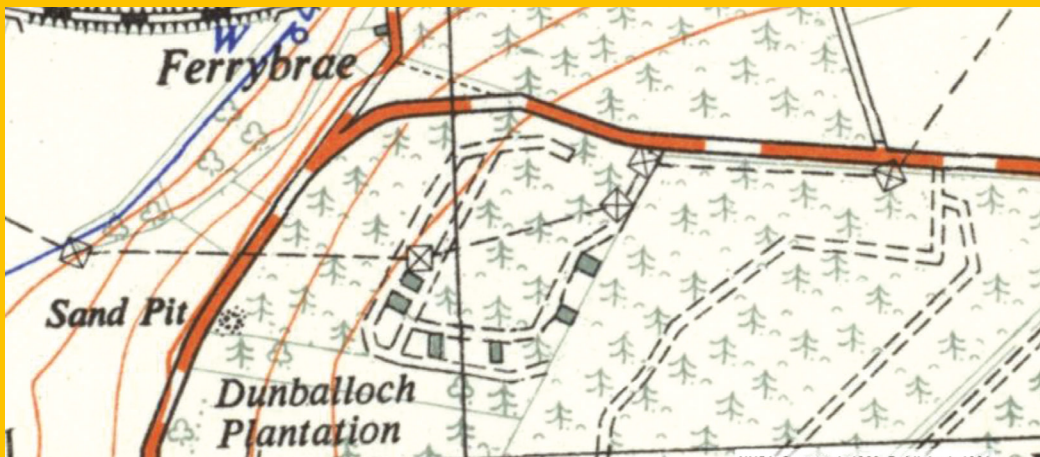
*Stephen Driscoll,*  
**University of Glasgow**

**Below: The feast of St Constantine was celebrated with a Viking Festival and probing jamboree, which recovered lost grave-stones and burial monuments.**

**Bottom: Looking across the Clyde from Govan Old to the Riverside Museum.**







**Left: Map of huts, published in 1961. Note that the hut depicted in the top left is in error. There are no remains of this on the ground, nor does it appear in the aerial photos.**

**Below left: Excavating the Road.**

**Below right: Dunballoch Twin Ammo Concrete Huts. The best preserved of the huts.**

**Bottom: Investigation of the sandball wall.**



## Recording Dunballoch, Kirkhill Wartime Remains

**The area north of Inverness was a restricted area in the Second World War, with airfields, military camps, prisoner of war camps, and various fortifications and gun emplacements.**

### Military remains

In scrubby woodland near Kirkhill, west of Inverness, there are remains of five double Nissen huts, linked by roads at both ends. These were initially thought to be Equipment Ammunition Magazines (EAM), but wartime documents suggest they may instead be Intermediate Ammunition Depots (IAD) which supplied EAMS, and Anti-Aircraft Ordnance Depots (AAOD) which maintained guns and stored spares.

The huts have deteriorated over the years and were becoming a public safety risk. Before demolition the estate contacted local heritage groups so that a detailed survey and measurements could be made.

### Aird Heritage Group

The Aird Heritage Group had emerged from the ARCH FACET project reported in the Celebrating Archaeology in Scotland 2022 magazine. It took the lead, with help from ARCH in doing the photographic and measurement survey, and from the North of Scotland Archaeological Society in trial excavations of part of a berm and across some of the roads.

A local metal detecting group also checked the area before work. What initially seemed to be five identical huts turned out to be three with berms at the sides and ends, in case of explosion. The other two had windows, now blocked in, and must have had a different function. The three berms were in part reinforced by walls created by filling hessian bags with concrete, the patterns of the bags still visible. Each structure was made with a double Nissen hut, filled with concrete between the two frames. The perimeter roads were remarkably well made, understandably due to what must have been heavy lorry use.



### Ongoing investigations

Further investigation of military documentation is planned. The project is a good example of local groups and landowners working together, with enthusiastic local volunteers.

Thanks to Martin Briscoe and Allan Kilpatrick for help with references and military acronyms. Reports, photos and other information will be deposited with the Highland Historic Environment Record.

*Susan Kruse,*  
**ARCH**

*Jim Murray,*  
**Aird Heritage Group**



Leading guided walks showing the results of surveys. X Craft submarines scuttled, Aberlady Bay, East Lothian.



Image © East Lothian Council

# CARING AND PROTECTING

Ensuring evidence of our past is valued and cared for sustainably.

**THE PAST YEAR HAS SEEN SEVERAL CHANGES IN NATIONAL POLICY AND STRATEGY, THE INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK 4 (NPF4) AND THE LAUNCH OF OUR PAST, OUR FUTURE (OPOF) TO NAME BUT TWO. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THESE CHANGING AIMS AND OBJECTIVES ARE WOVEN INTO ANY ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK THAT IS CARRIED OUT.**

ALGAO:Scotland, alongside National Museums Scotland, is the lead for Aim Three of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy and has been undertaking a significant amount of work across multiple policy and strategy areas. We do this to ensure that Archaeological work remains a policy requirement, meeting the relevant aims and objectives. We also want to ensure best professional practice is still maintained and where possible enhanced.

#### **Maximising Benefit from the Planning Process**

One of the emerging cross-cutting policy aims is to deliver resilient and inclusive communities and places.

The work of commercial archaeology represents the largest proportion of archaeological activity in Scotland and the vast majority of this is carried out as part of the planning process. It has been recognised that enabling communities and individuals to have more access to the information derived from these investigations aid inclusiveness and resilience. With the adoption of the NPF4 in February 2023, there was a greater emphasis put on public benefit deriving from archaeological projects which are part of the planning process. New wording was introduced into the planning regulations clearly outlining the requirement not only to undertake excavation, recording, archiving and publication as appropriate but also to undertake other public benefit activities.

While this was often already done on an informal basis, this change in policy wording requires it to be adopted universally. In response ALGAO:Scotland have drawn up guidance for developers and contractors. The aims of this guidance are to:

- To achieve better public engagement and benefits from archaeological works undertaken as part of the planning process, and maximise the positive contribution development is making to local communities
- To provide clear and concise guidance for developers and their archaeological contractors in how to achieve the public benefit requirements as laid out within NPF4's Policy 7, 'Historic Assets and Places'
- To provide a standardised methodology and guidance for use across all local authorities in Scotland to ensure consistency for council staff, developers, contractors, and other relevant stakeholders



- The guidance outlines clear reasons why including public benefit is important for archaeological projects, as well as explaining how it can be embedded within mitigation strategies. It also lays out the types of public engagement which are needed for every project and what may be required dependent upon individual projects.
- The guidance was drawn up by Bruce Mann from Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service and was adopted as ALGAO:Scotland Guidance in February 2023.

### Before the Museums

One of the other projects being undertaken as part of Aim Three of the Archaeology Strategy is the Before the Museums Project. This is being grant funded by Historic Environment Scotland and is being delivered jointly by ALGAO:Scotland and National Museums Scotland. The project is twofold:

- to develop standards and guidance for the preparation of archaeological assemblages for Museum deposition
- the introduction of a processing fee, which will be collected via commercial archaeological projects and paid to the Museum of deposition

This project, while seeking to address a long-standing issue with commercial archaeological assemblages, also helps deliver resilient and inclusive communities by ensuring that material collected from commercial field projects is deposited in an agreed manner and accompanied by funding. This will enable museums to provide greater access to this material either through displays or accessibly in the stores. The aims of the project are:

- The creation of guidance for the transfer for archaeological assemblages to museums in Scotland
- The development and implementation of a processing fee from depositors to Museums for archaeological archives
- Before the Museum is due to be completed by 2025

Both projects will help the results of commercial archaeological investigations to be more inclusive by, first, ensuring that public benefit is embedded in archaeological projects as appropriate and, second, that the material derived from commercial projects is more accessible once a project has finished.

By providing both communities and individuals greater access to information about their past it is hoped that commercial archaeological work can help with delivering more resilient and inclusive communities. By extension, it can also further show the value of Archaeology and wider Heritage to today's communities and society.

[Link](#) to the Public Benefit and Social Value guidance.

*Andrew Robertson,*  
**ALGAO:Scotland and East Lothian Council**



Image © D Gilmore

Image © East Lothian Council



**Above: Working with school groups at North Berwick law, East Lothian as part of John Muir award.**

**Right: Presenting the results of developer led Archaeological Projects at conferences such as Edinburgh Lothians and Borders Archaeology conference.**



## In Depth

# Conserving Scatness

**Old Scatness, Shetland, was a mound thought to conceal a broch when excavated between 1995 and 2006.**

The excavation and interpretation project were managed by Val Turner, Shetland Amenity Trust and excavations were directed by Steve Dockrill and Julie Bond of Bradford University.

### Unexpected discoveries

Work began in April 1995 with geophysical survey, in the hope that the broch still survived. Nothing prepared the team for what we found: the broch was surrounded by what is probably the best-preserved Iron Age Village in Northern Europe. The pierced and aisled roundhouses clustered around the broch and nestling inside the broch ditch had, in some cases, diameters which exceeded that of the broch, but with much narrower walls, and mezzanine floors.

**Below: Members of the community participating in a consultation on Old Scatness.**

**Bottom right: Aerial view of the site.**

### A new challenge

The quality and survival of the remains, together with the ethos of the project, good public engagement (in those days frowned on by “serious” archaeologists) led to another unanticipated challenge: how to conserve and preserve the site sustainably, whilst retaining its authenticity and integrity in a world which had very different standards to those of today.

Some of the more stable structures were consolidated with pinnings and light-touch rebuilding in the early years following excavation. Other areas have been shored up with protective sacking, some of which are beginning to split, largely due to unauthorised intruders.

### Towards sustainability

Spring 2023 has seen the start of a new project, working with conservation engineers and the Shetland community, to find a long-term, sustainable future which has the protection of the site at its centre. The project will report by the end of 2023, after which fund raising for the work will begin. Thanks to Coastal Communities for funding this preliminary project.

*Val Turner,*  
**Shetland Amenity Trust**







Above: Coastal survey at the Sands of Forvie, Aberdeenshire.

Right: Surveying a site at Whinnyfold, Aberdeenshire, using the SCAPE Coastal Archaeology Recording mobile app.



## A stroll with a purpose beside the seaside

**COASTARCH, run by the SCAPE Trust and supported by Historic Environment Scotland, is a project that involves the public in new coastal heritage surveys around the Scottish coast.**

The surveys collect information on the condition of heritage sites to assess their vulnerability to loss due to coastal erosion. The definition of a heritage site is wide ranging and includes everything from ancient submerged forests to modern Second World War pillboxes.

In 2022 we walked 140 kilometres and visited 620 heritage sites with local volunteers along parts of the Highland, Moray and Aberdeenshire coastlines.

### A targeted approach

We have applied existing models which have identified coasts susceptible to erosion, or projected to erode in the future, to target our walks in areas where heritage could be most vulnerable. These mostly coincide with low-lying, soft coasts.

We assign a priority to sites visited based on their archaeological significance and their risk of loss due to current and future coastal processes.

### A community effort

Nothing beats local knowledge. In 2022 over 50 volunteers took part in collecting data using SCAPE's bespoke Coastal Archaeology Recording app. Volunteers have enriched the surveys with their insights into the specific character and history of their local coastlines. Each walk has resulted in a new understanding of the area and has identified many previously unrecorded sites. A healthy dose of fresh air and learning a new skill with a friendly group has proven the surveys to be a popular and enjoyable experience for all.

COASTARCH encourages and welcomes volunteers. We are currently planning more surveys and may be walking a coastline close to you in the near future.

*Sarah Boyd,*  
**The SCAPE Trust**



**Right: PoW accommodation hut. Roof of pre-WW1 store visible on the right.**

**Bottom right: Panoramic view of PoW camp area. PoW visible on the far right.**

**Below: Officers' accommodation hut.**



## Designating Military Archaeology for Future Generations

**The hills around Acreknowe and Barns, south of Hawick in the Scottish Borders, feel remote and lonely today but for more than 50 years it was a busy military camp, the temporary home for thousands of men, troops, internees and Prisoners of War (PoW).**

In 1902, the War Office purchased land from Stobs Estate. The remote, hilly terrain was ideal for training cavalry following the British experience of the Boer War. Soon buildings were constructed for officers and administrators and tented camps were set up for training troops.

### Camp activities

Activities at Stobs changed with the First World War. A camp was built to accommodate German and Austrian civilian internees. Railway sidings were constructed to carry supplies, internees, and troops to the camp. The troops at Stobs now trained for trench warfare, digging practice trenches and dugouts. The civilian internment camp was converted to a Prisoner of War camp – the largest in Scotland. The camp had 80 huts to accommodate thousands of prisoners.

Between the World Wars troops continued to be trained at Stobs, and while activities during the Second World War are less well documented, we do know that tank training took place at a specifically constructed range in the hill to the south of the camp and that there were D-Day practices. After the Second World War, it was used as a resettlement camp for Polish troops. By the 1950s, troops were training here for the Korean War before the site was mostly dismantled and sold by 1959.

### Stobs today

Today, most of the plan of the camp remains visible. It survives as building bases, paths, tracks, walling and earthworks. The site also includes upstanding buildings: a PoW accommodation hut, a pre-First World War store and an officers' hut. Other features include a dammed bathing pool, the internee cemetery site and practice trenches. The PoW accommodation hut is a unique survivor as the only example in the UK in its original position. It is a potent and tangible reminder of the conflicts of the 20th century.

From 2016, Archaeology Scotland led the Stobs Camp Project working with organisations, groups and individuals including local schools, the Scottish Borders Council archaeology service,

Historic Environment Scotland, and the various owners of the site. The project surveyed and recorded the remains, exploring the human stories of those who trained and were interned there. Equally important are the tales and memories of local people, and oral reminiscence and genealogical research have played a key role in understanding and preserving its social history. Volunteers from across Europe helped build a picture of what life was like at the camp by researching archives, newspapers, regimental records, and family histories.

### Designation

This research was crucial when Historic Environment Scotland Designation's Service was asked to consider the site for designation. It helped inform our research and site visits, helping us to appropriately assess the site. Stobs Camp and associated features have now been designated as scheduled monuments to recognise their national importance. The aim of scheduling is to secure the long-term protection of monuments in the national interest. Detail of the designations can be found on Historic Environment Scotland's Designations Portal

*Kyle Armstrong,*  
**Historic Environment Scotland**





## Sustainable Archaeological Fieldwork at Historic Environment Scotland Properties in Care

**We are in a climate emergency and Historic Environment Scotland (HES) is a leader in studying the impacts of climate change.**

We are actively looking at how we can mitigate against these in all our business processes, as well as developing policies and strategies to become a responsible organisation.

### Climate change and archaeology

The impact of climate change is already being seen on the sites and monuments in the care of HES (as well as the wider historic environment) – whether it is increasing coastal erosion, longer periods of waterlogging or the accelerated decay of historic stonework.

Through its Climate Action Plan, HES is at the forefront of taking climate action to both reduce the organisations impact on the environment and drive the heritage sector towards a net zero future.



In 2022 it was time to re-tender our Properties in Care Minor Archaeological Services Contract for archaeological works across the estate. We were keen to ensure that sustainability was a key component of our requirements. In doing so, we were guided by two things:

Firstly, recognising that the practice of archaeological fieldwork has an impact on the environment, through the simple fact that it generates waste. This can be through the extensive use of single use plastics in tags, finds bags or trays and sample tubs associated with archaeological excavation, and through the hefty use of paper throughout most projects.

Secondly, that many of the Historic Environment Scotland properties are in remote, rural locations which mean that many sustainable transport options – public transport, electric vehicles (and related infrastructure) – are not always viable. We therefore wanted to see what tenderers could offer with regards to reducing distances travelled, which would result in smaller carbon footprints for pieces of fieldwork.



### Contract considerations

Overall, 15% of the tender scoring was available for approaches to sustainability, split into 10% for how the tenderer would approach sustainability issues, and 5% available for how the tenderer would achieve 'national coverage'.

We received a range of submissions, with innovative approaches and ideas. Ultimately, AOC was able to provide us a more sustainable approach to national coverage, by partnering with another company to increase their geographic coverage (and reduce mileage) and by sub-contracting fieldwork to archaeologists based in locations such as Shetland, Orkney, and the Outer Hebrides, where flying or a lengthy drive and ferry has often been the only option. Additionally, AOC were able to demonstrate their sustainable policies with the idea of an internal circular economy and a 100% digital recording system, which removes paper and waste from much of the fieldwork process.

*Stefan Sagrott,*  
**Historic Environment Scotland**

**Top left: Aerial view of St Mary's Chapel, Cross Kirk, Thurso, one of many HES properties in care on the coast.**

**Top middle: Exterior view of Threave Castle, where a period of heavy rainfall has caused the surrounding River Dee to flood right up to the castle walls.**

**Top right; Students at Holyrood Field School – undertaken as a collaboration between University of Edinburgh, HES and new PIC Minor Archaeological Services contract holder AOC.**

**Left: Groundwater flooding at Machrie Moor.**



*“I have gained a massive boost from being part of a small peer-to-peer support group with others who understand the joys and challenges of working in independent museums.”*

**Established in 2019 and emerging from the original Highland Museums Forum, MHH exists to be a supportive voice for heritage in the Highlands. Our members include museums, galleries, and heritage organisations of all sizes from across the region.**

We work to promote collaborative working and capacity building; developing partnership opportunities that support our members to achieve their purpose and help them be sustainable and resilient in challenging times.

#### **Workforce development**

A key strategic priority for Museums and Heritage Highland is supporting workforce development.

Although in the Highlands we have a very diverse body of expertise within the professional heritage workforce, staff are spread across museums, many in rural communities and often working alone or in very small teams.



**OVER THE PAST YEAR, MUSEUMS AND HERITAGE HIGHLAND (MHH) HAS BEEN WORKING ON A PROGRAMME OF WORK SUPPORTING STAFF ACROSS OUR HIGHLAND MUSEUMS.**

# **BREATHING SPACE - SUSTAINING HIGHLAND HERITAGE**



Most are 'curator/managers', a role which involves juggling a vast array of diverse tasks and responsibilities. Many often find themselves forced to focus on the organisational aspects of their roles, caught up in a never-ending list of deadlines, emails, evaluations and budgetary concerns.

It can also be very challenging for young professionals establishing their careers in small, rural museums to find time for their own continuing professional development. Breathing Space is exactly as the name suggests, an opportunity to take some time away from the daily grind and focus on challenges and share ideas for personal and organisational development.

### A Space to Breathe

In February 2023 we welcomed five participants to the first 'Breathing Space' at a venue near Pitlochry. We designed the weekend to allow for everyone to lead their own action learning set and work through challenges together as a group. This model gave participants time to reflect and work through their own challenges and to build confidence in their own skills by being able to help others. The peer-to-peer element of the weekend was essential and ensured the power was shared equally with mutual understanding.

The residency was supported and facilitated by Tamsin Russell, a highly experienced professional working in the cultural sector for over twenty years leading on learning and professional development from formal leadership programmes to action learning sets, from careers advice to coaching.

Tamsin's knowledge and understanding of the sector helped our participants navigate through the weekend to create learning sets to use back in their own workplaces. Sessions included one-to-one skills sharing, group discussion and problem solving, alongside time to relax, walk and socialise. The group have stayed in touch and continue to support each other. Participants saw improvements in relation to their well-being, capacity to deal with issues raised and confidence.

This comment echoes the feelings of the wider group, "I have gained a massive boost from being part of a small peer-to-peer support group with others who understand the joys and challenges of working in independent museums."

### Evaluation and impact

We will continue to evaluate the programme to help us assess the programme's impact in the short, medium and long term and to support the delivery of similar workshops for our sector that help us build a strong peer to peer network across the region.

Breathing Space is part of our wider project 'Sustaining Highland Heritage' funded through the Museums Galleries Scotland Forum's Fund project and made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players.

*Helen Avenell,*

**Museums & Heritage Highland**





## Encouraging creative learning and engagement for everyone.

THE PAST YEAR HAS BEEN AN EXCITING AND INNOVATIVE TIME FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT IN SCOTLAND. WE SAW GROUNDBREAKING EXCAVATIONS WITH NEW SCOTS THAT SUPPORTED INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES AND INSPIRING YOUTH LED LOCAL HERITAGE PROJECTS THAT TACKLED ISSUES AROUND WELLBEING.



# ENCOURAGING GREATER ENGAGEMENT

### Encouraging the Next Generation of Archaeologists: Attainment through Archaeology

From Ayrshire to the Scottish Borders, over 350 children and young people took part in Attainment through Archaeology (AtA) programmes in the past year. AtA is a wellbeing and skills development initiative developed by Archaeology Scotland to tackle the poverty related attainment gap.

The Kelsae Archaeology Project, a youth led AtA programme in the Scottish Borders which tackled post-pandemic wellbeing issues, was named Youth Engagement Project of the Year at the Marsh Community Archaeology Awards 2023. You can read all about it on the [Heritage Resources Portal](#).

### Letter to a Young Archaeologist

'A Letter to a Young Archaeologist' is a UK wide initiative set up by the Council for British Archaeology and Birkbeck, University of London, to encourage young people to get involved in archaeology.

In previous years, the great and the good of archaeology have written letters aimed at those considering a career in archaeology; letters addressed to a fictional figure of 'the young archaeologist'. This year young people were given the opportunity to respond to, or initiate, these 'conversations' and Archaeology Scotland's Learning Team were keen to get involved.

A group of S1 pupils from the Supported Learning Centre at the Robert Burns Academy in Cumnock created a Letter *from* a Young Archaeologist video following their participation in a five-week Attainment through Archaeology project with Archaeology Scotland's Learning Team.

During their AtA workshops pupils explored their local heritage, from prehistoric rock art to 20<sup>th</sup> century mining heritage, before responding creatively to their new-found skills and knowledge. Their short film can be viewed [online](#).

### Scotland Online Young Archaeologists' Club

With members zooming in from across Scotland every month, the Scotland Online Young Archaeologists' Club (YAC) has proved to be a huge success. Online workshops which cover a variety of archaeological topics are packed full of quizzes, activities and virtual site visits and are delivered by Archaeology Scotland in partnership with several organisations including Stirlingshire YAC, Inverness YAC, Trimontium Museum, Stobs Camp, National Trust for Scotland, Wessex Archaeology, Glasgow University and Edinburgh World Heritage. A recent highlight was a workshop about Bronze Age Jet delivered by Dr Alison Sheridan. The young people learnt all about the Dunragit jet necklace, before making their own versions from modelling clay.

### Supporting Educators

The Archaeology and Learning Working Group continues to meet to work on new initiatives to support learners and educators and encourage the use of archaeological learning. The group has representatives from across the archaeology and education sectors. Educators can also find support on the Heritage Resources Portal which hosts a growing bank of learning resources and case studies, to support the delivery of engaging heritage projects.



Left: Kelsae Archaeology Project - Youth Engagement Project of the Year Award.

Right: Pupils from St David's Primary School trialling activities for the Greyfriars handling kit.

Below right: Still from the 'Letter from a Young Archaeologist' film with pupils from the Supported Learning Centre at Robert Burns Academy, Cumnock.

### Encouraging Broader Engagement through a Decolonised Curriculum

A recent addition to the Heritage Resources Portal is Stories in Stone, a new learning resource for Greyfriars Kirkyard in Edinburgh. Stories in Stone uncovers Scotland's links to colonialism and the trade in enslaved African peoples through the exploration of one family's gravestones. The story of Thomas and Elizabeth Riddell, whose headstones can be seen in Greyfriars Kirkyard, encourages learners to use their historical enquiry skills to delve into some of the darker episodes in Scotland's past. The resource, which was funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, was co-created by Archaeology Scotland, Edinburgh World Heritage, teachers and school pupils.

The resource can be downloaded on our [website](#).

### Inclusive Archaeology

Archaeology Scotland's New Audiences project continues to support New Scots, particularly asylum seekers and refugees, to explore Scotland's archaeological heritage while learning new skills and getting to know other members of their communities. In 2022, a community excavation took place at Cathkin Park football ground in Glasgow. Over the course of two weeks local volunteers, members of the United Yemeni Community, The Scottish Guardianship Service, Canal College and university students came together to excavate this fascinating and important piece of Glasgow's footballing heritage. Work was supported by the Scottish Refugee Council's volunteering forum. Linked to this work on footballing heritage, a tour of the Three Hampdens and the Scottish Football Museum was organised for The Scottish Guardianship Service. The Guardianship Service supports refugee children and young people who arrive in Scotland alone. 2023 will see some exciting creative collaborations with artists, archaeologists and New Audiences, so watch this space!

### Celebrating Archaeological Achievements

The Heritage Hero Awards recognise, reward and celebrate the work of participants involved in history, heritage and archaeology projects. Since the Awards were first piloted in 2016, over 21,000 awards have been achieved by people of all ages across Scotland. Definitely something to celebrate!

Jane Miller,

Archaeology Scotland



Left: Bronze Age 'Jet' Necklace created by a Scotland Online YAC member.



## In Depth



*“Can anyone be an archaeologist?” ‘Yeah, they can! If you keep being passionate you will be one.’”*

*Quote from Robert Burns Academy SLC Pupil*

## Attainment through Archaeology with Robert Burns Academy Supported Learning Centre

**Archaeology Scotland are in their third year of partnership with Coalfields Communities Landscape Partnership to deliver Attainment through Archaeology programmes for groups across East Ayrshire.**

Attainment through Archaeology uses hands on archaeology to connect young people with their local heritage, developing new skills and knowledge in a fun, inclusive environment. Over the last year we delivered six programmes for groups in East Ayrshire who wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity to engage with archaeology.

### Robert Burns Academy

We kicked off the year running a programme for S1 from the Supported Learning Centre at Robert Burns Academy in Cumnock. The programme was guided by pupils' interests, and with the group describing themselves as 'indoor cats' we kept outdoor work minimal.

Throughout the programme pupils were introduced to archaeological excavation, artefacts and recording, with mock excavations mimicking local sites. We explored Cumnock's historic cemetery, where the group were taught how to record historic headstones and put their numeracy skills into action, measuring headstones and investigating dates. Sessions three and four fell over the Mexican festival Day of the Dead so workshops were centered around this, making comparisons between the Mexican festival and others we celebrate in Scotland. Pupils made sugar skulls, paper flowers and chiseled paper, and created a colourful Altar in the classroom for other staff and pupils to visit.

Another session was themed around the nearby Ballochmyle rock art. We brought the Rock Art to them using Forestry and Land Scotland and AOC Archaeology's 3D models. Pupils considered what the marks might mean, and how they were made, before creating their own through carving, printing and using chalk to recreate Ballochmyle in the playground. In our final session we recorded pupils speaking about the project. Clips from this were featured in the Council for British Archaeology's Letters to a Young Archaeologist series – a real highlight of the project.

*Becca Barclay,  
Archaeology Scotland*



**Top:** Day of the Dead altar created by S1 pupils at Robert Burns Academy SLC.

**Far left:** Gravestone recording in Cumnock Old Cemetery with pupils from Robert Burns Academy SLC

**Left:** Playground rock art with pupils from Robert Burns Academy SLC.



## Three Years of Learning at the Petardy Historic Landscape Project

**The Petardy Historic Landscape Project was founded in 2020 following the initial lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Initiated and run entirely by university students, its guiding aim is to combine research with accessibility and community engagement. Focusing on young members of the community, it hopes to inspire the next generation with a passion for Scotland's past and equip them with the skills they will need to serve as its future custodians.

### **Skill building and outreach**

We have worked towards these goals by hosting four field seasons, and a smattering of historic landscape tours and archaeology give-it-a-go days. Here, the life of the project centres around an archaeologically rich farm in east Fife – a place that has nurtured both our research into many periods of Scotland's past, and our connections with the many people that make up Scotland's present. This has entailed learning to build connections with a range of local gatekeepers and stakeholders, from the landowners who host us to local schools, parenting groups, academics and professionals, universities and societies.

As our project has gathered momentum, we have developed our digital presence through a website and regular newsletter, attempting to highlight some of the adventure of fieldwork, and recently branching out onto social media. Taking our findings on the road, we have engaged with the local community through presentations and a museum display, as well as travelling further afield to present at national student conferences.

It has been a tremendous learning experience for everyone involved, giving us the opportunity to develop a familiarity with everything from archaeological fieldwork skills to the knowledge and interpersonal qualities required to lead a project. The three-year mark has begun to feel like something of a waypoint – the trial stage is over. Looking towards the future, we are eager to solidify and revitalize the project with more personnel and more expert help from the wider landscape of Scottish archaeology. This, we feel, will help guarantee another three years of discovery for Fife.

*Erik Crnkovich & Joe Lippitt,*  
**Petardy Historic Landscape Project**



**Far left: View of ongoing work at Petardy Field School**

**Left: Petardy field school, 2021.**

**Tour of Petardy field school.**





**Right: Clay building made by the Kelsae Archaeology Project team.**

**Below: Model buildings made by care home residents during the Kelsae Archaeology Project.**



## Kelso Students' Award-Winning Youth-Led Archaeology Project

**The Kelsae Archaeology Project was a collaboration between young people from Kelso High School, Archaeology Scotland, the Community Learning and Development Service at Scottish Borders Council and QME Care, with additional support from many local heritage and community groups. The project was led by the young people who worked alongside archaeologists from Archaeology Scotland.**

A group of students from Kelso High School in the Scottish Borders were delighted to hear that their Kelsae Intergenerational Archaeology Project was named Youth Engagement Project of the year at the Marsh Community Archaeology Awards.

With funding from the Build Back a Better Borders Fund, the project aimed to use archaeology to tackle the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on two specific groups within the community - those most affected by lockdowns - young people and older members of the community.

### Developing new skills

Archaeology Scotland's Learning Team worked with the young people to develop the skills needed to carry out the project - historical research, gravestone recording, historic building recording and archaeological survey and excavation.

Tooled up with some key skills, the young people decided on the focus and name of their project: The Kelsae Archaeology Project, looking at historic buildings in the town centre and how they've changed over time.







The Kelsae Archaeology Project team at the Bedrule Castle excavation.

Bottom: Stone carving created by Kelsae Archaeology Project participant.

There was also a desire to uncover the stories of people who'd lived in the town in the past, so gravestone recording was carried out in the Old Parish Church Burial Ground. Inspired by the carving on the gravestones, the group worked with local stone carver Natasha Smith to create their own carved symbols in stone.

### Intergenerational inspiration

Members of the community were encouraged to drop in on the weekly workshops at the community centre to share their memories, and visits to a local care home were planned. Ahead of the care home workshops, the young people prepared questions, planned activities and discussed issues experienced by older people. The first workshop with the residents was an opportunity for the young people to share information, historic photographs and maps of Kelso and ask the older people about their own memories and experiences.

The second was activity based – all participants made small clay model buildings while chatting about homes, shops and other buildings in Kelso and how they've changed over time.

Gradually a picture of the historic town and its residents was pieced together. Some of the buildings were creatively reconstructed out of clay and an engaging pop-up banner was designed by one of the young people – a great way to share their findings with others at the end-of-project celebration event.

### National recognition

The project gained national recognition at the YouthLink National Youth Work Conference 2022, where the project team, including one of the students, were given the opportunity to present a workshop for youth work professionals and showcase a student's poster about their project journey.

In addition to the Marsh Youth Engagement Project of the Year Award, participants achieved Silver Heritage Hero Awards; Archaeology Scotland's wider achievement award for history, heritage and archaeology projects, and many are participating in further stone carving activities.

The project has had an ongoing impact and shown how young people can engage with archaeology and local heritage through a youth-led, hands-on approach.

Councillor Carol Hamilton, Executive Member for Developing Our Children and Young People in the Scottish Borders, congratulated the pupils on their award, adding that "Their willingness to research and tackle issues faced by certain groups due to the pandemic and collaborate with the wider community is great to see. I feel sure that the skills that they have gained throughout this journey will be of lifelong benefit and that their example will encourage more students to get involved in the fascinating study of Archaeology."

A blog post about the project can be found on the [Heritage Resources Portal](#).

*Jane Miller,*  
**Archaeology Scotland**





Right: Stories in Stone resources on the Heritage Resources Portal.

Below left and middle: St David's Primary School pupils trialling activities from the Artefact Investigation Kit.

Bottom right: Greyfriars Resource Launch .

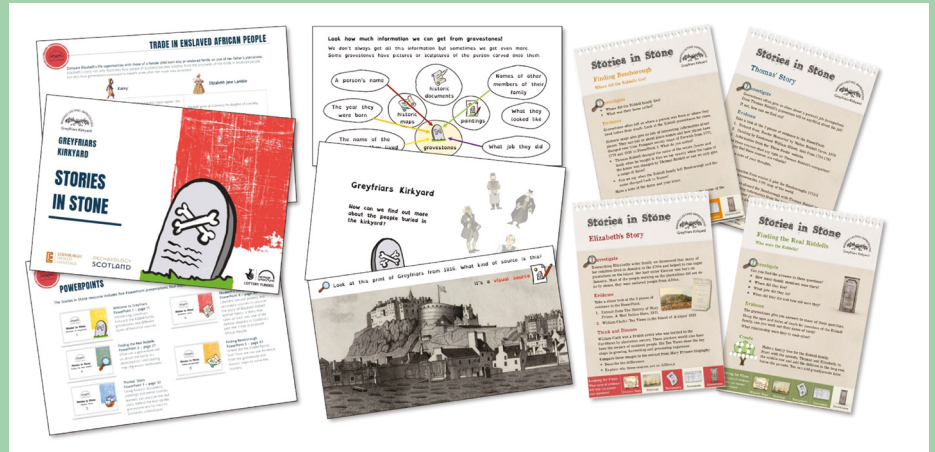
## Stories in Stone: Uncovering Hidden Histories in the Kirkyard

### A new learning resource for Greyfriars Kirkyard

Within every historic graveyard, behind every gravestone there are fascinating stories from the past. Stories in Stone, a new learning resource for Greyfriars Kirkyard, explores some of these. Stories that uncover Scotland's links to colonialism and the trade in enslaved African people through the exploration of the gravestones of Thomas and Elizabeth Riddell and their family.

### Riddell me this

Thomas Riddell's gravestone is already well known, attracting thousands of visitors to Greyfriars Kirkyard every year. But it is a fictional character, Tom Riddle, also known as Lord Voldemort, that has Harry Potter fans flocking to the site. They believe that Thomas Riddell's gravestone inspired JK Rowling to name her villainous character Tom Riddle. The story of the real Thomas Riddell is less well known but far more interesting, steeped as it is in some of the darkest episodes in Scotland's past.



Thomas was a captain in the East India Company, voyaging between India, China and across the South China Seas in the 1760s and 1770s. The East India Company was an unstoppable force in British empire-building at that time and would go on to become the most powerful company ever to exist.

Elizabeth Riddell's father and uncles owned sugar plantations in Jamaica, where enslaved peoples were forced to work. When slavery was abolished in the 1830s, the British government compensated the owners of enslaved people for their loss of 'property'. Some of this money came to Thomas and Elizabeth through compensation paid out to her uncle.

### Resource details and feedback

Stories in Stone, which was co-created by Archaeology Scotland's Learning Officer, Edinburgh World Heritage, teachers and school pupils, consists of PowerPoint presentations, educator notes, activities and an Artefact Investigation Kit. The Artefact Investigation Kit was developed with primary school pupils from St. David's Primary School in Edinburgh who trialed the activities and gave invaluable feedback.

*"Ties in with our aim of a broader, more inclusive and decolonised curriculum."*

*Feedback from participating teacher*

In March we celebrated the launch of this exciting new learning Stone resource with project partners and teachers. The launch was a great success with positive feedback from teachers and educators, describing the resources as: 'Engaging, accessible and local' 'Very accessible, engaging, tactile – lots of support for various learners' 'Ties in with our aim of a broader, more inclusive and decolonised curriculum'.

The resources were also shared at an event organised by Edinburgh City Council to celebrate the Building Racial Literacy initiative in Scottish schools. All the resources are now free to view or download on the Heritage Resources Portal.

*Jane Miller,  
Archaeology Scotland*







Left: A pair of sugar nips, used to cut lumps from sugar cones. The production of sugar is inextricably linked with our colonial past and the transatlantic slave trade.

Top left: Replica of a 17th Century Scottish Reduce Ware jug probably used as a chamber pot; the original is on display at the Museum of Edinburgh.

Below: A costumed interpreter representing John Edmonstone at the launch of Go Auld Reekie at the Museum of Edinburgh in October 2022.

## Go Auld Reekie Learning Resource

'Go Auld Reekie' tells the story of life in the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site before and during the 18th century, a period of significant change. Items in the handling box include a pair of sugar nips and a replica jar based on one found under the Tron Kirk in 1974 that was most likely used as a chamber pot!

### Response to Black Lives Matter

Promotion was stalled by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, which gave time for the World Heritage partners to reflect on the importance of representing the past inclusively and honestly. This was sharply highlighted by the murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter protests.

Omissions in representation were recognised as there were no references to Edinburgh's growth and success fuelled by Britain's colonial past and the Atlantic slave trade. In addition, there were no people of colour among the characters based on real historic individuals.

### Changing the narrative

Research into new content and characters addressed this and a new narrative was included explaining how slavery and colonialism is embedded into Edinburgh's history, with the impacts still felt in communities today. Fascinating new characters from under-represented groups in Georgian Edinburgh were added.

The learning resource was trialled by a primary four class before a museum visit and assisted the teacher to confidently discuss artefacts with the pupils in class and during the visit. The completed resource was launched during Black History Month 2022 at the Museum of Edinburgh.

### Future for inclusive education

'Go Auld Reekie' aligns with a key recommendation of the City of Edinburgh Council's 'Edinburgh Slavery and Colonialism Legacy Review'. It is a valuable resource that increases education of important topics and acknowledges an overlooked part of history. It sets a standard for inclusive education and is hopefully the first of many to do so.

Jenny Bruce,  
City of Edinburgh Council





# Budget-friendly fieldwork celebrated with Scotland Digs 2023: Free Days Out

Now in its fifth iteration, the Scotland Digs 2023: Free Days Out campaign coordinated by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland's DigIt! project celebrated the country's world-class archaeology. It also highlighted budget-friendly fieldwork events for the public through social media and an online hub over the summer.

## A summer of archaeology

Between 21 June and 22 September, the public watched a UHI Archaeology Institute team at work at The Cairns in Orkney, got a hands-on experience as part of the Petardy Historic Landscape Project in Fife, and flocked to the Holyrood Archaeology Project's open day at the site of an Iron Age hillfort in Edinburgh with the University of Edinburgh, AOC Archaeology and Historic Environment Scotland.

In addition, free fieldwork events which welcomed visitors or volunteers were coordinated by the 1722 Waggonway Project, Yarrows Heritage Trust, University College Dublin, Swandro-Orkney Coastal Archaeology Trust, Falkland Stewardship Trust, University of Aberdeen, Edinburgh Archaeological Field Society and more.

Developer-led archaeology also played a significant part in the summer campaign. AOC Archaeology, for example, coordinated free tours of an Iron Age settlement and structural remains uncovered in advance of a new housing development being built in Perth and Kinross.

## Increasing awareness

These campaigns are designed to increase awareness of, and encourage greater engagement with, archaeological fieldwork in Scotland. By the end of the summer, thousands of users had engaged with the hashtag #ScotlandDigs2023 and visited the campaign webpages, and summer fieldwork was covered by regional and national newspapers, websites such as STV News and more.

Want to boost the profile of your fieldwork and the sector by getting involved in Scotland Digs 2024? Contact [DigIt@socantscot.org](mailto:DigIt@socantscot.org) for more information.

## DigIt!

*DigIt!* is coordinated by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and primarily funded by Historic Environment Scotland



Left: Cairns site director, Martin Carruthers with archaeologist Holly Young at The Cairns, Rousay, Orkney.

Right: Close-up of Forfar Road Souterrain.

Middle: A member of the public at the Holyrood Archaeology Project.

Below: Volunteers excavating a trench in front of Pittarthis Castle as part of the Petardy Field School.



**SCOTLAND DIGS**



**Volunteers celebrating  
the end of the dig at Camas  
nan Geall.**

**Below: reconstructing  
the Blackhouse 1.**



## Real Wild West

**Archaeology Scotland's, three-year, Real Wild West: Adopt-a-Monument in Ardnamurchan programme came to an end in the summer of 2023, with the successful completion of the Hearth and Home: Reconstructing the Blackhouse project.**

This project involved reconstructing and enhancing two blackhouses in the crofting settlement of Achnaha. Both structures were in a poor state of repair, and the croft area was surrounded by debris from years of abandonment. Over several months volunteers from the local community came together, under the guidance of local traditional skills specialist Peter Holmes, of Rural Skills Training, to clear the site, create better access and reconstruct the walls of the two structures. Participants were on hand at every stage in the process learning new skills in dry stone walling, lime mortaring, revetment wall building and fencing.

### Practical skill building

Feedback from the participants has been extremely positive with many taking the skills they learnt during the project back to their own crofts, to help improve the sustainability of their crofting practices.

Aligned to these practical outcomes were the health and wellbeing benefits enjoyed by the participants. Many self-reported greater wellbeing, with people making friends and connecting with others in the community.

### Additional projects

Six other projects were delivered as part of the programme. These included excavations in the historical landscape of Camas nan Geall, "Adopting" ten archaeological sites, and the creation of an interpretation strategy that included the design of the Wander West Ardnamurchan heritage trail. The programme was aligned to the West Ardnamurchan Community Action Plan that aims 'to develop a sustainable strategy for encouraging and supporting visitors to West Ardnamurchan'. It was funded through the Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund (NCHF), a fund supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), managed by NatureScot on behalf of the Scottish Government with match funding provided by Historic Environment Scotland.

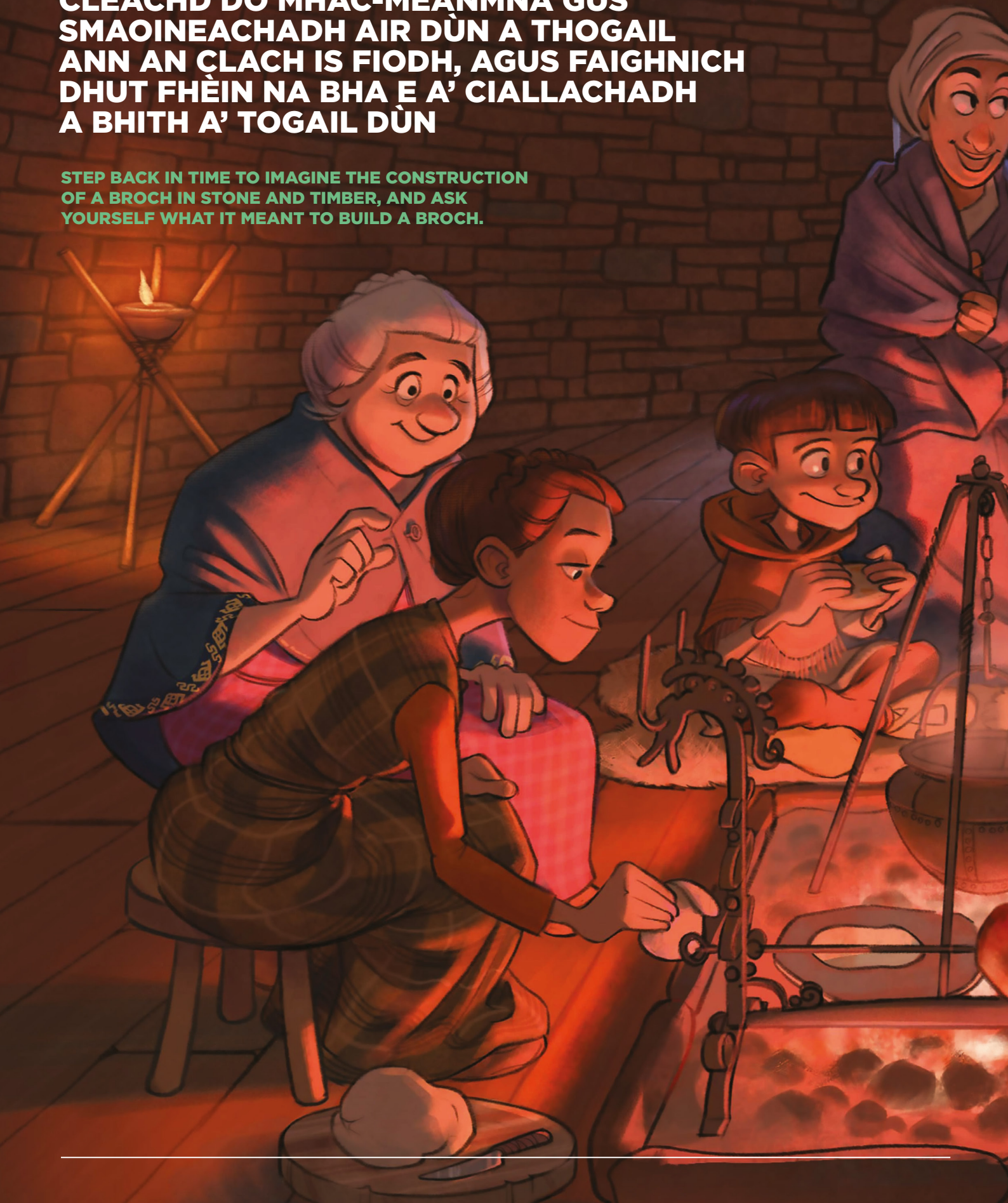
*Paul Murtagh,  
Archaeology Scotland*



# TO BUILD A BROCH

GABH CEUM AIR AIS ANN AN TÌM AGUS  
CLEACHD DO MHAC-MEANMNA GUS  
SMAOINEACHADH AIR DÙN A THOGAIL  
ANN AN CLACH IS FIODH, AGUS FAIGHNICH  
DHUT FHÈIN NA BHA E A' CIALLACHADH  
A BHITH A' TOGAIL DÙN

STEP BACK IN TIME TO IMAGINE THE CONSTRUCTION  
OF A BROCH IN STONE AND TIMBER, AND ASK  
YOURSELF WHAT IT MEANT TO BUILD A BROCH.





**Brochs are a truly unique aspect of Scotland's rich prehistoric tapestry. They were built around the end of the first millennium BC – distinctive circular drystone towers rising high from their foundations by employing a series of weight-saving and load-bearing galleries, stairways and passages within their double-skinned walls.**

They were likely commissioned by well-to-do productive households and constructed by experienced builders. Brochs were built and occupied, altered and repaired, fell into disuse and were sometimes reoccupied. Recognising the various processes at work between construction, collapse, ruination or conservation helps us to better appreciate the long timespans involved and imagine some of the key moments in time.

*To Build a Broch* presents an illustrated narrative – a story of complex structural engineering and bold architectural design, and an amazing vernacular tradition that was the height of fashion over 2,000 years ago. The learning resource uses fictional voices from the past to describe the building of a broch, and contemporary voices from across Scotland's vibrant heritage sector to describe a wide range of cutting-edge work, including archaeological excavation, conservation management, heritage interpretation and digital documentation. The Gaelic language edition, *A Thogail Dùn*, brings this regionally thematic popular archaeology to an important wider audience.

*To Build a Broch* was written by Alan Braby, Andy Heald, Matt Ritchie and Tanja Romankiewicz. It was published by Forestry and Land Scotland in partnership with AOC Archaeology, the Caithness Broch Project and Historic Environment Scotland.





## Scottish Community Heritage Alliance

**The Scottish Community Heritage Alliance (SCHA) was set up by a group of people involved in community heritage across Scotland who share a desire to see the sector grow. Our backgrounds vary from volunteers and curators to archaeologists and academics.**

Community Heritage was once the province of small traditional museums and heritage societies but is now a diverse and lively sector doing everything from managing nationally important assets to delivering arts projects around intangible heritage. It is a thriving and demanding environment and, to us, the most exciting growth area in the Scottish heritage sector. SCHA was set up to support individuals and organisations involved in community heritage and believe that by listening to and collaborating with each other we can create a positive change.

### **Is there a need for a network?**

Community heritage in Scotland is growing rapidly and has transformed over the past 25 years, reflecting a combination of changes to national cultural strategy and local authorities, and a growing movement of more empowerment within communities. At SCHA we speak with the people working and volunteering in these communities and the feedback we have gathered shows that there is the desire and need for a change in the sector.

From this feedback, our own experiences and that of our friends and colleagues, we have come to understand that many individuals and groups feel that the big players within the heritage sector claim to speak on behalf of grassroots organisations without adequately canvassing their views or understanding regional differences. SCHA aims to change this through a bottom-up, collaborative approach; creating a community heritage network which can represent the community voice at a national level.

### **What have we been doing?**

In 2019 SCHA, in partnership with University of St Andrews, conducted a Scotland-wide roadshow as a way for us to meet with and speak directly to a diverse range of individuals and groups from the community heritage sector, as well as bring people within the grassroots community together. From these meet ups, the aspirations were to identify needs within the sector, look further into regionality differences and encourage partnerships and opportunities for individuals and groups to work together.

Work stalled during the pandemic but SCHA still advocated on behalf of the community heritage sector – working to ensure that non-accredited museums were equally represented and eligible to receive the same support as accredited museums, opening avenues for non-accredited museums to receive support and vital recovery funding.





### What’s happening now?

We are aware that recent years have brought unprecedented demands on what is still an overwhelmingly volunteer-led workforce. SCHA is here to support these groups and individuals wherever they can by providing opportunities for networking, research and advocacy and helping the community heritage to become more resilient, respected and understood.

Early in 2023 we secured funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to bring in a member of staff to help us engage with previous supporters and convert them into members, to help spread the work about SCHA, and to develop research projects which focus on small heritage groups and museums. After seeing the success of the recent Highland Heritage Day, SCHA have been working to create avenues for people to communicate, meet and exchange experiences in looking after heritage assets.

We are currently developing a database of individuals and organisations involved in community heritage across Scotland which will allow you to see others active in your area and present opportunities for collaboration and skill sharing. SCHA representatives will also be present at upcoming heritage events to listen to your concerns, hold advice surgeries and signpost you to relevant help.

### How to get involved?

SCHA was set up to represent the whole of Scotland and as a member you will have direct input into priorities, development, and ways of working. Whether you are part of a group or an individual, we want to hear from you.

You can learn more about our work by following us on social media @schalliance or checking our website.

SCHA supports inclusive participation and representation of everyone involved in community heritage in Scotland. If you know someone who would prefer a paper application or phone call, please let us know. SCHA will be present at the SAF Conference in Aberdeen in October and we would love to see you there.

*Nicola McHendry,*  
**Scottish Community Heritage Alliance**



**Far right: A view from The Cateran Ecomuseum.**

**Top right: Scotland’s Community Heritage Alliance event.**

**Bottom right: Kilchiaran Bay.**

**Left: Scotland’s Community Heritage Alliance flyer.**

**Below: Scotland’s Community Heritage Alliance word bubble.**





Creating opportunities to acquire archaeological skills and driving innovation.

# INNOVATION AND SKILLS

**LIGHT ON THE HORIZON? SUPPORTING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO CAREERS IN ARCHAEOLOGY THROUGH AIM FIVE AND 12 MONTHS OF PROGRESS WITH AIM FIVE STILL HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANCE OF LONG-TERM STRATEGIC APPROACHES.**



Left: Edinburgh University fieldwork fair.

**As Lead Body for Aim Five of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy, the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) is supported by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) to deliver this area of the strategy which focuses on 'Innovation and Skills'. This includes developing new entry routes into archaeology, ensuring that all archaeologists have access to equitable training opportunities and supporting the sector to meet present and future skill challenges.**

## Events

*This year, 322 participants have engaged with CIfA facilitated events, which includes:*

- delivering 3 subsidised Continuing Professional Development (CPD) workshops for 67 current and future archaeologists*
- engaging with 241 students at career events and conferences*
- 14 events attended or supported by CIfA*
- 5 conference papers, news items or articles have been completed, promoting the work of CIfA in Scotland*

Delving into the stories behind those numbers, we have enjoyed continuing our engagement with university students and student archaeology societies and supporting them with career advice and knowledge on professional standards and accreditation.

Those events attended include the Edinburgh University fieldwork fair, the Scottish Student Society Archaeology Conference (hosted by Aberdeen University), career talks at Edinburgh University, and a digital careers 'teabreak' for students from UHI, Glasgow University and Edinburgh University.

We were delighted that Edinburgh University now joins Aberdeen University to become the second Scottish institution to be awarded 'Accredited degree' status – a partnership initiative between University Archaeology UK and CIfA, which supports the next generation of archaeologists to gain the relevant skills to succeed within their career in archaeology.

### Addressing skill gaps

Engagement with universities is only one part of delivering Aim Five. Another key aspect is developing new training opportunities and qualifications which address practical skill gaps for entry level archaeologists. That includes a new 'Professional Development Award' in archaeological field skills. The outline and content for this qualification has been developed with industry partners to ensure that it is fit for purpose. We were delighted to find out in June that our proposal has been accepted by the Scottish Qualifications Authority, and that we could move on to the formal development process. Taking this initiative forward will be a priority for the Aim Five work over the next 12 months and we can't wait to get started with it!

We also know that entry routes into a career in archaeology are narrow, and that this has a significant impact on who can be an archaeologist. We see the development of an apprenticeship for archaeology as an important way to address this issue. As we have reported in the past, it has been a challenge to navigate the apprenticeship development process. Convincing non-heritage stakeholders that we are a sector ready to deliver apprenticeships has been a challenge.

We may lack the numbers of candidates that these stakeholders look for, but we score highly on social value, on retention rates (as shown by the English Trailblazer apprenticeship schemes) and it has been reported there is a demand from our clients for archaeology apprenticeships.

Thanks to support from HES, we have been able to persist with this process. Last year archaeology was included on the 'development prioritisation list', which is compiled by Skills Development Scotland and submitted to Scottish Government. This is a huge step forward. We will now be pursuing an 'Industry Led' approach to apprenticeship development, and we are preparing the documentation to allow us to proceed to stage one of this process.

Navigating the conversations which have gotten us to this stage has taken skills and expertise, both from the archaeologists involved and other stakeholders. It has taken time and resources to realign those viewpoints and demonstrate that we are ready to deliver apprenticeships. We are grateful to everyone who has given their time to support this initiative. We continue to work closely with the team delivering the Skills Investment Plan for Scotland's Historic Environment, who have been instrumental in supporting us to navigate the skill development system.

### CPD workshops

Finally, we want to give a quick shout out to our CPD workshops which aim to provide access for archaeologists at all career stages to develop their skills and to continue working in the sector. These workshops are subsidised by funding from HES, and this year has included topics on 'Plain English', 'Deaf Awareness' and 'Bystander training'.

There is still much to do with Aim Five, but this year really feels like progress is being made!

*Cara Jones,*  
**Chartered Institute for Archaeologists**



**Magnetometry workshop led by Alice Amabilino.**



## Community geophysical survey at Cockenzie Harbour, East Lothian

**Wessex Archaeology and 1722 Waggonway Heritage Group, alongside military veterans and local volunteers completed a geophysical survey on the historic harbour structures at Cockenzie in East Lothian in spring 2023.**

This work, funded by Historic Environment Scotland and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, builds on the engagement and heritage assessment work already undertaken of the largely original early 19th century industrial harbour that was one end of the Tranent-Cockenzie wagonway, Scotland's oldest railway.

### **Developing archaeological skills**

The project was designed to provide archaeological skills training and to improve the mental health of military veterans by building connections between them, their local heritage, and local heritage groups.

It was also intended to further investigations into the construction and current condition of the harbour piers and quaysides.

Using Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR), the geophysical survey covered the eastern pier and quayside which had already been excavated by 1722 Waggonway Heritage Group and that identified salt pan houses and structures related to the export of coal from the harbour. Volunteers also received training in magnetometry survey using a cart-based system on the area of parkland to the south of the harbour, where the Stevenson plans had shown possible quarries.

Fifteen volunteers took part over two days, bringing their enthusiasm and own knowledge of the history of the harbour to assist our specialists in understanding the findings. While magnetometry of the area south of the harbour was inconclusive, probably due to landscaping works after the construction of Cockenzie Power Station, the survey of the harbour structures had several exciting results.

From the returns on the Ground Penetrating Radar, it was clear that compared to the Stevenson plans, which suggested the piers had been filled in with rubble between tie walls, a more constant and well-sorted fill being more likely. This may be sand or similar material, but exact identification was not possible from the results. GPR also identified areas within the pier with higher water retention. As the survey was completed during low tides, it meant that sea water was clearly getting into the harbour structure and staying, which could cause damage to the internal structures.

### **Geophysical results**

It was expected from the Stevenson plans, held by the National Library of Scotland, that the eastern pier would have a series of tie walls running within the main pier structure, dividing it up into boxes which were then infilled. These were visible on the GPR outputs, called radargrams, but were not as clear as they should have been, for currently unknown reasons. Cockenzie doesn't give up its secrets easily.





**Left: Cockenzie Harbour.**

**Bottom left: The volunteers receive their briefing at the 1722 Waggonway Heritage Centre.**

**Bottom right: Volunteers receiving training on use of GPR at Cockenzie Harbour.**

Within the eastern quayside, however, there was a clear difference in the radar returns from an area around 1.5m in from the harbour edge. To the east of this line the findings suggested a material consistent with rubble infill, while to the west between the line and the current harbour facing the return suggests a more homogeneous infill, like that of the eastern pier.

During excavations in 2018 within what turned out to be a counterweight pit for a coal drop, a facing wall was found running roughly north south at the same distance back from the current facing wall. References to an earlier 17th century harbour which was destroyed in the 1680s are known at Cockenzie.

### Looking forward

Even more excitingly, newly digitised plans for Stevenson's design for the harbour suggest that the quayside would have extended southwards from a salt pan house along this alignment.

The plans suggest that both the salt pan house and the earlier quayside were subsumed into the new harbour. Research is ongoing into the exact intricacies of this development. What is clear, is that the structure is relatively unchanged and features from Cockenzie's original construction in the 1830s have survived well. Coupled with an amazingly extensive selection of original plans from the Stevenson Collection and the information from this new in-depth survey, there is great potential to shed light on the design and construction of harbours during the early 19th century. This has great significance, as this was the period when many of Scotland's smaller harbours were built.

As we are now, unfortunately, at a point when these maritime structures are increasingly at risk from rising sea levels and increased storminess, as noted by Historic Environment Scotland's Guide to Climate Change Impacts it is vital we understand these structures before they are lost.

Volunteers, Wessex Archaeology specialists and the team from 1722 Waggonway Heritage Group continue to work on a publication presenting the results of our work and the development of Cockenzie harbour, which will be out in 2024. Thanks to all the funders of the project and to everyone who got involved for bringing together what will be a hugely significant piece of work.

Visit the 1722 Waggonway website for more information.

*Ben Saunders,*  
**Wessex Archaeology**







Left: Augmented reality archaeology at Cladh Hallan.

Augmented Reality at Viking Bornais.

## Uist Unearthed: revealing and reimagining island archaeology through augmented reality

**With few upstanding remains, fragile landscapes, and minimal interpretation, showcasing Uist's archaeology has been challenging.**

Uist Unearthed revisualises these challenges as opportunities by exploring low-impact digital interpretation for five archaeological sites; Bronze Age Cladh Hallan, Iron Age sites Cill Donnain and Dùn Torcuill, Bornais Viking longhouse and medieval Dùn an Sticir.

### Digital reconstructions of archaeological data

Previously inaccessible archaeological data is transformed into life-size digital reconstructions. Using augmented reality technology, the Uist Unearthed app projects reconstructions upon each site's location. Additional 3D models, bilingual text, audio, and animation help visitors to visualise sites in a new light. The app is further enhanced by a touring exhibition containing 3D-printed artefacts, virtual reality headsets, and interactive displays.

Engagement with local schools for app testing and content creation was a highlight for the project team. A bilingual animation was created with Sgoil Uibhist a Tuath pupils, telling the story of Hugh MacDonald, a familiar character in Uist's folklore tradition. Their talents were recognised with a shortlisting in the 2022 FilmG Awards.



### Project impact

Over 3.5 years, this transformational project has seen 4,500 app downloads to-date, over 5,000 exhibition visitors and won in three categories at the 2022 Archaeological Achievement Awards, including Overall Outstanding Archaeological Achievement. Evaluation tells us that this project has been "eye-opening for locals" with previously hard to reach audiences (Uist's families and young people) now more engaged with their archaeology. 90% of participants said they had learned more about Uist's archaeology and 81% would visit more archaeological sites after using the app or visiting the exhibition. Uist Unearthed shows that digital technologies can be a key enabling tool for engaging a wider range of people with archaeological sites and landscapes.

We are grateful to our funders, project partners and participants. Please visit our website for more information.

*Emily Gal,*  
**University of the Highlands and Islands**



## Investigating Iron Age Communities in Assynt

**Archaeological investigations by Historic Assynt and AOC Archaeology, most notably at Clachtoll Broch, and Loch na Claise crannog, have shown a substantive Iron Age community existed in Assynt, northwest Scotland in the 1st century BCE/CE.**

The origins of this community, and the impact it made on the landscape, are not well understood. A novel approach was taken to look at the Iron Age settlement in Assynt using pollen, geochemical and stable isotope analysis conducted on loch sediment core material.

### Loch na Claise

Analysis of material from a core taken adjacent to Loch na Claise crannog, revealed some surprises. Towards the middle of the sediment core, there was a change in the geochemistry of the sediments, indicating human activity. Modelled dates for the sediment layers were Neolithic, around 3200–3100 BCE/CE, and not Iron Age.

This may be the first evidence for a Neolithic crannog on mainland Scotland, although examples are known on the Hebrides. A decline in tree pollen indicated that the evidence for soil erosion seen in the geochemical and isotope evidence may have been due to land clearance around the crannog.

Further geochemical changes were recorded higher up the core, and these indicated that Iron Age occupation of the crannog was earlier than the excavation evidence suggested, starting around 450–400 BCE/CE. The difference is most likely explained by the occupation in the 2nd or 1st centuries BCE/CE removing earlier material. Evidence for a rise in the growth rate of microorganisms, and increased terrestrial material in the sediment, indicated that occupation added nutrients to the loch, in the form of effluent or manured soils.

### Clachtoll

Pollen evidence from a sediment core from Loch an Aigeil, Clachtoll, suggested a period of tree-loss from the 7th century BCE/CE. Increased sediment accumulation and evidence for more nutrients in the waters of the loch, in the period 650–250 BCE/CE, was interpreted as the erosion of nutrient-rich terrestrial material into loch systems, because of land-use for farming, compounded by deforestation. The start of this pre-dates the main phase of occupation at Clachtoll Broch and suggests that the landscape was in use at a much earlier time in the Iron Age, perhaps when an earlier phase of settlement at the broch existed.

*Louisa Matthews,*  
**Newcastle University and  
AOC Archaeology**

**Assembling core-collecting apparatus at Loch na Claise. The crannog can be seen in the background to the right**







Digital reconstruction of Whithorn Priory.



Above: Artist's impression of Whithorn Priory in the 1500s.

## The Ties That Bind: using bioarchaeology to investigate maternal-child wellbeing in medieval Scotland

### In their bones, and teeth

A mother's health during her own childhood is of vital importance in terms of birth outcomes and poor health can have consequences down the generations. But how do we investigate poor health in past women and children? The key is in their bones and teeth; skeletal assemblages across Scotland hold vital evidence of past diet and health, and although there is much bioarchaeological research on adult lifeways, research on reconstructing the health of Scotland's past children falls woefully short. Part of the story may be told by looking at markers of disease or deficiency on the bones themselves, but it is the chemical signatures locked in their teeth that hold the key to fully understanding the health of women and children from Scotland's past.

### A powerful tool to reconstruct diet and health

Exciting new research is now underway by Dr Shirley Curtis-Summers at the University of Bradford's School of Archaeological and Forensic Sciences, who will carry out stable carbon and nitrogen isotope analysis of incremental tooth dentine collagen from medieval women and children to identify maternal-child health relationships. Dr Curtis-Summers will analyse medieval skeletons from Whithorn Cathedral Priory, and Portmahomack, as well as engage with local communities on mother-child diet and health. These sites were major ecclesiastical centres during the medieval period and included burials of Pictish monks, medieval bishops, pilgrims, ministers, and layfolk.



Tarbat Old Church.

Bottom: St Ninian's Priory Church.



However, it's the women and children that are now receiving attention, and isotope analysis serves as a powerful tool to identify episodes of poor diet and physiological stress, from in-utero to early adulthood. Dr Curtis-Summers said "I'm extremely excited to be given the opportunity to carry out this research as there are huge gaps in our knowledge of maternal-child health relationships in Scotland. This research aligns with the Strategy for the Historic Environment's priority of 'building a wellbeing economy' by using archaeological science to help people understand health in the past and encourage wellbeing for the future".

### Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the University of Bradford for funding this research, and to National Museums Scotland, and Dumfries and Galloway Council, for granting access to skeletal collections. Sincere thanks also to the Whithorn Trust, and the Tarbat Historic Trust for offering endless support and fruitful collaborations.

*Shirley Curtis-Summers,*  
**University of Bradford**



## The Benefits of Partnership: A CASE Study

**As part of her PhD research at Durham University and the University of Stirling, Vanessa Reid has been collaborating with HES to improve the understanding of archaeological soil science.**

In late 2018, I began a National Environment Research Council (NERC) IAPETUS PhD that involved a six-month CASE placement at Historic Environment Scotland (HES). The aim was to gain experience in a non-academic organisation and create a mutually beneficial research collaboration.

### Soil sciences

The bulk of my research involved applying soil science techniques to archaeological sites in Scotland, using the techniques and theories from a subdiscipline known as 'geoarchaeology'. This resulted in me developing practical experience in fieldwork, sampling strategies and laboratory science, and knowledge of the principles that guide these approaches.

However, the reality of a PhD is that only a handful of people will end up reading your thesis and seeing the results.

### Broadening the scope

My CASE placement with HES therefore provided an opportunity to communicate this knowledge to a wider audience.

Working with Dr Lisa Brown, we conducted interviews with stakeholders to understand what knowledge gaps existed and channeled this into a guidance document that provides information on geoarchaeological approaches. By directing the document at a non-specialist audience, we aimed to give archaeologists the agency to understand the value of soil science and implement these techniques and principles more widely. It is hoped that the guidance will be complete and published in 2024.

I am now happy to report that I have officially graduated, and my CASE placement has already resulted in a subsequent collaboration with HES.

I hugely enjoyed developing this partnership with Lisa and HES and would highly recommend a CASE placement to other PhDs!

*Vanessa Reid,*  
**University of Edinburgh**

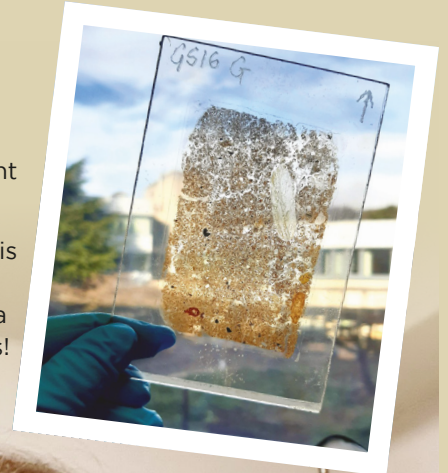


Image © Vanessa Reid

**Left: Multi-element analysis on pressed soil pellets - attempting to get some lab work done during the COVID-19 lockdowns!**

**Above: Newly manufactured thin-section slide from an early medieval structure at Lair, Glenshee - one of the techniques and case studies covered in the geoarchaeological guidelines.**





*“Working directly with undergraduates is the most effective way to develop key skills in the next generation of professional archaeologists, providing experience that equips them to enter the heritage profession. The Holyrood project gives us all the opportunity to do this at the same time as carrying out new and exciting research on nationally-important monuments in Scotland’s capital.”*

*Dr Graeme Cavers, Director at AOC Archaeology,*

**Students learning survey skills at Holyrood Field School.**



Images © Holyrood Field School

# HOLYROOD PARK FIELD SCHOOL

**SPANNING OVER 650 ACRES, HOLYROOD PARK IS WELL KNOWN AS A HAVEN FOR NATURE AND GEOLOGY ENTHUSIASTS. WHAT IS LESS KNOWN, IS THAT IT CONTAINS OVER 100 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES RANGING FROM MESOLITHIC HUNTER-GATHERER ACTIVITY, ESTIMATED TO DATE TO AT LEAST 8000 YEARS AGO, TO USE IN THE PRESENT DAY.**





Learning new skills.

**In between, there is prehistoric occupation from Bronze Age enclosures and at least four Iron Age hillforts, evidence of a Roman presence and plenty of agricultural terraces in use until at least the Medieval period.**

#### **Establishing Holyrood Park**

David I founded the nearby Holyrood Abbey in 1128 and from the Stewart period the use of the park changed from habitation and agriculture to become a medieval Royal hunting park. King James V enclosed the park with a stone wall in 1541 as an addition to the Palace of Holyrood house. This effectively preserved the present Holyrood Park as an area of open ground. There was virtually no settlement from that time onwards, which is significant from an archaeological point of view because it means there was little disturbance of the below-ground remains. That said, areas were utilised as a source for post-medieval quarrying and the park was a focus of military activity in the Victorian and First World War periods (the latter use including firing ranges, allotments and training trenches).

#### **The Park's archaeological landscape**

Holyrood Park is a unique archaeological landscape sitting in the middle of Edinburgh. Not only is it a [Site of Special Scientific Interest](#), but the whole landscape of the park is protected as a [Scheduled Monument of National Importance](#). The remains in Holyrood Park remain largely unexplored and undated and they are now under threat from the impacts of erosion due to the increasing visitor numbers to the park every year.

In 2021 the Holyrood Park Field School was set up as a collaboration between the University of Edinburgh, AOC Archaeology and Historic Environment Scotland. The field school has two main objectives:

*“This collaborative project supports the essential hands-on experience for the next generation of archaeologists while providing us with new information to allow HES to make evidence-based, informed decisions on the future management of the park.”*

*Richard Strachan, Head of Cultural Resources, Historic Environment Scotland*

Firstly, it provides much needed practical training for university archaeology undergraduates, addressing the skills gap in the professional sector and helping to prepare students for a career in heritage. Students receive hands-on instruction from experienced commercial archaeology staff in essential archaeological field skills, ranging from basic tape and offset to total station and GPS field survey, photogrammetry and excavation.

Secondly, it aims to identify and record the rich range of archaeological sites in Holyrood, and the threats to their preservation, to inform future sustainable management plans for the park.

The most recent programme of work began when CFA Archaeology excavated a trench on a flat-topped knoll on the eastern slope of Arthur's Seat, where visitor erosion is causing the exposure of a stone wall, the probable remains of the outer rampart of the Iron Age fort on Arthur's Seat. Work at the site involved Edinburgh students, supervised by CFA staff, while at the same time AOC Archaeology led a programme of topographic and geophysical survey in other areas of the park.



Uncovering the remains of the hillfort at Dunsapie.



### Dunsapie Hillfort

Since 2022 excavation work has focused on Dunsapie Hillfort to define the extent, character and vulnerability of the archaeological deposits at the site. Dunsapie is an irregular volcanic knoll, encircled by a low stony bank, perhaps comprising several phases of rampart construction. Previous finds from the site have included Bronze Age metalwork and later prehistoric stone moulds, as well as animal bone from midden deposits near the summit. The site had remained undated, however, and virtually nothing was known of the extent of archaeological survival, meaning that precisely what was at risk from erosion and unauthorised metal detecting was unknown.

The 2022 excavations, in trenches designed to evaluate areas vulnerable to erosion as well as areas where survival might be better, showed that the site likely has a long and complex history. The stony bank was shown to be a multi-phase construction, with a primary bank evidently fortified with a heavier stone wall sometime after the Early Iron Age. The first radiocarbon dates from the site, from animal bones sealed by the rampart construction, show that activity was taking place on the site in the middle of the first millennium BCE/CE, around 500-400 BCE/CE, as well as later, in the first century BCE or AD. Artefacts from the evaluation work included coarse ceramics, stone tools and vessels, and a copper alloy bangle from a small stone roundhouse, likely belonging to the Late Iron Age.

As identified through previous survey work carried out by the field school, Dunsapie Hillfort is currently vulnerable to footpath erosion and targeting by metal detectorists. However, not all areas of the fort are equally at risk, since sediment and structure survival are unlikely to be uniform across the site. The ongoing excavations provide an improved understanding of the survival of deposits to inform strategies for improved footpath management and erosion mitigation in line with similar approaches taken elsewhere in the park.

Dunsapie will be returned to for a second season of excavation in September 2023 with archaeologists from AOC Archaeology and students from the University of Edinburgh. The project continues to make results publicly available through the [project website](#), based around an interactive web map of the archaeological findings, and alongside a programme of social media outreach. It is hoped that the Holyrood Field School can continue to develop a model for student training, through professional and university collaboration, while simultaneously contributing to the ongoing management of the archaeology in the park.

*Jon Henderson,*  
**University of Edinburgh**

*Graeme Cavers,*  
**AOC Archaeology**

*Richard Strachan,*  
**Historic Environment Scotland**



*“It is amazing that we have this rich but largely unexplored archaeological landscape sitting right in the middle of Edinburgh that has the potential to reveal how this area was used and developed from the prehistoric period and beyond. Working directly with AOC Archaeology and Historic Environment Scotland has been instrumental not only in providing a professional training experience for our students but also in the public outreach aspects of the project. We’re sharing our findings through the project website and an interactive web map to involve the public in the progress of the work. Our goal is not only to train students but also to contribute to the ongoing management of the archaeology in the park.”*

*Prof Jon Henderson,  
Head of Archaeology at the  
University of Edinburgh*



**The excavation team at Holyrood Field School.**

**Digging for Britain filming at the field school.**



**Inspecting photographs.**





# Get in touch

## Our hashtag #ScotArchStrat is a great way for you to get involved.

Follow it to see up-to-date news about how the Strategy is being delivered or tag your own content with it to share what you are doing to help make Scotland's archaeology matter.

**#SCOTARCHSTRAT**

## Scotland's Archaeology Strategy website

Visit the Strategy's website to find more information on how the Strategy is being delivered and how you can get involved. You'll find previous issues of the magazine, the Five Year Review and much more. Also, look out for our new blog launching soon:

<https://archaeologystrategy.scot/>

## We'd love to hear your stories!

We are always keen to hear of great work happening that is delivering the Strategy - if you have an example of best practice, lessons you've learned, or something you are particularly proud of, please get in touch either through the Strategy e-mail or social media. We would love to share your project so that others can learn and be inspired! For more information on promoting the strategy and getting involved, visit our website:

<https://archaeologystrategy.scot/promoting-the-strategy/>

## Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee needs you!

The Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee is a group which represents a wide spectrum of interests in Scottish archaeology. They oversee and drive the delivery of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy. Members sit on the Committee for four years. We regularly look for new members for both the Committee and its working groups. If you would like to be involved, please get in touch:

[ArchaeologyStrategy@hes.scot](mailto:ArchaeologyStrategy@hes.scot)

## #ScotlandDigs2023

If you are conducting any fieldwork keep your eye out for #ScotlandDigs2023

Use this hashtag to make your work part of a national conversation.



## Enjoyed finding out what is happening in archaeology in Scotland this year?



Dig into past issues of the magazine [here](#).







Front cover: Loch Lungard  
Hut Circle, Highland.

Find out more about the  
site on page 23.

Image © Glenn Wilks

**OGL**

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