

Cover: Keiss Castle on the coast of Caithness.

Image © ScARF



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You can download this publication from our website at:  
<https://archaeologystategy.scot/>

Edited by Heritage Research Service (HES).  
Design by Submarine Design.

Produced by:



HISTORIC  
ENVIRONMENT  
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD  
EACHDRAIDHEIL  
ALBA

Scottish Charity No. SC045925

Celebrating archaeology in Scotland

# 2024



SCOTLAND'S  
ARCHAEOLOGY STRATEGY



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# 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.

The SWSARF team celebrating the launch of the project with Rebecca Bain, HES.



Image © ScARF

## Archaeology for all in Perth's new museum

View of the ground floor archaeology displays, Perth Museum.



Image © Culture Perth & Kinross

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Keiss Broch and Keiss Castle, Caithness.

Image © ScARF



Four stages of the facial reconstruction of Trimontium Man by Professor Caroline Wilkinson.

Images © The Trimontium Trust

## Connecting young people to their local heritage through hands-on archaeology

Plane table survey, Ayton Old Kirk with Eyemouth Primary Pupils.



Image © Archaeology Scotland

## Scotland's Monastic Archaeology Field School at Lindores Abbey

The team at morning instructions in the chapter house.



Image © MAFS

MAFs Trench 9 group photo.



Image © MAFs






**W**ELCOME to *Celebrating Archaeology in Scotland* 2024. This is our seventh issue and, remarkably, marks the ninth year of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy (SAS).

The Vision for SAS is simple: we want to live in a Scotland where archaeology is for everyone. The topic of this year's magazine is central to our vision – inclusivity. This edition showcases the many individuals and groups that contribute so much to our shared heritage. As you browse the magazine you will discover a diversity of topics and projects ranging from a community archaeology investigation at Eddlewood Castle to the opening of Perth Museum.

Once again, *Celebrating Archaeology* clearly demonstrates that archaeology is indeed 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.

I hope you enjoy reading and celebrating the continued successes across our collaborative sector.

Andrew Heald,  
*Chair of Scottish Strategic  
Archaeology Committee*

 @heald\_andy

Glencoe field school.



# WELCOME 2024



**Following an extensive consultation in 2015, Scotland's Archaeology Strategy (SAS) was developed and launched by the Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee (SSAC) in 2015, a Committee I have the honour of being the current Chair.**

At the heart of SAS was the vision to Make Archaeology Matter and the unmovable belief that we want to live in 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 order to deliver the vision, the original Committee launched the *Archaeology Strategy Delivery Plan* in January 2017. Delivery of the plan is led by the SSAC, whose members represent different groups within the archaeology community in Scotland. Emphasis was on five key aims: delivering archaeology, enhancing understanding, caring and protecting, encouraging greater engagement and innovation and skills.

In 2020 we published a *Five-Year Review* of Scotland's Archaeology, summarising progress from 2015 to 2020. The review outlined the staggering amount of outputs generated by those involved in archaeology across Scotland, success stories that continue to fill magazines and various media outlets such as *Celebrating Archaeology*.

We've been trying to keep everyone up to date with developments since 2020, largely through the annual publication of *Celebrating Archaeology* and the minutes of our *SSAC meetings*. But I thought I would take the opportunity in this year's magazine to outline some of the key outputs that I have enjoyed seeing being developed and delivered since I became chair a few years ago. This list is certainly not exhaustive but offers a few anecdotes of what I have enjoyed seeing being developed and delivered.

The first output is actually related to the way we operate: *collaboration and partnership working*. This is illustrated exceptionally well by the SSAC. As chair of the Committee I can genuinely say that the scores of individuals who constitute SSAC leave their job descriptions at the door and collectively work tirelessly together to deliver the Strategy. But partnership working is, of course, extensive across the entire Scottish heritage sector, exemplified on a national, regional and local level. It's often easy to forget that the number of people working in Scottish archaeology is small compared to other countries; when I travel outwith Scotland I continually meet people who are envious of our Scottish partnership working and what it is achieving. This stems from our collective passion to do what is best for our shared heritage and those who celebrate it, irrespective of whether one works for the public, private or third sector. For me, our cross-collaborative partnership working is the key to how we achieve and over-achieve. Long may this continue.

Another major outcome of SAS over the last five years has been the creation and launch of numerous local, regional and thematic *research frameworks* – a staggering, tangible output which will help to ensure that archaeological activity focuses on the questions that need answered. As heartening as this has been, there are more Frameworks that have recently been launched or are being discussed; it's not unreasonable to think that in a few years we may have regional Frameworks that cover the entire of Scotland, as well as cross-cutting thematic research frameworks. The use of these Frameworks is being closely monitored and hopefully we will see their wide-spread use across all sectors in years to come, so we can continue to ask the right research questions and answer them in the correct ways, regardless of who is putting the trowel in the ground.

We know that our heritage is a finite source and it is fantastic to see suites of new (or updated) policies and guidance published by various stakeholders that will ensure we continue to *care, protect and manage* our shared historic environment for years to come.

One of Scottish archaeology's greatest achievements has always been the hundreds of projects that enable wider *public engagement*, reach broad and diverse audiences, and promote information exchange. The content of this magazine demonstrates this better than anything. I'm also delighted to see the increased emphasis on demonstrating *social value* in all of our work.

When I was at school I'd never heard of archaeology and when I studied archaeology at Edinburgh University, I could count my fellow students on my hands and feet. In recent years, huge strides are being made in promoting archaeology within wider learning and teaching frameworks, particularly in primary or secondary schools. We are also working hard as a sector to develop and support new entry routes into our profession, particularly through non-graduate career entry training programmes such as National Vocational Qualifications and apprenticeship schemes. The efforts being made now will pay off in the coming years and decades which can only benefit our profession.

2025 is around the corner. The SSAC are away to begin embarking on consulting on the next 10-year Strategy. We will also be undertaking a review of the 2015-2025 Delivery Plan to celebrate successes and undertake lessons learnt.

But that is for another day. For now, as you continue to delve into this year's *Celebrating Archaeology*, I hope you take time to sit back and consider how much archaeology has developed over the last decade: I genuinely believe that everyone's collective efforts across the entire of Scottish archaeology is Making Archaeology Matter and that we live in a Scotland where 'archaeology is for everyone'. Let's see what the next decade brings.

Andy Heald,  
Chair of Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee

# SOME PERSONAL NOTES ON SCOTLAND'S ARCHAEOLOGY STRATEGY

Walking out to get a closer view of Mousa Broch on the Shetland SIRFA fieldtrip.



*Our Past, Our Future* publication.



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

## DELIVERING ARCHAEOLOGY

**We want to live in 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.**

### Planning for the future

This was the vision set out in Scotland's Archaeology Strategy when it launched in 2015. As we approach the end of the ninth year of the Strategy, it is natural and sensible to ask ourselves and others how successful the Strategy has been; if it has achieved its objectives and what the future will look like. The world has changed immeasurably over the past decade, more so than anyone could have anticipated when the Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee (SSAC) was formed, but everyone involved with the Strategy has continued to deliver against all odds.

The Strategy was created following the 2012 review of Historic Scotland's Archaeology Function. The review recommended the adoption of a strategic approach to managing archaeology and supporting the archaeology sector, with coordinated leadership. Following this recommendation, the SSAC was formed, and in 2013 it developed the delivery plan, with specific objectives to be fulfilled over the next 10 years. We could not have anticipated the degree of change that would take place over that decade.

### A dynamic approach

The launch of the Strategy came at a time of change and realignment in the Scottish historic environment sector. 2014 saw the publication of *Our Place in Time*: the Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland. In 2015 the new lead body for the historic environment was created, Historic Environment Scotland, through the merger of Historic Scotland and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.

Although the overarching vision of the Strategy has remained the same since then, the delivery plan has changed and been updated since it was launched in 2016, as objectives have been completed, refined, or overtaken by changing circumstances. The heritage sector more broadly has sought to demonstrate the public benefit of engaging with the past in recent years, a trend which has accelerated with greater focus on diversity and inclusion, wellbeing and tackling the climate emergency since 2020. The collaborative working fostered through Scotland's Archaeology Strategy means that we are already working together, and well placed to move forward with a focus on how archaeology can contribute to tackling the big challenges we all face.

More recently, *Our Place in Time* has been superseded by *Our Past, Our Future*. This has provided us with a great framework around which to structure our future actions. However, before we can move forward, we must take a critical look backwards at what Scotland's Archaeology Strategy has achieved, and how we can improve.

Aerial view of St Mary's Chapel, Thurso.



Has the Strategy achieved its objectives? Who has been the most engaged, and who are we yet to reach? What should our focus be for the future? To answer these questions, Historic Environment Scotland is commissioning a review of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy, the first stage in the development of the post-2025 strategic direction of Scottish Archaeology. SSAC is recognised as a delivery body in *Our Past, Our Future*, so this is not so much a mandate to continue, as an opportunity to improve. The review will engage a range of stakeholders, both from within the archaeology sector and from adjacent areas, such as planning and education, which might have been impacted by the changes the Strategy has made. After the review is complete, we will share the results, and begin a broader consultation to get everyone's views on what post-2025 strategic delivery should look like for Scottish archaeology.

### Looking forward

Those who have been following Celebrating Archaeology in Scotland will know there are many projects taking place under the banner of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy which are still ongoing and will be in 2025.

The amazing work which has been done by The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland to develop regional research frameworks will continue. The Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO) Scotland and National Museums Scotland will move forward from 'Before the Museum' to 'Into the Museum' and then 'Beyond the Museum'. Archaeology Scotland's vital work to embed archaeological learning into education must continue, and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) development of archaeological apprenticeships is vital for the future of commercial archaeology. It is anticipated that this work will continue post-2025, but there is more we need to do as a sector to meet the challenges of this changing world. There are a lot of fantastic endeavours already taking place in Scotland which Scotland's Archaeology Strategy does not sufficiently recognise in its current form, for example in areas such as climate adaptation and social prescribing, we should be championing these.

This is the start of a long process, but we will need your help, so please start thinking about what you would like the future of Scottish archaeology to look like and be ready to offer your opinion!

Kirsty Owen,  
Historic Environment Scotland



## Eternal Ascent: Celebrating the legacy of John Mackenzie and Norman Collie in the Cuillin Mountains

**Born in 1856 in Sconser on the Isle of Skye, John Mackenzie showed a passion for exploration from a young age, climbing Sgùrr nan Gillean at just ten years old.**

He later became the first Scot to work as a professional guide, playing a pivotal role in the early ascents of the Cuillin mountains. Professor Norman Collie, a renowned climber and frequent visitor to Sligachan, formed a close friendship with Mackenzie. Together, they established many of the now-familiar routes across the Cuillin range.

### Honouring achievements

To commemorate the significant achievements of Mackenzie and Collie, the Collie Mackenzie Heritage Group raised funds and commissioned sculptor Stephen Tinney to create a bronze sculpture of the duo based off photogrammetry models, now erected at Sligachan. This tribute honours their pioneering climbs and celebrates their deep connection to the landscape, highlighting the significance of the Cuillin within Gaelic culture.

The Collie Mackenzie Heritage Group collaborated closely with the Sligachan Hotel, where they often stayed while planning their groundbreaking climbs. This historic hotel served as their base and played a crucial role in their mountaineering adventures

### Enhancing engagement

In addition to the physical sculpture, AOC Archaeology Group produced a detailed 3D Sketchfab model of the monument, allowing the public to appreciate the tribute online. This digital model enhances accessibility and engagement, enabling a wider audience to explore and celebrate the legacy of Mackenzie and Collie.

The efforts of the Collie Mackenzie Heritage Group, in partnership with AOC and the Sligachan Hotel, ensure the remarkable contributions of these pioneering climbers are recognised and appreciated, fostering a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural significance of their achievements within the context of Scottish heritage.

To learn more about the process of photogrammetry and development of the sculpture, visit [Stephen Tinney's website](#).

*Jamie Humble,*  
**AOC Archaeology Group**



Left: Face-to-face with Professor Norman Collie.

Main image: Capturing data on the hilltop for a digital model.



Above: Is it a wall? Volunteers working at Cammo Estate.

Inset: The joy of a find!

## Fifty-three years of archaeological outreach

**Edinburgh Archaeological Field Society has been encouraging wider involvement in archaeology in the South-East of Scotland since 1971.**

### Hands-on experiences

Through our regular excavation work at Cammo Estate in Edinburgh we offer the public the opportunity of a direct 'hands on' chance to try archaeology for themselves and to develop the required skills.

For those who feel unable to cope with the physical aspects of excavation we offer opportunities for field walking, geophysics, finds washing and cataloguing as well as recording the work that we do.

Currently at Cammo we are searching for the 'old' Stables. We have the 'New Stables' built in 1811 but on an 1805 map we can see buildings that are no longer there in the 1825 map. Could these be the stables we have been searching for? Test pitting is taking place over summer to search for the elusive buildings.

To join in, contact us at:  
[volunteer@eafs.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@eafs.org.uk)

### Practical skills for all ages

In collaboration with students from several Scottish Universities and from the United States of America, we have been giving practical experience to enhance their studies.

We work with primary and secondary schools, as well as the Forest Kindergarten, and have links with the Green Team and the Make a Wish Foundation and support other community groups with our geophysics equipment and skills. We also link with and support other local excavations.

Our autumn and winter lecture programmes gives members and the general public a chance to hear speakers at the forefront of Archaeological investigation. Members also provide talks for other groups to spread the knowledge that we have gained. We have a close relationship with Dig It!, Archaeology Scotland and with the Scottish Civic Trust through Doors Open Days.

*Christine McPherson,*  
**Edinburgh Archaeological Field Society**



**IN A SIGNIFICANT BOOST TO SCOTLAND'S HERITAGE SCIENCE SECTOR, THE RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE FOR CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE SCIENCE (RICHeS) HAS PROVIDED OVER £3 MILLION IN FUNDING TO ENHANCE THE CAPABILITIES OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND HERITAGE CONSERVATION ACROSS THE NATION.**

Image © HES

# AN EMBARRASSMENT OF RICHES



Above: View from Stirling Castle.

**RICHeS is a long term, £80 million commitment from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) – part of United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI) – to support excellence and collaboration within heritage and conservation science. It will maximise the research and innovation potential of UK heritage science by delivering a generational step change in sector effectiveness, efficiency and excellence.**

As part of the first round of funding, a total of 31 projects have been funded across all four nations of the UK with 144 project partners based in the UK, Europe and beyond. Scotland's heritage, renowned for its historical significance and rich potential, has been recognised with funding for the following four key projects, each of which will benefit from this vital investment.

## **Scotland's Archaeological Human Remains Collection (SAHRC) – National Museums Scotland**

National Museums Scotland (NMS) is comprised of several facilities, each holding extensive collections. Within NMS, the archaeological human skeletal remains collection is one of the most intensively researched within the Scottish History and Archaeology Collections.

This collection is frequently featured in high impact osteoarchaeological and biomolecular studies, contributing to collaborative and innovative national and international narratives about the human past in Scotland. However, as research interests in this collection increase, the current facilities are insufficient to meet user demand.

The project aims to address these challenges by:

- increasing the storage capacity of the National Museums Collections Centre in Scotland by 70%
- incorporating new research equipment
- providing enhanced, dedicated areas for research and analysis

This new infrastructure will house the archaeological human skeletal remains collection and accommodate additional collections currently held in temporary storage by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) at various locations. Upon completion, this will be known as Scotland's Archaeological Human Remains Collection (SAHRC).

## **Ark of the North – University of Aberdeen**

This project is opening access to animal bone reference collections in northern Scotland. These collections are crucial for studying archaeological and palaeontological remains, offering insights into past environments, ecosystems, economies, production, crafting, human-animal relationships and evolutionary studies. These collections also provide socio-historical insights into colonial origins. Despite digital advancements, physical access to these collections is vital, particularly in underserved areas like Scotland. This project aims to integrate two significant collections into the Ark of the North, creating a valuable research resource that enhances accessibility and discoverability.

## **Retrofit Centre for Traditional Buildings – Historic Environment Scotland**

HES frequently receives requests for advice on the practicalities of retrofitting traditional buildings and for support in testing retrofit products that utilise traditional and sustainable materials.

However, HES currently lacks the space and resource necessary to meet this growing demand. Improving the energy efficiency of traditional buildings is crucial for achieving net zero targets, especially since the UK has the largest proportion of traditionally constructed buildings in Europe. The installation of energy efficiency measures in these buildings requires significant intervention and care. It is essential to ensure that retrofit measures are correctly installed and are compatible with each building's original design in terms of moisture management, ventilation and thermal performance. Moreover, it is vital to preserve the cultural significance of each building during the adaptation process.

## **Archaeology and the Environment Science Facility (AEonS) – University of the Highlands and Islands**

The project aims to address the urgent need for enhanced environmental archaeology research capabilities across Scotland by establishing a single distributed facility.

This project aims to enhance the expertise and facilities for studying historic and prehistoric environments, crucial for understanding and addressing contemporary global challenges like climate change and biodiversity loss.

The project's purpose is to establish a comprehensive suite of laboratories at the AEonS. This facility will enable advanced processing and analysis of biological materials, enhancing research into past ecosystems, farming practices and human responses to environmental changes. The project will also deploy a new mobile environmental sciences laboratory to support on-site analytical needs across Scotland, fostering a network of environmental archaeology specialists and facilitating community-driven and commercial projects.

For more information about the RICHeS programme email: [RICHeS@ahrc.ukri.org](mailto:RICHeS@ahrc.ukri.org)

*Stephanie Pye,*  
**RICHeS**

RICHeS

RESEARCH  
INFRASTRUCTURE FOR  
CONSERVATION AND  
HERITAGE SCIENCE

**SAHRC National Museums Collection Centre.**



Image © RICHeS



Increasing knowledge,  
understanding and  
interpretation of the past.



## ENHANCING UNDERSTANDING

Lightshaw standing stone,  
just north of Muirpark in  
Ayrshire (part of the South-  
West Scotland region).

**THE SCOTTISH  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH  
FRAMEWORK (SCARF)  
PROJECT CONTINUES TO MAKE  
KNOWLEDGE DISCOVERABLE,  
ACCESSIBLE, AND REUSABLE  
BY CREATING AND UPDATING  
RESEARCH FRAMEWORKS.**

**As our recent evaluation has shown, our frameworks continue to be an invaluable tool to anyone undertaking research and excavation in Scotland and have more users each year.**

As well as summarising what we know about archaeology in Scotland with bibliographies, datasheets and maps, the frameworks pose key research questions to be asked that will increase our understanding of our past in the future.

### **New frameworks**

Over the past few years, we have released a series of new regional research frameworks. This autumn, the latest of these, Scotland's Islands Research Framework for Archaeology will be launched. The first event for the Clyde Valley Archaeological Research Framework was held in Glasgow this year and our newest regional project also got underway in the South-West of Scotland at the end of May. Read more about each of these three projects in this magazine!

We are continuing to work on the remaining sections of the South-East of Scotland Archaeological Research Framework, so look out for an event in early 2025 where we will discuss the medieval to modern periods in this region.

As well as working on completing the regional frameworks, we are beginning to update the science sections of ScARF. These are now over a decade old, and we plan to gradually add new sections that reflect current scientific archaeological advances and techniques.

The first of these to be completed is on dendrochronology and covers not only dating but also how various aspects of tree-ring analyses can tell us more about past climate change and woodland management.

### **OASIS V**

Those of you who use OASIS V to report archaeological work will have seen that you can now record how your projects have contributed to answering ScARF research questions or recommendations. We are currently working on new website updates that will be able to link to the outcomes of archaeological work that has helped to answer research questions, once it has been archived in the Archaeological Data Service Library, directly from the ScARF website. All the online UK research frameworks are also now available at [www.researchframeworks.org](http://www.researchframeworks.org) and bringing everything together helps ensure that data and knowledge is more easily discoverable and accessible than ever before, so that we can continue to contribute to our understanding of Scotland's past.

The ScARF Project is primarily funded by Historic Environment Scotland. To find out more visit our website: <https://scarf.scot>

Remember you can follow us on social media:

X: @ScARFhub

Facebook and Instagram: @ScARF\_scot

Email: [scarf@socantscot.org](mailto:scarf@socantscot.org)

*Helen Spencer,*  
Society of Antiquaries of Scotland

Kilnave Chapel and  
early medieval cross  
on the Isle of Islay.





The standing stone at Finlaggan, with the side of the Lord of the Isles in the background.



Keiss Broch, Castle and WWII lookout station on the coast of Caithness.



Left: Exploring Whitecastle hillfort in East Lothian, one of the SESARF case studies.

Below: Langbank anti-aircraft station in Renfrewshire with the Clyde Valley and Glasgow in the distance.

Below left: Hill O'stanes in Caithness.



The Timber ponds just outside Port Glasgow in Inverclyde.

Images © SCARF





# CVARF Symposium

**On 7 and 8 June, the first symposium for the Clyde Valley Archaeological Research Framework (CVARF) took place at the University of Glasgow and Govan Old Church.**

This two-day event offered attendees the chance to have their say in the creation of the highly anticipated Clyde Valley framework. The symposium involved a series of talks by representatives of different archaeological sectors including academia, community groups and commercial archaeology. Attendees also discussed key themes and important questions to consider going forward with the project. The event ended with walking tours to showcase local archaeology around Govan, including the ongoing excavations in Govan churchyard and the site of the Glasgow Garden Festival.

## A collaborative approach

This gathering marked the start of what the CVARF team hope will be a collaboration between archaeologists and residents of the Clyde Valley area, giving the local community a voice in the creation of the framework.

The CVARF project, led by Archaeology Scotland, University of Glasgow and the West of Scotland Archaeology Service, aims to prioritise the community aspect of forming an archaeological research framework. With a dedicated Community Outreach Officer, CVARF is setting a new standard for inclusivity and community engagement in research framework projects across Scotland and the UK.

The Clyde Valley region is home to over one third of Scotland's population, and the CVARF project will not only highlight the diverse archaeological evidence, but also represent the research interests of the people and communities in this significant area.

You can keep up to date with the latest updates from the CVARF team by following them on social media: [@ClydeValley\\_ARF](https://twitter.com/ClydeValley_ARF) or heading to: [scarf.scot/regional/cvarf](https://scarf.scot/regional/cvarf)

*Jennifer Allison, Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*

Image © Ingrid Shearer



Above: Ingrid Shearer leads a walking tour of Govan on Day 2 of the CVARF Symposium.

Main image: The Shipbuilders of Port Glasgow sculpture ('The Skelpies') by renowned artist John McKenna.



Images © ScARF

Images © Coralie Mills



From left: St Giles, Edinburgh bell tower frame dendro-dated to the 1450s with a native oak source in North East Scotland indicated through the SESOD project.

Core sampling in the Main Guard House, Stirling Castle for HES. Pine roof timbers dendro-dated to 1795/96AD and dendro-provenanced to South/South East Norway.

A Historic Woodland Study of Ardura Community Forest, Mull, for The Mull & Iona Community Trust.

## Scotland's new Dendrochronology Research Framework

**Dendrochronology, or tree-ring dating, offers the most precise scientific dating technique available where suitable material survives, for example in historic buildings, archaeological sites or shipwrecks.**

It has the additional advantage of revealing timber provenance, indicating the region in which the parent trees grew. Yet, despite these obvious benefits, dendrochronology is surprisingly under-used in Scottish archaeology. It is hoped this new resource will encourage its wider application here.

### Dendrochronology Research Framework

The new Dendrochronology Research Framework is the first update to the Science section of the original Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (ScARF) national framework completed in 2012. During development of the regional frameworks, it became clear that updating archaeological science aspects would be better undertaken at a national level.

Dendrochronology has many uses in cultural heritage and beyond. This framework includes sections on dendroclimatology, dendroecology and dendro-isotopes as well as the more familiar applications in archaeology, standing buildings and cultural landscapes. It covers both established and more novel techniques.

### The benefits of Dendrochronology

Dendrochronology provides date, source and species information which contributes to the better understanding of individual heritage structures. Conventional ring-width dendrochronology can even sometimes provide a felling date of a tree used in a building to a specific year. Timber provenancing is particularly important in Scotland because the country has a long history of importing timber and knowing where the timber came from can tell us more about the history of the trade of wood. Knowing the original source of timber is also important to inform like-for-like timber replacement in conservation repair work. Newer dendrochronological methodologies that were first developed for climate-based applications, for example using stable oxygen isotopes or blue intensity parameters, now offer complementary approaches that broaden the range of material which can be dated.

This Research Framework summarises the range of applications of dendrochronology in Scotland. Each section highlights recent developments and areas of good practice, followed by key research questions and recommendations that should help guide future uptake and development of dendrochronology in Scotland.

### Case studies

A series of Scottish case studies illustrate the framework. These include an overview of dendrochronology in historic buildings at Stirling Castle and a summary of the South-East Scotland Oak Dendrochronology (SESOD) project. The benefits of using dendrochronology in wetland archaeology and prehistoric contexts is exemplified at the Black Loch of Myrton while the increasing interest of using the past to inform the future amongst 'rewilding' initiatives is illustrated in a cultural wooded landscape project at Ardura Community Forest, Mull. There is also a case study on Ancrum Old Bridge, the recently discovered medieval bridge site in the Scottish Borders, which shows how the new oxygen isotope dendro-dating technique has secured a precise date for the bridge foundation timbers which had eluded other scientific dating approaches.

*Coralie M Mills, Dendrochronicle & Anne Crone, AOC Archaeology*



Culls Loch crannog, Dumfries & Galloway is one of several crannogs in South West Scotland which have now been dendro-dated to the mid-1st millennium BC.

Images © Dendrochronicle





## Our Islands, Our Past – Scotland's Island Research Framework for Archaeology

**Scotland's Island Research Framework for Archaeology (SIRFA) has reached the final stretch of this ambitious regional framework project.**

SIRFA started in 2018, when local authority archaeologists at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Amenity Trust, and staff at the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) Archaeology Institute decided to work together to develop a regional research framework for Scotland's islands. The rationale behind this collaboration was recognition of shared challenges and opportunities for future archaeological research and a strong desire to share ideas, approaches and examples of best practice between researchers working across the three archipelagos. From the outset, SIRFA has had incredible support and input from the Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (ScARF) team at the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, with grant funding from Historic Environment Scotland as part of the delivery of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy.

### SIRFA events

Since 2019, the SIRFA team have run three symposia events in each of the island regions hosted across venues in Uist, Lerwick and Kirkwall.

The project has directly engaged more than 300 people, including 285 workshop participants, 42 sessions chaired and 30 students and early career researchers acting as official note-takers, as well as employing five members of staff, across multiple island locations. We have run 10 field trips across six different islands, facilitated six public talks and hosted three evening receptions. In addition, the SIRFA project team have given papers and presentations at multiple events and conferences, including the European Association of Archaeologists annual conferences in Barcelona (2018) and Belfast (2023), providing opportunities to share and link our research framework nationally and internationally. As an output of the SIRFA workshops we have amassed more than 300 research questions, over 51,000 words of official notes and over 110 hours of session recordings.

### Final touches

The team are now finalising the resource assessment data from each area and fine-tuning the research questions in consultation and with input from workshop session chairs. The aim is to launch the framework on the ScARF website by the end of the year. The final framework will include a series of case studies for each island region, each period and each of our themes highlighting some of the best and most impactful research projects from our islands over the last few decades. Thank you to everyone who has participated in this project, especially the researchers who are submitting case studies, our excellent note takers, all the individual session chairs and those who have agreed to review our final research questions.

*Rebecca Rennell,*  
**UHI**

Attendees at the Orkney SIRFA symposium on a field trip to the Dwarfie Stane. Walking out to get a closer view of Mousa Broch on the Shetland SIRFA fieldtrip.

Images © ScARF



Clockwise from top left:

Holy Chambered Cairn in Newton Stewart, Dumfries and Galloway.

Excavation of the early 18th century walled garden at Fountain Court, next to Culzean Castle in South Ayrshire.

Excavation post-medieval stone-lined pits at Irvine.

Dunure Dovecote, located next to Dunure Castle, Ayr, South Ayrshire.

The SWARF team celebrating the launch of the project with Rebecca Bain, HES.

## South West Scotland Archaeological Research Framework

**We are excited by the start of the South West Scotland Archaeological Research Framework project – a 'one-stop' guide to everything we know about the region's archaeology.**

We're starting from a great position. Our local authorities have planning archaeologists and museum services strong in collaborative working, having delivered projects like Future Museum. Community archaeology projects have shown vibrant community engagement and we have regional societies in Dumfries and Galloway, and Ayrshire with long histories of archaeological endeavour.

Archaeologists in commercial practice have made impressive discoveries of multi-period settlements and landscapes. Academic archaeologists have contributed through their exploration of past communities while national bodies have run initiatives like Scotland's Rock Art Project. We are blessed with a string of well-researched historic properties cared for by Historic Environment Scotland and the National Trust for Scotland.

### Achieving the best outcome

The research already delivered is significant, but the lack of a route map to this knowledge is a problem. How does new research ensure it achieves the best outcome? How do you add social value, improve understanding and engage communities when you're not sure what has already been done and what has not? This will be the role of the new framework - to enable the best outcomes from archaeological research through sharing what we have collectively already achieved.

### SWSARF needs you!

To compile this framework, we need you! Over the coming months, we will ask for your help to ensure the discoveries that have transformed your appreciation of our region's archaeology are included. Once that research landscape has been mapped, we will then be looking for you to help us spot the gaps and shape our future research priorities. Look out for events and ways to get involved over the next year.

To collaborate in building a framework that will help us all, please follow the project on X, Instagram or Threads at SWScot\_ARF, Facebook at SWScotARF and LinkedIn.

*Thomas Rees,*  
**Rathmell Archaeology**

Images © Rathmell Archaeology Limited



## Black Loch of Myrton

**Excavations at Black Loch of Myrton in Dumfries and Galloway, conducted by AOC Archaeology with support from Historic Environment Scotland, have transformed our understanding of Iron Age life. Initially thought to be a crannog, the site is actually an Early Iron Age settlement on a small natural island, built without artificial foundations and accessed via a natural causeway.**

### Key discoveries

From 2013 to 2019, excavations revealed six roundhouses marked by stone hearths, with multiple phases of activity defined by precise dendrochronological data and evidenced by repeated refurbishments of hearths, floors and entrance structures.

Defensive perimeters evolved over time, including wooden palisades and earthen ramparts.

Key findings include remarkably preserved wickerwork walls, complex entrance structures and substantial defensive constructions, like oak plank palisades. Rare artefacts include a decorated wooden bowl.

Three major episodes of activity have been identified:

**Episode 1:** Construction of at least three roundhouses clustered around a log trackway with fence-lined sides within a post palisade.

**Episode 2:** Expansion of settlement over the old palisade. At least three new roundhouses built and continued use of the trackway and new defensive structures.

**Episode 3:** Frequent redevelopment of the defensive perimeters, revealing significant wooden and earthen ramparts.

### Public outreach

Extensive public outreach and volunteer involvement have been integral to the success of the project.

The project engaged local communities, delivered talks, and created temporary exhibitions at Whithorn Timescape. Notably, the 'Dig TV' initiative involved high-school pupils in documenting the project, leading to nominations for British Archaeology awards.

A major community effort saw the reconstruction of a roundhouse from the site, now a focal point for education at Whithorn Timescape. Experimental archaeology projects further explored construction techniques, enhancing visitor experiences.

The results of the project will be fully published in 2025. Discover more and view multimedia about the Black Loch of Myrton project on [Whithorn.com](http://Whithorn.com)

Anne Crone,  
AOC Archaeology Group

**Top:** The complex carpentry of the entrance structure into one of the roundhouses.

**Below:** Clay ovens in one of the roundhouses. The earlier oven lies in the foreground; above this is a later wickerwork floor on which the stone base of the second oven lies.



Four stages of the facial reconstruction of Trimontium Man by Professor Caroline Wilkinson.

Erica Reid, Trustee, comes face-to-face with the remains of Trimontium Man and his facial reconstruction in Trimontium Museum.

## A son of the Borders: revealing the identity of human remains from Trimontium Roman fort

**The Trimontium Trust have revealed new dating and isotope analysis results for 'Trimontium Man', whose remains were found within Trimontium Roman fort. He was no legionary, but a local from the Scottish Borders.**

### Trimontium Roman fort

Trimontium was a massive cavalry fort which at times marked the Roman Empire's northernmost frontier. It was occupied between the late 70s AD and 211 AD. Trimontium Man was discovered in one of the fort's 107 pits during James Curle's excavations of 1905-1910.

Dating from the fort's abandonments in the 80s and 180s AD, the pits contained masonry, weapons and armour, tools, accessories, pottery, and human and animal remains. Were the Romans denying the local Selgovae any spoils, or was the garrison overwhelmed and the pits filled with violent wreckage? We may never be certain.

### The new findings

Analysis coordinated by Professor Derek Hamilton of the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre (SUERC) as part of the Francis Crick Institute's '1000 Ancient Genomes from Great Britain' project found that Trimontium Man lived before 120AD in the area between Moffat in the southwest to the Lammermuir Hills in the northeast.

Strontium isotope analysis of his tooth put his age at 36 to 45. His diet consisted almost entirely of land-based plants and animals, despite having the River Tweed and North Sea nearby. He suffered from periodontal disease and abscesses and had an overbite on the right side.

Was he a civilian in the wrong place at the wrong time? Or a local dignitary or hostage executed by the Romans? An iron spearhead was found alongside his skeleton, but no direct connection is demonstrable. Whatever the case, he was 'one of ours'.

A facial reconstruction of Trimontium Man, and many of the artefacts excavated from the pits, can be seen at [Trimontium Museum](http://Trimontium Museum) in Melrose.

David Weinczok,  
Trimontium Museum





Above: Extract from a comic about the Stone produced by the Culture Perth and Kinross Youth Collective as the outcome of a workshop jointly organised by Culture Perth & Kinross and the University of Stirling, working with Magic Torch Comics.

Right: What part might new ideas about the Stone play in the Scottish Curriculum? The University of Stirling and Perth Museum explored ideas in a workshop with St Ninian's Primary School, Perth.



## The Stone that just keeps on giving

**So, did you *really* escape noticing the Stone of Scone, aka Stone of Destiny, in the recent past?**

Created and used for 13th century Scottish royal inaugurations at Scone Abbey, in 1296 it was stolen and taken to Westminster Abbey to be used in the Coronations of English, and later British, monarchs. It was returned to Scotland in 1996 by the United Kingdom Government trying to prevent a popular vote for Scottish devolution. Kept securely by Historic Environment Scotland in Edinburgh Castle's Crown Room along with the Scottish regalia, it returned to London briefly for the 2023 Coronation of King Charles III. In 2024 it moved to an acclaimed permanent home in the new [Perth Museum](#).

### An interdisciplinary approach

Capitalising on so much movement, my interdisciplinary Authenticity's Child research project is exploring three dimensions:

- Fragments, their power and untold stories. The existence, extent and nature of an unexpected number of fragments of the Stone has not previously been recognised or explored, each with their own fascinating life journeys. One sat between the King and Queen's legs as they went to their Coronation.

- Understanding the Stone's contemporary values and significance, with a focus on social value and authenticity.
- A critical reflection on the theory and practice of itinerary and cultural biographical approaches to material culture.

My ethnographic fieldwork at Scone Palace, Westminster Abbey, Edinburgh Castle and Perth, four very different places the Stone is associated with, has sought to understand the different ways in which the Stone is used and the meanings and discourses that develop around each of these.

### Follow Along

My illustrated project blog <https://thestone.stir.ac.uk/articles/> is the place to catch up with more about this research, all those fragments, a year in the media life of the Stone, sculptor George Wyllie, known as scul?tor and 'Destiny', and much more.

Sally Foster,  
University of Stirling





Trench 2 under excavation looking north towards Galashiels showing the scale of the earthwork.

Right: Three columns of samples taken from the earthwork in Trench 2.



Tim Kinnaird taking samples from the section cut into the bank, with the Eildon Hills in the background.

## Monkish Disputes and Medieval Earthworks

**Research into medieval rural settlement and exploitation of the land is something of a Cinderella topic that the Bowden Moor project is hoping to shed light on.**

Peeblesshire Archaeological Society's (PAS) project on Bowden Moor developed from a pre-forestry survey conducted in 2022 on Bowden Moor Farm. Remains of an extensive system of earthworks were originally mapped by the Ordnance Survey in the 19th century and subsequently by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS). The latter mentioned a boundary dispute between Melrose and Kelso Abbeys in the late 12th century that might be related.

Thought to be medieval, more recent work by John Barber and John Gilbert suggested a connection with woodland management, and certainly both Abbeys needed timber at this time. PAS added to what had been recorded and recommended their conservation in the context of the afforestation. They concluded that the earthworks were similar to boundary systems previously found in Southdean parish, Liddesdale and Annandale, all areas that once lay within medieval hunting forests. They are characterised by banks and ditches with the ditch on the exterior uphill side of the enclosed area and often built upon one another taking in more land. Settlements have been found within or along the edge of the enclosures as well as traces of ridge and furrow within them.

### Medieval land disputes

That might have been the end of it, but the Society's interest was piqued as Piers Dixon had been involved in the survey and recording of the Southdean and Liddesdale earthworks with RCAHMS. He had also excavated one in the Cheviots in the 1980s at Alnham Moor, formerly within the medieval forest of Alnham.

The story that the monks of Melrose disputed the boundary with Kelso Abbey and William the Lion decided in favour of Kelso in 1204, fixing the line on the original boundary given to Melrose Abbey in their initial endowment, made it more interesting. Melrose exceeded their rights by expanding onto Kelso's lands on Bowden Moor, driven perhaps by the need for timber which grew in the woods that the boundary had intentionally bisected to provide access to timber for both. In this context it seemed possible these earthworks were illegal intakes by Melrose Abbey.

### Contemporary earthworks?

However, Bowden Moor was not a hunting forest, and no settlement remains were found in the survey, only areas of ridge and furrow. These by and large post-date the earthworks and could be medieval or post-medieval in date. The boundaries all lay uphill from the parish boundary that had fossilized the estate boundary defined by David I. Could they be the relics of this dispute or later intakes? The question was how to proceed since an earthwork is not easily dated by scientific means. Radiocarbon is unlikely to help as the charcoal incorporated could be of any date in a moorland context and finds are equally rare in these situations. Optically Stimulated Luminescence seemed the best option as it has been successfully applied to medieval earthworks on the Wallington estate in Northumberland. Piers Dixon contacted Tim Kinnaird at St Andrews on the recommendation of Kirsty Owen at Historic Environment Scotland. After discussing, Tim agreed to assist the Society's project by coming to take samples from two earthworks if they could be excavated.

The excavations were carried out by a team of PAS volunteers in June 2024, samples taken, and the Society now awaits the results following laboratory analysis with baited breath! Will the dates confirm or contradict the 12th century documentary evidence?

*Piers Dixon,*  
**Peeblesshire Archaeological Society**





Survey team on Yetholm Mains Farm.

### A Border skirmish – archaeological field survey in the Halter Burn Valley, Roxburghshire

The field survey of the Halter Burn Valley, begun in 2017, is now complete. It was carried out by Archaeology for All (ACFA)/Arc-Eòlas do na h-uile and Border Archaeological Society (BAS).

The survey area was divided into four parts, two of which, Halterburnhead Farm, Scotland and Shotton Hill, England, have been published. Reports on the remaining two parts, Yetholm Mains Farm, Scotland and Thomson's Walls Farm, England are in production.

#### A plethora of features

Over 230 features were recorded ranging from large Iron Age scooped settlements, ring cairns, barrows, unenclosed platform settlements, cists, medieval house platforms, post-medieval houses, remains of livestock management and a complex of dams and lades supplying water for former mills.

Yetholm History Society was involved in documentary research for Halterburnhead Farm and several of the local community became essential members of the survey team. Training in the use of tape-offset was provided and some became proficient in drawing archaeological remains.

#### Archival research

Historical documents from the 16th and 17th centuries provided interesting references. A horse fold on Burnt Humbleton, the site of a hill fort, was mentioned in 1687 (National Archives GD6/823) and was drawn by the team. Shielling huts were also mentioned in early documents. Some of these temporary dwellings, described as herd's huts, were also recorded by the survey team.

Finally, the site of an early chapel known today as St Ethelreda's Chapel has proved elusive. The location, however, may be narrowed to a portion of ground on the east bank of the Halter Burn following the recording of two features on the survey; one an unusual fold and the other a keb house or sheep shelter: a good example of field survey and documentary evidence working in tandem.

Dugie MacInnes,  
ACFA

[www.borderarchaeologicalsociety.org](http://www.borderarchaeologicalsociety.org)  
[www.acfabaseline.info](http://www.acfabaseline.info)

Below: A team recording a herd's hut on Thomson's Walls Farm.

Right: Survey team on Shotton Hill with the Halter Burn Valley behind



## Eddlewood Castle site investigation

According to an account entitled *The Hamiltons of Eddlewood and Neilsland*, written by Andrew Hamilton and published in 1889, Eddlewood Castle was dismantled after the Battle of Langside in 1568.

It states that the 'site is marked by a mound of rubbish and the fragment of a wall'. The site of the castle is marked on the estate plan of 1776 prepared for the Duke of Hamilton by William Douglas.

In summer 2023, Clutha Archaeology Group first visited the site which is on a promontory above the Meikle Burn in Chatelherault Country Park. It matched the description in the 1889 account. We subsequently carried out a survey using a Total Station and drew a plan. In July 2024, we opened three test pits looking for evidence of walls and a courtyard. We found a cobbled surface with pottery sherds that may be medieval, and a possible drain. The results encourage us to continue our investigation next year. We were supported by Andrew Jepson of Archaeology Scotland on our first attempt to organise our own dig.

Ed & Ailsa Smith,  
Clutha Archaeology Group

Visit by Andrew Jepson of Archaeology Scotland on day two.



Image © E. Smith

## Baileyfield Kit

A new artefact handling kit and learning resource, focusing on Portobello's industrial history – particularly the Baileyfield brickworks, bottle works, and potteries – has been created for schools.

Funded by Barratt Homes, this initiative aims to educate pupils about the area's rich industrial heritage.

AOC Archaeology



Baileyfield handling kit



## Grassroots heritage in Scotland roadshows

**An exciting new project has just been launched by the Scottish Community Heritage Association (SCHA), and everyone involved in grassroots heritage in Scotland is invited to get involved.**

SCHA supports community heritage throughout Scotland, representing grassroots voices at a national level. SCHA has recently become a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation and is taking forward its work in providing advocacy, networking, support and research opportunities. You can find out more about SCHA and become a member on our website.

### Heritage Roadshows

The 'Grassroots Heritage in Scotland' project is funded by Historic Environment Scotland and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It aims to provide opportunities for in-person networking and to address common issues in the sector. Central to the project is a series of 12 regional roadshows running throughout Autumn 2024 and Spring 2025. These will involve discussions on the challenges faced by community heritage groups, such as funding, climate change and how to record and signpost heritage, as well as the opportunity for groups and organisations to run stalls to promote their work and stimulate networking opportunities. Local steering groups are being set up to ensure the roadshow discussions meet the specific needs of each region and the varied heritage groups.



SCHA Stall 2024.

### Get Involved!

If you are interested in being involved in your local community heritage roadshow, please contact Project Officer Laura Ferguson to discuss opportunities to be on the steering committee, have a stall at a roadshow, attend an event or simply to find out more about the project or how archaeology will be represented within it.

We are also looking for suggestions of groups and individuals to add to our directory that will form the invite list for the event, so please get in touch with any suggestions or to be added yourself.

*Laura Ferguson,*  
**Scottish Community Heritage Association**

[www.scottishcommunityheritagealliance.org](http://www.scottishcommunityheritagealliance.org)  
[scottishcommunityheritage@gmail.com](mailto:scottishcommunityheritage@gmail.com)

## Make your mark inclusive volunteering toolkit

**Dig It! has been working with partners on the Make Your Mark campaign to improve inclusivity in heritage volunteering.**

In late 2023, the Toolkit – developed with the University of Strathclyde – was launched to provide practical advice, support, and links that will help organisations attract diverse new audiences as volunteers.

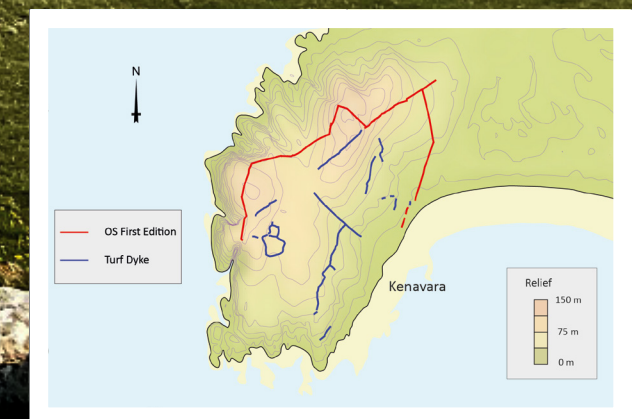
**“ BY TAGGING YOUR CONTENT WITH #SCOTARCHSTRAT YOU CAN JOIN A NATIONAL CONVERSATION ABOUT HOW SCOTLAND'S ARCHAEOLOGY STRATEGY IS MAKING ARCHAEOLOGY MATTER. ”**

**#SCOTARCHSTRAT**

Image © Erik Lunnberg

**Top: The end of the line on Kenavara!**

**Bottom: Map of field boundaries on Kenavara. Contains OS data.**



**Surveying Kenavara with Ben Hynish in the distance.**

## Field survey on Kenavara, Tiree

**The Association of Certified Field Archaeologists (ACFA) carried out a boundary survey on the Kenavara headland on Tiree during spring 2024.**

In previous years we recorded the field boundaries on nearby Ben Hynish. As Kenavara is much smaller, we completed the survey in a single trip.

### Project methodology

We used the same methodology as for Ben Hynish, tracing the possible field boundaries from aerial photographs and enhanced

LiDAR images on QGIS, a geographic information system. We then visited each line on the ground and recorded its attributes on an iPad form. Once back home, we added the data we collected to our model in QGIS and produced various maps.

### Field boundaries

The field boundaries on the west and north of the headland are shown on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition map. They were originally stone dykes but have been replaced with wire fences, running along the edge of the cliffs.

An earlier head dyke, made mostly of turf, on the eastern side of the headland is now much degraded. There are remnants of earlier field systems but the long grass in the interior of the headland has obscured them. Only two enclosures were identified compared to the numerous ones on Ben Hynish.

To get to Kenavara from the nearest road, we walked along the sands of Balephuill Bay, which was a lovely way to start and end each day!

*Ailsa and Ed Smith,*  
**ACFA**

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Image © Crown copyright and database rights (2024)

Image © John Spencer Jones



Excavation on Mar Lodge Estate in the Cairngorms during Scotland Digs 2023.

Images © Shahbaz Majeed 2023

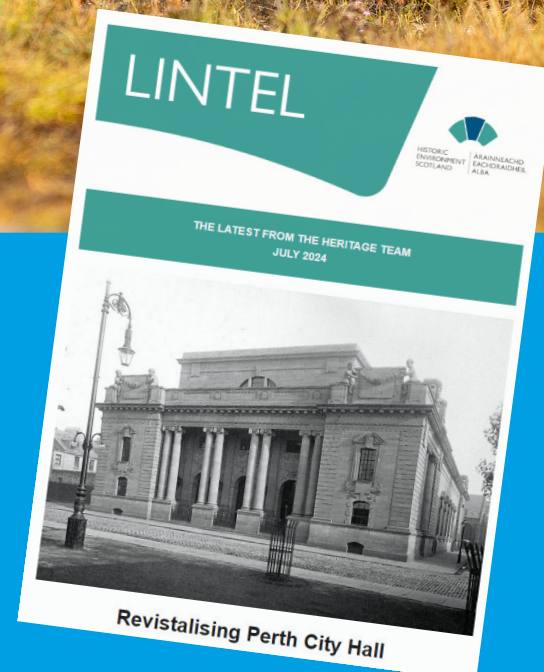
## Digging the Digs?

**Sign up now to the HES Heritage Directorate's newsletter, Lintel – delivered to your inbox every three months.**

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

Read more about the Designations process, how climate change is being addressed in the Heritage sector, as well as Perth City Hall's involvement with the Stone of Destiny!

Visit the HES website for more information.



## Scotland Digs 2025

### Planning archaeological fieldwork for next summer?

Get involved in Dig It!'s campaign to increase public awareness of Scottish archaeology! It's free and you don't need to organise public events to participate. Use #ScotlandDigs2025 to share fieldwork updates from the first day of summer

For more information contact:  
[DigIt@socantscot.org](mailto:DigIt@socantscot.org)

Below: Archaeology on Mar Lodge Estate in the Cairngorms during Scotland Digs 2023.

Main image: Flint artefact discovered on Mar Lodge Estate in the Cairngorms during Scotland Digs 2023.



**SCOTLAND  
DIGS**

## Proceedings Journal

There has been an exciting development in the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland's flagship journal, the *Proceedings*.

As well as releasing the full volume in November, individual articles will now appear online throughout the year. This change will speed up research release and support the exchange of ideas.

For more information visit:

[www.socantscot.org/publications/](http://www.socantscot.org/publications/)





# CARING AND PROTECTING

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

**INCLUSIVITY IS ALL ABOUT ENSURING THAT EVERYBODY HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE WITH ARCHAEOLOGY AT WHATEVER LEVEL THEY WANT. THIS ENGAGEMENT CAN TAKE MANY FORMS AND RANGES FROM CASUAL INTEREST TO PURSUING ARCHAEOLOGY AS A CAREER.**

## Local archaeology for local people

It also means there is as much access to the results of archaeological investigations as possible, right down to the primary archives and recovered artefacts.

Inclusivity and access are at the heart of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy including Aim 3: Care and Protect. The Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers: Scotland (ALGAO: Scotland) are the joint lead for Aim 3 along with the National Museums Scotland (NMS). Ensuring that the assemblages which arise from commercial archaeology are as accessible as possible was identified as a key part of providing inclusivity.

## Before the Museums

To this end the 'Before the Museums Project' was created and is currently in its final stages. Once implemented, it will, amongst other things, create standards and guidance for the deposition of finds assemblages, deriving from commercial archaeological investigations, into museums.

This will ensure that once excavation assemblages have been allocated through the Treasure Trove process, they will arrive at receiving museums in a uniform condition where they can be accessed more readily. The Before the Museums Project will be completed in early 2025 and is being managed jointly by ALGAO: Scotland and NMS, delivered by Dig Ventures and funded through the Historic Environment Scotland (HES) Partnership Fund.

## Inclusivity and accessibility

In addition to formal projects such as those outlined above, members of ALGAO: Scotland work extensively to ensure that the results of archaeological work undertaken through the planning process, and in general by local authorities, is as accessible to as many people as possible.

Over 95% of the archaeological work undertaken in Scotland is the direct result of the work of ALGAO: Scotland members. Inclusivity and accessibility are key elements of this work. The recent inclusion in the National Planning Framework 4 of a requirement to consider an element of 'public benefit' ensures that inclusivity is built into each project. The nature of engagement is dependent upon individual projects, but they are designed to be as inclusive as possible with a range of activities including open days, digital blogs, talks and handling sessions.

Along with the traditional publications and papers, the emphasis on all projects delivering public benefit is key to ensuring communities are included in the conversations about their local heritage and they have opportunities to engage with it.

## Digital access

Along with access to finds assemblages, there is an increasing use of digital access with many local Historic Environment Records (HERs) being available online. These are being used not only by professional archaeologists and researchers but increasingly by school children undertaking projects and members of the public researching family history or even the history of their own house. Many of the HERs are fully searchable and some are cross referenced to local archives and museum's collections, which means the information is readily accessible.

All commercial archaeological projects in Scotland are required to upload summaries and project reports to the OASIS online reporting form, a UK wide database which holds records of archaeological investigations and site reports. This has greatly increased the accessibility of these reports and allows people to investigate the primary data from archaeological projects first hand.

## Conservation projects

Many ALGAO: Scotland members are involved in multiple conservation projects and work to ensure that these build in inclusion and accessibility where possible. Even where physical access is not achievable, remote viewing cameras, online resources, as well as the more traditional information boards, braille and large type sheets are becoming more widely used. An example of this is the work at Preston Tower in Prestonpans, East Lothian. This 15th century tower house stands in a public park in the heart of the town. A conservation project by East Lothian Council and the National Trust for Scotland consolidated the building and increased access to the tower both physically and through on-site interpretation and digital information online. The tower will be managed by the local community going forward and the vision for the project is to ensure that access to the tower is as inclusive as possible.

While inclusivity is not always obvious, much of the work of Aim 3 of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy has it built in, whether it is access to local archaeological investigations, increased access to the primary data and artefacts deriving from excavations or enabling local communities and groups to have a say in how their heritage is managed and protected.

*Andrew Robertson,*  
**East Lothian Council Archaeology**

Main image: Polished stone axes.

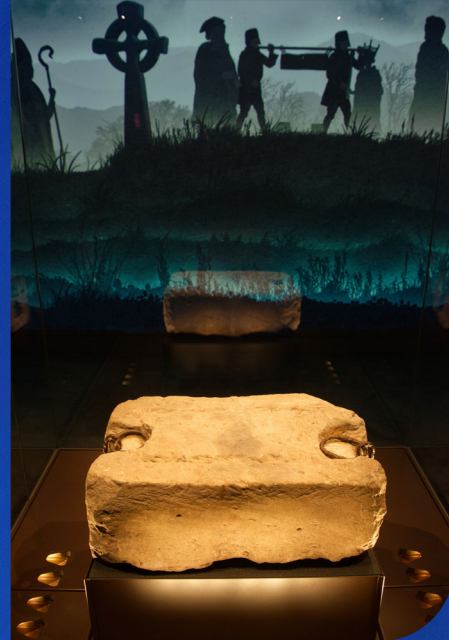
Left: Volunteers participate in a community dig.



Main image: The new Perth Museum exterior.

Right: Reconstruction view of Perth Castle. Artist Simon Edwards.

Far right: The Stone of Destiny in its new setting, Perth Museum.



Images © Culture Perth & Kinross

© Rob McDougal

## Archaeology for all in Perth's new museum

**Scotland's Archaeology Strategy identifies the importance of museums in preserving Scotland's heritage and sharing it with communities. Collecting and storing for the future are vital to a sustainable, shared understanding of the archaeological past. Without this, fashioning new stories to tell in public spaces becomes unsustainable.**

### Displays in Perth

On 31 March 2024 the new Perth Museum opened, a multi-million-pound, grant-aided and Government supported partnership project between Perth and Kinross Council and Culture Perth and Kinross. It tells the human story of Perth and Kinross, from the end of the Ice Age to the present. The ground floor is the main focus of the archaeology displays with a broad chronological sweep combined with thematic focusses, including supernatural and other engagements with the River Tay through prehistory.

For the first time in the Museum's history all our Pictish sculptures are on display and visitors can explore how they might have been coloured and see the digitally recreated environment of the St Madoes cross-slab and Inchyra symbol stone. Digital facial reconstructions based on skeletal evidence add a further dimension, along with a range of newly commissioned reconstruction paintings and replicas of key objects. Loans from the British Museum, National Museums Scotland and the Hunterian Museum – including the Glen Lyon brooch, the Tummel hoard and the Dundurn shoe – add further powerful content.

### Medieval Perth

The rich resource of Perth's medieval urban archaeology is well represented in the new displays with a wide coverage of beliefs, institutions, crafts and trade in the town and further afield. Visitors can even meet Bawsie Broun, our life-size model of one of Perth's medieval dogs!

### Stone of Scone

Central to the new displays is the loan of the Stone of Scone or Stone of Destiny, used in the inauguration of Scottish kings as far back as Alexander III, until it was taken by Edward I of England. It has a dedicated pavilion and visitors can learn its stories through two audio-visual experiences. Entry is free but has to be booked in timed slots.

The first 10 weeks the Museum was open saw 70,000 visitors through the door, a powerful testament to the rich archaeology and heritage on display. Come and see what you think!

*Mark A Hall,*  
**Perth Museum and Culture  
Perth & Kinross**

## The Treasure Trove Review 2024

**The findings of the Treasure Trove Review, launched last year, were published on the King's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer (KLTR) website in September 2024.**

The Review's report makes detailed recommendations for the future of treasure trove, the system which deals with archaeological finds in Scotland by recording them and making them available for acquisition by museums.

The Treasure Trove system has been a mainstay in preserving Scotland's archaeological record and ensures that objects of archaeological, historical or cultural significance are recorded, preserved and allocated to Scottish museums for public benefit.

Following a programme of engagement with organisations and individuals involved with the system, and a 12-week public consultation held in Spring, the Review endorses



**Late Bronze Age socketed axehead, approximately 1000-800 BCE (Perth and Kinross).**

**Late Medieval heraldic harness pendant, approximately 1200-1400 CE (Highland).**

what it calls "the core principles and characteristics" of Treasure Trove in Scotland, suggesting that, broadly speaking, respondents want the existing system to work better.

The Review proposes practical measures to support its better leading, planning, and resourcing. These include recommendations about changes to governance and approaches to resourcing, intended to make the system viable for the future in a manner that is financially sustainable and cost-efficient.

It also recommends a change in culture, where Treasure Trove is recognised as a key partner in the Scottish heritage sector, where all those involved, from museums to metal detectorists, are recognised for their participation and contribution to Scotland's heritage.

These, and other detailed recommendations, provide a blueprint for the future of the Treasure Trove in Scotland, all subject to approval by the KLTR. Work on revising the Treasure Trove Code of Practice now follows completion of the wider Review.

*Marcus Dean,*  
**Treasure Trove**

Images © Treasure Trove

## Whithorn Tap o' the Toon

**The medieval town of Whithorn, renowned for its rich history and close-knit community, has seen extensive heritage investigations focused primarily on its core areas along High Street and George Street.**

However, the southern end of the town, known as the 'Tap O The Toon,' has been historically neglected despite its vibrant past. To address this imbalance, the Whithorn Trust commissioned AOC Archaeology Group to undertake a historic building survey of the 'Tap O The Toon,' as part of a broader grant-funded initiative.

Established in the 1830s, the Tap O The Toon thrived as a bustling community with its own shops, social, and industrial centres, serving as the first area encountered by merchants and visitors from the Isle of Whithorn.

The arrival of the railways in the late 1870s brought further prosperity. However, the 20th century, particularly post-World War II, saw significant changes. An emerging housing crisis and the need for urban housing reform led to the decline of older cottages, with many cleared and rebuilt by the 1970s, transforming the area into one dominated by social and private housing.

### Capturing memories

The building survey by AOC Archaeology ran alongside an oral history project by Urbancroft Films. This project aimed to capture the memories of current and former residents, focusing on the 1950s-1970s social housing schemes. The resulting documentary, 'Tap o' the Toon Tales,' offers a poignant exploration of Whithorn's past through personal recollections.

By combining historic building surveys with oral histories, this project seeks to create a comprehensive understanding

View of Whithorn.



of the Tap O The Toon's history, ensuring that the memories and heritage of this once-bustling area are preserved and appreciated. You can read more about the project and view multimedia on the Whithorn Trust website.

All filmed clips from the documentary can be viewed at Urbancroft Films' website.

[www.urbancroft.co.uk](http://www.urbancroft.co.uk),  
[www.whithorn.com/archaeology/the-tap-o-the-toon/](http://www.whithorn.com/archaeology/the-tap-o-the-toon/)

*Katie O'Connell,*  
**AOC Archaeology Group**

Image © Historic Environment Scotland



**KILMARTIN MUSEUM RE-OPENED ITS DOORS TO GREAT ACCLAIM LAST AUTUMN FOLLOWING A PHASE OF ESSENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT.**

### **The new museum**

Situated at the heart of the internationally important archaeological landscape of Kilmartin Glen, the Museum has been actively conserving and interpreting the area's cultural and natural history since 1997. As custodian of ancient artefacts allocated from across Argyll, the Museum's artefact collections had increased over time to the point where they outgrew the buildings.

Additional space was also needed to revamp the exhibitions and enable the Museum's team to expand their delivery of services and undertake research. A decision was made to construct a major extension. Designed by award-winning architects Reiach and Hall, this joined together two existing buildings to create a seamless Museum facility, greatly enhancing the experience for staff and visitors and more efficient to run.

The new Museum opened to the public in September 2023.

### **An immersive experience**

Inside the expanded permanent exhibition space, colourful displays, and immersive audio visuals transport visitors back through 12,000 years of human history. For the first time, the Museum can display artefacts from its collections which were awarded Nationally Significant status in 2019.

They include a piece of worked flint marking the earliest evidence of humans in the area, a trio of early beaker pots, and fascinating examples of ritually deposited bronze weapons. The latest technology has been used to bring the past to life for modern audiences. Lighting has been used to draw the visitor's eye to the jewel-like qualities of many objects and to create moments of drama and pause along the journey.

One of the most evocative displays features the remains of a young Bronze Age woman, displayed alongside an uncannily realistic reconstruction of her face created by world-class sculptor Oscar Nilsson. For the first time in millennia, visitors can look into the eyes of this distant ancestor.

Main image and below: Kilmartin Museum opening event.

Bottom: Poltalloch jet necklace.

# **KILMARTIN MUSEUM RE-OPENS ITS DOORS TO OVER 12,000 YEARS OF HISTORY**







Top left: 4500-year-old Beaker pots and flints.

Kilmartin Museum opening event.



Displayed alongside the Museum's own collections are spectacular artefacts on loan from National Museums Scotland, The British Museum and Historic Environment Scotland. At the time of writing, these include the stunning Poltalloch jet necklace, a piece of internationally important Bronze Age jewellery, and the exquisitely decorated Glebe Cairn vessel which has been displayed to overlook the Bronze Age burial cairn in which it was found. From more recent times, there are symbols of power dating to the age of the Gaelic-speaking warrior kings of Dunadd and intricately sculpted medieval crosses. Together, the exhibition constitutes one of the most comprehensive assemblages of ancient artefacts to be displayed in the landscape where they were found.

#### Interactive exhibitions

The exhibition was designed to be accessible to diverse audiences and is filled with sensory experiences and opportunities to get hands-on. Interactives include spinning yarn, grinding grain, decoding Ogham writing, and rebuilding a fragmented pot. Throughout the gallery, informative videos reveal insights into ancient craft processes: how to knap a flint arrowhead, fire a prehistoric pot, and smelt a bronze axehead.

The Museum worked closely with a Gaelic consultant who contributed fascinating insights into the local dialect, place names and folklore in historical times. The exhibition promotes and contextualises Gaelic language and culture through bilingual panels, audio recordings, songs, and storytelling.

Alongside the permanent gallery, temporary exhibition spaces allow for a changing programme of displays. There are also brand-new laboratories where finds and acquisitions can be processed. An expanded and state-of-the-art collections store has the capacity to house the ever-growing collection of artefacts, many with specialist conservation requirements. The store is also home to Argyll and Bute Council's archaeology collections, which the Museum cares for under a Service Level Agreement. There is also a stunning learning space with panoramic views across Kilmartin Glen, which was purpose-built to deliver cultural and educational activities and is available for meetings, conferences, and community events.

#### Beyond the Museum

Inclusivity is at the heart of everything the Museum does and extends far beyond its walls.

The Museum team runs a variety of programmes, courses, and events for people of all ages and backgrounds, giving them hands-on experience with history. The Museum's renowned Education Team works closely with schools and the local community including a variety of classroom-based projects, initiatives for young people, and activities for those with mental and physical health issues. The volunteer programme promotes health and well-being opportunities and stages guided walks to visit many of the glen's famous ancient monuments during the summer. A recent community archaeology project engaged with over forty volunteers and more than one hundred staff and pupils from local schools. The Museum hosts researchers from far and wide, as well as student placements.

In the months since opening, feedback has been fantastic, with visitors commenting: "The diversity of experiences, seeing, hearing, touching, doing, reading is perfect to have our imagination flying!" or "I loved how interactive the museum is and how it interacts with the landscape around it."

Kilmartin Museum is a must-see for anyone living in or visiting the stunning west coast of Scotland.

[www.kilmartin.org](http://www.kilmartin.org)

Aaron Watson & Sharon Webb,  
Kilmartin Museum

Images © Paul Campbell

Reconstruction of a Bronze Age woman by sculptor Oscar Nilsson.





## Encouraging creative learning and engagement for everyone.

OVER THE PAST YEAR WE HAVE CONTINUED TO PROVIDE MORE INCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT ACROSS SCOTLAND. WE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT A WIDER RANGE OF PEOPLE OF ALL AGES TO PARTICIPATE IN ARCHAEOLOGY THAT ALLOW SKILLS AND WELLBEING TO DEVELOP.

# ENCOURAGING GREATER ENGAGEMENT

### Attainment through archaeology

We continue to work with school pupils and youth groups across Scotland using archaeology to help close the attainment gap through archaeology. Over the past year we have worked with more than 280 young people in East Ayrshire, Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian, and the Scottish Borders.

Attainment through Archaeology (AtA) workshops and courses have given children and young people the opportunity to work together to develop a better understanding of the past using newly acquired skills and knowledge. Last year, AtA participants recorded historic graveyards, joined the wider community to carry out archaeological excavations, investigated local prehistoric rock art and explored sustainability and fashion in the past.

### Inclusive archaeology

In the past year, Archaeology Scotland's New Audiences project has delivered engaging activities with groups of New Scots in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. This has ranged from working with Archaeology Scotland's Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities (SSGAH) Artist in Residence to produce an exhibition in Dundee, collaborating with Make Your Mark to codesign activities with participants in Glasgow, and supporting participation in excavations of rock art with Kilmartin Museum. There is a growing recognition of the impact that inclusive archaeology can have for wider audiences.



Images © Archaeology Scotland

### Heritage Heroes Awards

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 26,000 have now been achieved by people of all ages across Scotland. The Awards encourage people at all stages in their lifelong learning journeys to explore, engage with and respond to the archaeology, places and sites that are important to them.

### Supporting educators across Scotland

The Archaeological Learning Working Group has continued to support more educators to deliver archaeological learning across Scotland. Whether using the resource on the Heritage Learning Portal or the Archaeology Scotland loan kits, there is something to engage every pupil. Looking forward, we will seek more ways to enable the benefits of Archaeological Learning in every school in Scotland.

The Archaeological Learning Working Group continues to champion archaeological learning across Scotland. Learning resources, digital and hands-on, are freely available through the Heritage Resources Portal and Archaeology Scotland's loan kit service, encouraging and supporting more educators to deliver archaeological learning activities. Looking forward, we have an ambition to get Archaeological Learning into every school in Scotland. We want children and young people across the country to experience the excitement and sense of community and place that archaeological learning activities can provide.

Gavin MacGregor,  
Archaeology Scotland



Above left: Citadel Youth Spark AtA Workshop – exploring fashion and craft skills in the past.

Above: Pupils from Ancrum Primary School joining Ancrum and District Heritage Society's Mantle Walls Dig.

Right: Pupil from Ancrum Primary School at the Mantle Walls Dig.

Above right: Logan Primary School pupil's creative response to their investigations in the Ballochmyle Rock Art Panel.

Below: Gravestone recording.



## Celebrating 80 Years of Supporting Scotland's Archaeology

Archaeology Scotland celebrates 80 years of supporting people to get involved in Scotland's archaeology. Our origins are with the formation of the Council for British Archaeology and creation of its Scottish Regional Group in 1944.

From these early days, support was given to archaeological societies and individuals to develop skills and learn more about Scottish Archaeology. We soon championed initiatives such as an annual Summer School to help more people learn about Scotland's distinctive sites and monuments, a Field School to train more archaeologists and publication of Discovery and Excavation Scotland, so news of the most recent archaeological discoveries could be shared with all.

These are still key activities which Archaeology Scotland delivers to this day. Looking forward, creating more and wider opportunities for people to participate in archaeology across Scotland is a key area of focus for Archaeology Scotland.



## In Depth

Right: Volunteers repairing the Kilchoan Jetty.

Below: Celebrating the opening of Achnaha.



Image © Archaeology Scotland

# Adopt-a-Monument and the Real Wild West

**Adopt-a-Monument has been supporting communities to take a leading role in conserving Scotland's Cultural Heritage for just over 30 years.**

In that time the programme has developed a range of approaches to build capacity, support communities and widen participation. Many archaeological sites and monuments across Scotland need care but few have owners with the resources to make this happen. Equally, there are people who wish to step in to do something to help protect and interpret these monuments and places. In practice, communities have come together to conserve, promote and understand over 130 sites and landscapes, ranging from early Neolithic monuments to late 20th century football stadiums.

## Heading West

A good example of how the programme works is our recent The Real Wild West: Adopt-a-Monument on Ardnamurchan project. The Ardnamurchan History and Heritage Association developed a wide-ranging project revolving around three main goals: caring for their heritage, promoting tourism and tackling local issues such as skills development and other factors like social isolation.

To do this, they adopted ten historical and archaeological sites across Ardnamurchan. Local people came together to help repair, rebuild and improve each site, making friends, learning new skills and helping promote the cultural heritage of the area.

A traditional skills project took place which focused on the historical crofting township of Achnaha, where two blackhouses were repaired and rebuilt and the surrounding landscape enhanced to create better access to the site. The project was led by a local traditional skills specialist who engaged participants in learning about drystone walling, lime mortaring, fencing, path building and landscaping. A project was created which delivered training in traditional skills, rural skills and hospitality and tourism skills. The courses were designed around what the community felt was most needed in the local area and were delivered by the University of the Highlands and Islands.

## Inspiring Interpretation

This work was brought together and presented through a major interpretation programme. Members of the community were engaged in co-designing interpretive material that was used as inspiration for ten new heritage interpretations at the ten adopted sites, as well as the installation of three heritage hubs at key tourist locations across the peninsula. This formed part of the new Wander West Ardnamurchan Heritage Trail, which encourages visitors to the peninsula, to explore and learn more about the heritage of this unique place and contribute to the economy.

The Adopt-a-Monument programme is community-led, and the Real Wild West Project is only one example of the great work happening across Scotland by people in and for their communities. The projects are co-designed and co-created with the community and would not be possible without them or the funders who support it. Thanks to everyone involved and for support from Historic Environment Scotland, The Shared Prosperity Fund and Nature Scot through the Natural Cultural Heritage Fund.

*Phil Richardson,*  
**Archaeology Scotland**

Images © Robert Burns Academy

## Creating an Antonine Wall Community Map for West Dunbartonshire

**In early 2024, the Antonine Wall team worked with people aged 60 and above and artist Neil Thomson to create a community map of the Antonine Wall in the local area.**

### About the Project

In 2023, The Antonine Wall was chosen as a pilot site for the [UNESCO UK Local to Global](#) project. This involved activities including audience and stakeholder mapping and funding was provided to deliver a small pilot project. Audience analysis revealed that there is a large audience of people aged 60+ along the Wall.

As we had not engaged specifically with this audience during the delivery of the Rediscovering the Antonine Wall project, we decided to use the grant to work with them in West Dunbartonshire. Previous feedback indicated a strong appetite for walks along the line of the Wall.

### Encouraging social interaction via heritage

The aim of our project was to encourage the use of the Wall as an outdoor resource for local walks and to facilitate social interaction. Over three weeks, three indoor workshops and two walks were delivered.

The first workshop was centred around the history of the Antonine Wall, object handling and getting to know each other. The two other indoor sessions were led by appointed artist Neil Thomson who worked with participants on map design and sharing personal knowledge about the area and their memories.

The final map shows points of interest along the Antonine Wall and is the perfect companion for small wanders or longer walks between Old Kilpatrick and Duntocher.



Left: Community members during a walk along the Antonine Wall.

Below: Community members during a community map workshop.

Bottom: West Dunbartonshire Community Map

In addition to the map, the group shared local information available on our blog as well as poems and artwork.

Find the Antonine Wall Community Map on the [Rediscovering Antonine Wall website](#).

*Severine Peyrichou,*  
**West Dunbartonshire Council**



Image © West Dunbartonshire Council



DigiTay participants.

## Recording Balgay Park: digital skills and archaeology

**Over the course of Summer 2024 Archaeology Scotland, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) tutor and facilitator Amina Okhai have been working together on a digital skills and archaeology project in Dundee.**

We have been working with a group of 12 women ESOL learners from a wide variety of backgrounds, some with lived experience of asylum, all who have migrated to Dundee and its surroundings. The project is funded by the Tay Cities Deal through DigiTay with the focus of bridging the digital skills gap in the area.

### Field survey

The project has sought to bring together digital learning, archaeological learning, and English language learning through a field survey of sections of Balgay Park in Dundee. The project began with Desk Based Assessment work and understanding the value of data we collect on study areas before we begin fieldwork. We then proceeded to the park where the group digitally recorded elements of the park's archaeology, including the medieval Rose Window, the Victoria Pavilion and fountain feature. The project will continue into August where we will look at how to analyze our data and bring it together to present to the wider public through working with Power Bi software.

### Archaeology and digital skills

Throughout the project there has been a focus on how we can use archaeology and digital skills training to assist the learners on their English language learning journey. New vocabulary relevant to digital skills and archaeology were introduced and practiced for the duration of the experience. The project also offers the group the chance to practice English through conversations, while working as a team and learning about a wonderful piece of Dundee's history. Placemaking and shaping a project that creates a space for the learners to improve their overall wellbeing is an important part of what we have sought to achieve also by building the group's confidence to pursue positive destinations in work or education after the project.

*Kieran Manchip,*  
**Archaeology Scotland**

## Attainment through Archaeology and Community Archaeology in Ochiltree

**Archaeology Scotland are now in their fourth year of partnership with Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership to deliver Attainment through Archaeology (AtA) 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, and provides new experiences for groups who wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity to engage with archaeology.

### Enthusiastic community response

This year, for the first time we ran a community excavation as part of the project. In March, in association with the Ochiltree History Group, we undertook a two-week excavation looking for evidence of the Bronze Age landscape in Ochiltree.

The dig was a huge success, and the results are currently being written up.

**Left: Excavations at Ochiltree attended by local families.**

**Right: Ochiltree Primary School explored real and replica Bronze Age artefacts.**

As well as volunteers and families from the community, the dig was attended by three classes from Ochiltree Primary School, two pupils from Robert Burns Academy and a local youth group: with over 60 people attending on the busiest day – despite terrible weather. Project staff also ran a whole school assembly during the week, to introduce pupils to archaeology and the work at the excavation. It was fantastic to work across such an enthusiastic community!

### Attainment through Archaeology taster session

Following the dig, the three classes who took part had the opportunity to complete an Attainment through Archaeology Taster Session with the Archaeology Scotland Learning Team. Pupils were updated on findings from the excavation, were able to handle finds from the dig, alongside some typical Bronze Age artefacts and learned how archaeologists carry out desk-based assessments.

*"I thoroughly enjoyed it. I've always wanted to do this but never thought I'd ever get the chance. Brilliant people, brilliant experience, I'm so hoping we can do it all again."*

We then went on to explore Bronze Age pottery, similar to that found in Ochiltree in the 1950s, with pupils having the opportunity to make and decorate their own. Each participating pupil earned their Heritage Hero Explorer Award, which was presented at the end of the school term.

[www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/learning/heritage-hero-awards/](http://www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/learning/heritage-hero-awards/)

[www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/learning/attainment-through-archaeology/](http://www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/learning/attainment-through-archaeology/)

*Becca Barclay,*  
**Archaeology Scotland**



*"Myself and the kids all had a blast at the dig in Ochiltree. The kids thought it was really fun and they thought it was amazing that they got to dig and become archaeologists for a short time. It was so interesting learning how you worked and how a dig site is run."*





Left: Imported ceramics from places like France and the Low Countries were discovered by the Monastic Archaeology Field School at Lindores Abbey during Scotland Digs 2024.

Above and right: University of Glasgow and the National Trust for Scotland fieldwork in Glencoe during Scotland Digs 2024.

Image © MAFS



Images © Artis Palyvos

## National campaign shines a spotlight on summer fieldwork with international connections

**This summer, the Scotland Digs 2024 campaign – coordinated by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland's Dig It! project – collated fieldwork updates and events for the public.**

This year's "International Connections" theme raised awareness of historic links between Scotland and the wider world, as well as how archaeology can combat harmful narratives, by highlighting projects and discoveries with links to other parts of the globe.

### Celebrating fieldwork

These campaigns are designed to increase awareness of – and encourage greater engagement with – archaeological fieldwork in Scotland by supporting organisations of all shapes and sizes.

Before the launch, Dig It! coordinated a free webinar for the sector with Archaeology Scotland and Dundee International Women's Centre who shared their tips on reaching new audiences. Organisations such as Rampart Archaeology also received free reusable signs to help attract passers-by to their sites.

Campaign press releases – covered by *The Scotsman*, *The Herald*, *The National* and more – featured volunteering, open days, and site visit opportunities from the University of Glasgow, National Trust for Scotland, Swandro-Orkney Coastal Archaeology Trust and Friends of Dundonald Castle.

Webpages acted as a hub which helped thousands of people to follow fieldwork updates and events, including site visit opportunities from the Swandro-Orkney Coastal Archaeology Trust, the Friends of the Ness of Brodgar and the University of the Highlands and Islands Archaeology.

# SCOTLAND DIGS

Social media content helped spread the word about discoveries, updates and events coordinated by organisations including the University of St Andrews and the Peeblesshire Archaeological Society. By the end of the summer, thousands of users had interacted with posts containing #ScotlandDigs2024.

### Get involved

Want to raise the profile of your fieldwork by taking part in Scotland Digs 2025?

For more informations contact:

[DigIt@socantscot.org](mailto:DigIt@socantscot.org)

Julianne McGraw, **Dig It!**

*Dig It! is primarily funded by Historic Environment Scotland*







Main image: Trying to work out what the sugar nips were was challenging.

Below right: The child sized shackles were a big hit!

Below far right: A selection of the handling items; shackles/handcuffs, shoes, sugar nips, coffee pot, tea caddy and replica chamber pot!

Bha e dùbhlannach a’ feuchainn ri obrachadh a-mach dè bh’ ann an clobhan siùcair.

Bha meas mòr air geimhlean na cloinne!

Taghadh de nithean làimhseachaidh; geimhlean, brògan, clobhan siùcair, poit cofaidh, canastair teatha agus mac-samhail poit seòmair!



## ‘Go Auld Reekie’ to ‘Gu Dùn Èideann’

**Packed with information and activity ideas, Go Auld Reekie is a free digital learning resource for educators that brings the history of Edinburgh’s Old and New Towns alive.**

Its main focus is the 18th century, a period of considerable change. There is a handling box that can be loaned alongside the resource. Objects include original tea caddies and replica shackles or handcuffs, in both adult and child sizes!

### Increasing inclusivity

The resource already includes real life characters from under-represented groups in Georgian Edinburgh, we wanted to bring it to a wider audience by creating a Gaelic version. With the help of the HES Gaelic Language Policy Manager, it was translated into Gaelic. We then worked in partnership with [Comunn na Gàidhlig](#) to launch Gu Dùn Èideann in May 2024, with enthusiastic help from P5 pupils and staff of Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce.

Pupils got to handle both replica and real objects, learn about, and discuss, them in Gaelic. They were encouraged to investigate them and asked what they saw or felt, thought, and wondered about each. Some are like those they would use today, such as the shoes, but others were more of a puzzle: who knows what sugar nips are?

### Remembering Edinburgh’s Gaelic Heritage

Launching [Gu Dùn Èideann](#) in the heart of Edinburgh at Riddles Court, with a trip to the Georgian House, got everyone thinking about the rich Gaelic heritage of Scotland’s capital city that is often overlooked. There’s no doubt that the streets of Georgian Edinburgh would have been filled with the sound of Gaelic, but this is an aspect of the city’s history that is often misunderstood. Edinburgh’s famous Sedan Chairs were regularly carried by people originally from the Highlands and many of the city’s residents would have spoken several languages, including Gaelic.

### Looking to the future

Gu Dùn Èideann is available to download from the HES website and the handling box can be borrowed by contacting [heshandlingboxes@hes.scot](mailto:heshandlingboxes@hes.scot)

Jenny Bruce,  
City of Edinburgh Council

## ‘Go Auld Reekie’ gu ‘Gu Dùn Èideann’

**Loma-làn de dh’fhiosrachadh agus de bheachdan mu ghnìomhachdan, is e goireas ionnsachaidh didseatach an-asgaidh do luchd-oideachaidh a th’ ann an Gu Dùn Èideann, a tha a’ toirt eachdraidh Seann Bhaile agus Baile Ùr Dhùn Èideann beò.**

Is e an 18mh linn air a bheil e a’ cuimseachadh, àm de mhòr-atharrachadh. Tha bogsa làimhseachaidh ri fhaotainn a ghabhas a thoirt seachad air iasad còmhla ris a’ ghoireas. Am measg nan nithean, tha bogsaichean-tì tùsail agus mic-samhail de glasan-làimhe, ann am meud an dà chuid inbhich agus clann!

### Meudachadh In-ghabhalachd

Tha an goireas mar-thà a’ gabhail a-steach charactaran fìor-bheatha bho bhuidhnean a tha fo-riochdaichte ann an Dùn Èideann Deòrsach, agus bha sinn airson a thoirt gu luchd-èisteachd nas fharsainghe le bhith a’ cruthachadh tionndadh ann an Gàidhlig. Le cuideachadh bho Mhanaidsear Poileasaidh Gàidhlig HES, chaidh eadar-theangachadh gu Gàidhlig. Dh’obraich sinn an uair sin ann an com-pàirteachas le [Comunn na Gàidhlig](#) gus Gu Dùn Èideann a chur air bhog sa Chèitean 2024, le cuideachadh dìcheallach bho sgoilearan Prìomh 5 agus luchd-obrach Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce.

Fhuair na sgoilearan cothrom air mac-samhailean agus nithean tùsail a làimhseachadh, ionnsachadh mun deidhinn, agus an deasbad ann an Gàidhlig. Chaidh am brosnachadh gu an sgrùdadh agus chaidh faighneachd dhaibh dè bha iad a’ faicinn no a’ faireachdainn, a’ smaoineachadh no a’ gabhail iongnadh mu gach aon aca. Tha cuid coltach riuthasan a chleachdadh iad san latha an-diugh, leithid brògan, ach bha càch na bu doirbhe an obrachadh a-mach: cò aige a tha fios dè th’ ann an gearradair-siùcair?

### Cuimhneachadh Dualchas Gàidhlig Dhùn Èideann

Thug foillseachadh air [Gu Dùn Èideann](#) ann an teis-meadhan Dhùn Èideann aig Cùirt Riddle, le turas gu an Taigh Deòrsach, air gach neach smaoineachadh mu dheidhinn an dualchais Ghàidhlig shaidhbhir ann am prìomh bhaile Alba a tha glè thrìc air a dhìochuimhneachadh. Chan eil teagamh nach biodh sràidean Dhùn Èideann a’ taomadh le fuaim na Gàidhlig, ach ’s e taobh den eachdraidh a tha seo a tha glè thrìc air a mhì-thuigsinn. Bha Cathraichean Iomchair ainmeil Dhùn Èideann gu cunbhalach air an giùlain le daoine a bha bho thùs às a’ Ghàidhealtachd, agus bhiodh mòran chànanan aig luchd-còmhnaidh a’ bhaile-mhòir cuideachd, a’ gabhail a-steach Gàidhlig.

### Coimhead ris an àm ri teachd

Tha Gu Dùn Èideann ri fhaotainn airson a luchdachadh sìos bho [làrach-lìn](#) HES agus faodar am bogsa làimhseachaidh fhaighinn air iasad le fios a chur gu [heshandlingboxes@hes.scot](mailto:heshandlingboxes@hes.scot)

Jenny Bruce,  
City of Edinburgh Council



# THE BARE BONES

## FROM RESEARCH FRAMEWORK TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SHOWCASE

**The Boyne to Brodgar research initiative aims to improve and promote understanding of the fascinating Neolithic monuments found across Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland. It is a unique blend of serious and considered archaeological research framework with an enthusiastic and joyous celebration of our shared cultural heritage.**

Boyne to Brodgar, Scotland's Archaeological Research Framework and Scotland's Archaeology Strategy all provide the strategic direction for Forestry and Land Scotland's recent work exploring Early Neolithic chambered cairns.

Our holistic and inclusive approach acts to present a diverse collective of monuments in their wider regional and international context – an archaeological showcase of people and place, new survey techniques and creative visualisations. We tell the story of the early Neolithic pioneers who arrived in the Atlantic-facing areas of south-west Scotland and the north of Ireland in the centuries after 4000 BC and who built the megalithic monuments known as Clyde cairns and court tombs respectively. The architecture suggests their use both as a place for the dead, where people placed the deceased within the chambers inside the cairn; and as a place for the living, where people could pay their respects within the forecourt outside the cairn.



0 |-----| 10m

The early Neolithic Clyde cairn of Ardchnonnell (NM 9932 1275) was built around 6000 years ago. The cairn is situated in a clearing in a large forestry plantation on the east side of Loch Awe. It survives as a huge mound of stone, with traces of a curved forecourt with low square-ended horns still visible. This façade frames a central burial chamber which likely comprised three segmented compartments formed by overlapping orthostats.

The chamber has been opened in the past and only the rear capstone remains in place. Ardchnonnell was inspected at very low altitude in June 2024 by Skyscape Survey, using a drone to produce a high-resolution photogrammetric survey. The survey resulted in a detailed real colour 3D model (available to view on Sketchfab), which was then used as the base for a close contour model using orthographic colour to define the micro-topography (presented here on plan).

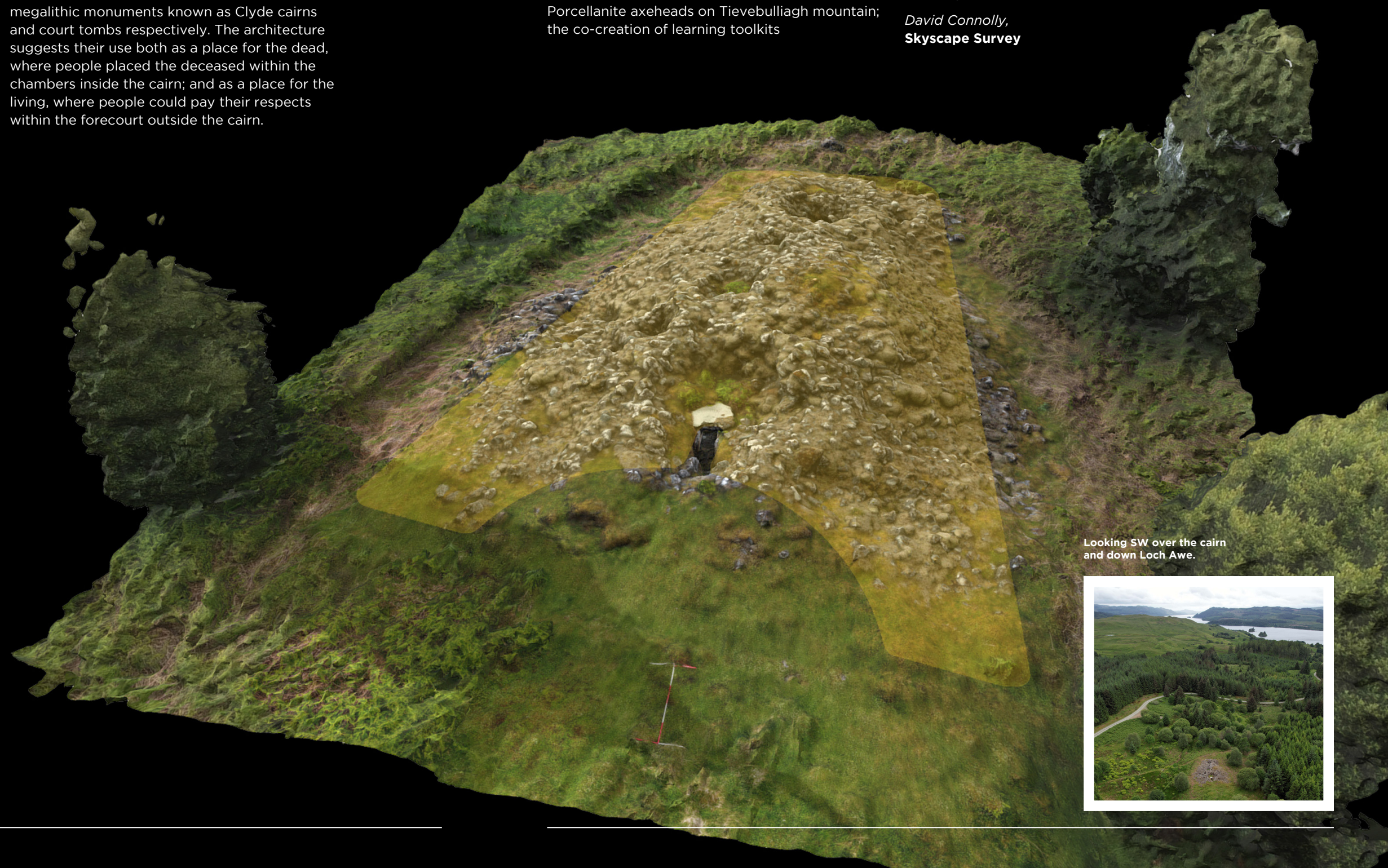
The work has included many innovative archaeological measured surveys on Scotland's national forests and land, including Clyde cairns such as Ardchnonnell on Loch Awe (and Bargrennan cairns such as Bencallen in Galloway). It culminated in the production of The Bare Bones archaeological learning resource (Forestry and Land Scotland 2023), which showcased associated projects across Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland: the artistic response to the Giant's Grave on Arran; the laser scanning of Aghanaglack in Northern Ireland and Magheraghanrush in Ireland; experiential archaeology searching for the source of Porcellanite axeheads on Tievebullagh mountain; the co-creation of learning toolkits

by communities across the region (led by Archaeology Scotland); financial support to enable post excavation and publication of legacy projects at Lochhill and the Slewcairn in Dumfriesshire; and the re-evaluation of the simple passage tomb of Carmahome on Arran.

Research frameworks and collaborative strategies create the springboard to enable a range of interlinked projects with a common theme to take a truly inclusive approach to the practice of archaeology.

*Matt Ritchie,*  
**Forestry and Land Scotland**

*David Connolly,*  
**Skyscape Survey**



Looking SW over the cairn and down Loch Awe.





Creating opportunities to acquire archaeological skills and driving innovation.

# INNOVATION AND SKILLS

**GAINING GROUND AND SHARING GOOD PRACTICE: A YEAR OF ACTION WITH INNOVATION, SKILLS AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE BEYOND SCOTLAND**

**Inclusivity has been an ever-present theme with the work of Aim 5 – from ensuring equitable access to career development opportunities, to creating sustainable and inclusive access to and through archaeology careers.**

Thanks to our funding from the Historic Environment Scotland Partnership Fund, the 'Platform for Success' project continues to build upon the previously HES funded workstreams in support of the active delivery of Aim 5. HES funding has been vital to the success of the project, which has supported staff continuity with this work and has enabled partnership working on a scale not seen before in the Scottish archaeology skills development space.

In practice this has resulted in apprenticeship and qualification development, taking part in career fairs, conferences and talks, facilitating continuing professional development (CPD) provision for archaeologists at all stages of their career and promoting this work to wider audiences in Scotland and beyond. Taking a joined-up approach with skills development work can help save time, resource, capitalise on shared expertise and enable standardised development processes to take place in all areas of the UK.

## Practical experience

We were delighted this year to gain approval from the Apprenticeship Approval Group (an oversight committee which monitors apprenticeship development) to move to the next stage of active development and look forward to working with Skills Development Scotland to take those next steps.

Another highlight for us was visiting the Glasgow University Glencoe field school – we valued talking to the students about their learning journeys and career aspirations and have applied those learning points to our work.





This work has allowed us to work closely with the Skills Investment Plan for the Historic Environment which has enabled fresh conversations within our sector and beyond. These new collaborations support us to explore shared challenges, barriers and potential solutions. The sub-sector collaboration, enabled by being part of the Skills Investment Plan (SIP) helps save time, resources and enables us to share expertise and learning experiences. In 2023 we played a lead role in facilitating consultation with the Scottish archaeology sector during the SIP refresh process. Within the new plan (launched in April 2024), archaeology has been identified as one of the ten pillars of the plan and the new skills profile that has emerged from this process will support the continuing strategic skills development work taking place in Scotland.

### Scotland's Archaeology Strategy

Scotland's Archaeology Strategy has also enabled us to play an active role on the Steering Group committee for the Improving Access project. Facilitated by Historic Environment Scotland and funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Improving Access project is exploring barriers to heritage careers by conducting focus group sessions with under-represented heritage audiences. The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) continues to be an active part of the Improving Access project steering group and support the project team to shape outputs. This includes supporting the delivery of a symposium and 'leaders' summit' (which took place May 2024) which shared the results of the project and discussed next steps of the initiative.

Going forward, CIfA is committed to sharing the results of this project and taking action with the findings from the focus groups. We are particularly interested in supporting the sector to develop or enhance inclusive recruitment practice and reduce the barriers to careers in archaeology.

This year has also seen the alignment of the science skills work in the Strategy with the SIP (Archaeology and Heritage Science workshops), and with skills work being undertaken by the National Heritage Science Forum (NHSF), including contributing to the recent paper looking at the challenges and opportunities for heritage science skills, particularly understanding career pathways and provision of training.

### Accessible learning

Together with the technical education and training team in HES, we have been looking for ways to deliver open and accessible e-learning modules in archaeological science, which will be complimentary to the archaeological science guidance documents. The first of these will be radiocarbon dating and Bayesian analysis, which will work through how this technique is used in archaeology, how to sample for it, to understanding the results. This is intended to be interactive, with assessment as you work through – the intention it to also have these CPD courses accredited by CIfA and so are also being linked to the National Occupation Standards.

The mechanisms for gaining practical experience and training in specialist skills has been raised as an issue. In response to this, HES has been exploring new ways of providing this training, for different stages of people's career. For those looking for career changes, or leaving school, we have used an existing apprenticeship framework in Laboratory and Associated Technical Activities (SCQF L7) to hire an apprentice in heritage science. In addition, for those with a background in archaeological science, who want to gain experience in the application of techniques within a workplace, we have two Archaeological Science Fellows.

*Lisa Brown,*  
**Historic Environment Scotland**

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



Left: Glencoe field school.

Below: Sharing the results of the Strategy at the 2023 EAA Conference .

# Glencoe Field School

From 12-25 June this year, a team of undergraduate students from the University of Glasgow joined us for the second season of our Glencoe Field School. Students took part in various forms of archaeological practice shaped by the research interests of our team and our commitment to engaged archaeology.

### Interpretive Media & Archaeology

In collaboration with the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) Archaeology Team our survey and excavations strands investigated the settlement landscape of Ach-na-con to inform new interpretative media along the route of the Glencoe Greenway path. This work contextualised the settlement of Ach-na-con within its wider landscapes for our team.

With the creative media team, students responded to this research by creating sound art and podcasts, as well as staging an installation in the NTS Glencoe Visitor Centre's turf house, to show the importance of communicating our research to wider audiences.

On 22 June we hosted an open day at the NTS Visitor Centre with artefact handling, craft activities, experimental archaeology, site tours, storytelling and the installation designed by our students.

### Introducing New Skills

Our field school project at Glencoe is designed to expose our students to a wide variety of archaeological skills including survey and excavation, digital and analogue recording techniques, post-excavation processes such as artefact photography, digitisation and artefact processing, and innovative methods of public engagement through our digital and creative media strand.

Students also had the opportunity to deliver site tours and run public facing activities gaining confidence in communicating the archaeology they were working on to wider audiences. Through this approach we hope to introduce our students to the variety of roles which exist within archaeology.

This field school was funded by the Archaeology Team at the University of Glasgow with accommodation, travel and a subsistence budget provided to our team of undergraduate students to reduce the barriers to participating in archaeological fieldwork. As well as the residential option in Glencoe students at Glasgow were also offered opportunities to participate in Glasgow-based field schools at Govan Old and Festival Park.

*Eddie Stewart & Elizabeth Robertson,*  
**University of Glasgow**

Image © Gareth Beale



Image ©Arlis Palyvos

Above left: Our students showcase some exciting finds from this seasons fieldwork at the Glencoe Archaeology Festival, organised by our team.

A drone photo of the 2024 excavation site showing the new Glencoe Greenway.





Main image: Lindores Abbey Gate and Distillery.

Above: Lindores Abbey Distillery, FS Partners.

Left: Dig mascots

## Scotland's Monastic Archaeology Field School at Lindores Abbey, Fife

**The University of St Andrews, in collaboration with Brandeis University, launched the Monastic Archaeology Field School (MAFS) – the first of its kind in Scotland focusing on medieval monasticism – in May 2024 at Lindores Abbey.**

The abbey, founded in the 12th century, was part of the Tironensian order and potentially the site of the first production of whisky (Aqua Vitae) in 1494.

In 2024, four trenches targeted specific questions regarding the layout of the abbey and its precincts, and evidence was found for demolished buildings and at least one wooden structure to the east of the church and cloister. Ceramics found included sherds of medieval Scottish Redwares and Scottish White Gritty wares dating from the 12th to 15th centuries and imported German (Rhenish) stoneware dating to the 14th/15th centuries and either French or Low Countries Highly Decorated wares of 13th/14th century date. A single fragment from a ceramic bird whistle is either from France or Southern England and of a post- monastic date.





Left: Assessing the site  
Below: Ground breaking day.



Below: A participant undertaking content drawing.

Bottom: Lindores Abbey Trench 11, ceramic bird whistle (French or English).

### MAFS Vision

MAFS is designed to train students in archaeology skills, incorporating historical research, engagement, and heritage activities, as well as scientific analysis in the lab over the course of four weeks. The field school is led by specialists with expertise in medieval monastic archaeology and history. This season has proved a valuable introduction to the archaeology of the site for the project team and has been ideal for the on-site training of the students. In future years, the project aims to explore water management and use in the abbey and surroundings largely within the area that is scheduled by Historic Environment Scotland.

The project team would like to acknowledge the support and interest of Drew and Helen Mackenzie-Smith and their team at Lindores Abbey Distillery.

*Alison Beach,*  
**University of St Andrews**

*Darlene L. Brooks-Hedstrom,*  
**Brandeis University,**

*Kimm Curran,*  
**University of St Andrews,**

*Derek Hall & Calum Muir*



Images © MAFS

## Holyrood Field School

**The Holyrood Field School, a partnership between AOC, the University of Edinburgh, and Historic Environment Scotland, integrates education and community engagement into archaeological work within Holyrood Park in Edinburgh.**

Well known as a haven for nature and geology and dominated by Arthur's Seat, an extinct volcano and the highest point in Edinburgh, the park is one of the city's main visitor attractions. What is less well known is that the whole landscape of the park, spanning over 250 hectares, is protected as a Scheduled Monument and contains over 100 archaeological sites dating from the Neolithic some 8000 years ago, right up to the present day.

### Progress so far

Now in its fourth year, the project is open to students from the University of Edinburgh and involves hands-on archaeological excavation and survey, providing them with practical experience and contributing to understanding and dating the largely unexplored sites in the park.

The project is committed to inclusivity and ensuring the next generation of archaeologists is diverse and well-trained.

In 2021, the project focused on topographic and geophysical surveys. Between 2022 and 2023, excavations around Dunsapie Hillfort investigated various features, including ramparts and summit occupations.

An enclosed scooped settlement, visible on LiDAR data on the eastern side of the hill, was for the focus of excavation aimed at obtaining radiocarbon dates and assessing the condition of possible roundhouses within the enclosure. This work helps assess and protect the park's archaeological resources for better public interpretation.

This year, investigations will continue at the roundhouse settlement on Dunsapie Hill and expand to new areas on the eastern slopes of Crow Hill. The extensive cultivation terraces in Holyrood Park, among the best preserved in Scotland, will be dated in relation to possible post-medieval buildings on the slope.

### Public Engagement

Public engagement is a core component of the project. Visitors to Holyrood Park can observe the excavation process and interact with archaeologists. Information panels are displayed, and a formal open day on Saturday September 7 included guided tours and artefact displays. For those unable to visit the park, updates are available on the project website and social media, ensuring broad community participation and appreciation of Scotland's rich archaeological heritage.

*Jamie Humble,*  
**AOC Archaeology Group**

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



Images © AOC



Above: Peer-led student tour of the archaeology showing the substantial out rampart of Dunsapie fort on the west side of the hill.

Main image: Students surveying their work at the summit of Dunsapie Hill with Crow Hill (subject to excavations this year) in the background.

Left: Students from University of Edinburgh recording a stone feature of Dunsapie Hillfort.



HERITAGE SCIENCE IS THE TERM USED TO DESCRIBE THE APPLICATION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TO OUR HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT. THIS HELPS US BETTER UNDERSTAND AND MANAGE IT, WHILE ALSO PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT.

# EXPLORING SPECIALIST SKILLS IN HERITAGE SCIENCE

Images © HES

Images © Folyrood Field School

Left: Archaeological Science Fellow Florence Bisson at Broch Gurness.

Below: Archaeological Science Fellow Florence Bisson at Skara Brae .



*“As an academically trained archaeologist with an interest in science, I had little to no idea how to jump from completing my Masters onto a career in something related to what I had just spent years studying. When I found the opening for the Archaeological Science Fellow, I knew it was exactly what I needed to bridge me over the professional realm. My days are now shared between the lab of the Engine Shed and work from home, where I both support the established projects of the Science Team and research my own.*

*So far, I have had a lot of learning opportunities, including visiting standing stones sites, using equipment like portable X-Ray Fluorescence (pXRF) and Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) and participating in a Geophysics survey.*

*I’m looking forward to what’s to come as the options are so vast and I love trying new things to get a sense of the possibilities within the archaeological science field.”*

**Florence**

**At Historic Environment Scotland (HES) we have been exploring different training routes which would allow those with a passion for science, archaeology, and heritage to develop analytical skills for the workplace, while employed as part of the Heritage Science Team.**

## Modern Apprenticeship

There are many benefits to undertaking a modern apprenticeship:

- The development of skills within a chosen industry while earning a wage
- Gaining experience in a workplace environment
- Having the opportunity to work alongside and learn from experienced colleagues
- Working toward a formal qualification

Currently, there is no modern apprenticeship specific to heritage science but because there are many shared skills between different types of scientific work, such as preparation of samples, analysis of results and writing of reports, it was possible to use an existing apprenticeship framework. With support from Forth Valley College, we were able to map the activities that we undertake at the labs in the Engine Shed to the learning outcomes of the Laboratory and Associated Technical Activities Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 7.

This modern apprenticeship includes attending college 1-day per week to gain a Higher National Certificate (HNC) in Applied Sciences, as well as a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) in Industrial Science which is assessed within the workplace.

We were keen to employ someone new to the profession, school leavers or those looking for a career change, and so adapted our recruitment processes to encourage as many applicants as possible. We were lucky to find Jasper, who has been in post since 2022, working as our Laboratory Technician.

## Archaeological Science Fellows

Another area where a training gap has been identified is between university and the workplace. Much like technical fieldwork, additional training is often required to take the knowledge and experience at university and transfer these skills to the workplace.

The HES Craft Fellow Programme has successfully created a mechanism to train individuals while they work alongside professionals on secondment. Using this model, we have created the Archaeological Science Fellow posts in HES; two years hands-on training for someone with a background in archaeological science.

The Fellows learn everything about a technique from sample preparation to analysis and report writing and can work on placements with other organisations to learn additional skills, such as radiocarbon dating and Bayesian analysis at the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre (SUERC).

In February of this year, we were lucky enough to have Florence Bisson and Samuel Matthews join the team.

*Lisa Brown,*  
**Historic Environment Scotland**



*“Before starting at Historic Environment Scotland, I had been working for a commercial archaeological unit as a field archaeologist, on sites mostly across the south of England. However, I saw that the HES fellowship would give me an opportunity to develop the scientific skills I had gained from university, particularly from an archaeological sciences MSc I completed in 2022, in a professional context.*

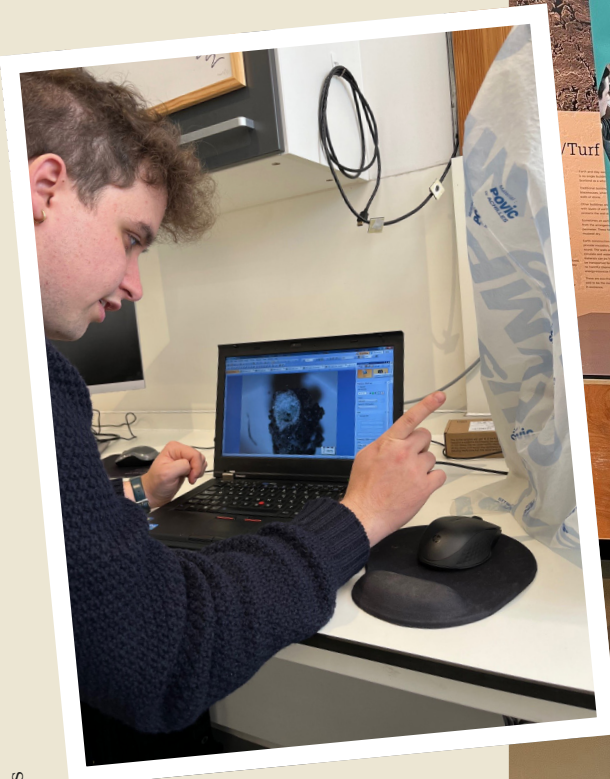
*In this position, I have had the opportunity to participate in the breadth of activities in heritage science undertaken by HES, from geophysics to radiocarbon.*

*We have also had the opportunity to be involved in projects to some depth - I have especially enjoyed a team project employing X-Ray Fluorescence, where I have been able to contribute my experience in data treatment and analysis. I hope that this two-year programme will grant me the requisite experience to forge a future career in the field of archaeological science.”*

**Sam**

**Below:** Archaeological Science Fellow Samuel Matthews presenting.

**Left:** Archaeological Science Fellow Samuel Matthews using a microscope.



*“I started my apprenticeship with Historic Environment Scotland’s Heritage Science team as a Laboratory Assistant a few months after finishing sixth year of secondary school. From a young age I had a natural interest in the sciences, history and maths and studied them with an ambition to work in ecology or veterinary medicine. I fell in love with the concept of ‘One Health’ and wanted a career that aligned with this. I was drawn to the unique role to gain qualifications and work experience in a relevant field.*

*I have completed an HNC in Applied Science and am nearing completion of an SVQ in Industrial Science. In my role I have been trained in the laboratory processes and equipment associated with the diverse work of the team, including multi-stage stone, clay and mortar analysis, X-Ray Diffraction (XRD), portable X-Ray Florescence (XRF), Microwave Moisture Sensing (MMS) and Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR). I have also developed my general laboratory management, sample organisation and admin skills.*

*The part I enjoy the most of my role is the constantly ongoing opportunity to learn new things from my knowledgeable colleagues and have amazing experiences I would otherwise never have had the chance to. Like improving my technique in lab procedures, site-work at beautiful places and partaking in collaborative projects, for example assisting in work to develop lab techniques for earth mortar analysis. I have felt my personal and professional confidence grow throughout my role as my knowledge and skills develop and would love to continue this working in a similar environment or go on to study at university to specialise and expand my career opportunities.”*

**Jasper**



**Left:** Heritage Science Modern Apprentice Jasper Croser undertaking a GPR survey.

**Middle and main image:** Heritage Science Modern Apprentice Jasper Croser at Hill House.



# 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 email 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)

### #ScotlandDigs2025

If you are conducting any summer fieldwork keep your eye out for **#ScotlandDigs2025**

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](#).