



## November Newsletter 2021

Dear Scottish Group members,

Welcome back everyone, it's time for the November newsletter!

Its been a busy quarter, with the SGCIfA AGM and our group survey, and we have more exciting articles to share with you from around Scotland.

Thanks to those that have made the switch over to the new [SGCIfA Facebook Group](#), great to see you all there! Hopefully you've been keeping up to date with the committee profiles on our various social media profiles (Thanks Linda!) which will hopefully be giving a better idea of who we all are, and some insight into the different roles the heritage sector has to offer!

As usual, if you have any comments or queries about the Scottish Group or any of the following articles, feel free to get in touch with us through our email, [secretary.cifa.sg@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.cifa.sg@gmail.com), or on our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). We also have information on the group's [CIfA webpage](#).

Keep safe!

Josh Gaunt BA MCIfA

And the Scottish Group committee

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## SGCIfA AGM and Survey

The SGCIfA AGM took place on Wednesday 13 October, and was held digitally via Zoom. The committee has been working on carrying out the strategic plan as laid out at the 2020 AGM, with a particular focus on engagement with non-MCIfA members. Further efforts to engage with strategic elements of CIfA's work in Scotland will be pursued to better represent the interests of the profession. Ongoing support for CIfA initiatives and groups including the CIfA Enabled and Diversity groups, as well as BAJR Respect campaign will help to support and deliver an inclusive profession.

There has been a drop in SGCIfA membership over the last year – in particular there are gaps in the middle element of the profession (PCIfA and ACIfA) which the committee will investigate to find better forms of engagement.

One new position for an Ordinary Committee Member was available at the AGM, with two candidates put forward for nomination – Lindsay Büster and Elliot Grater. Lindsay was elected to the committee with 28 votes, so congratulations to Lindsay!

The SGCIfA survey results are in the process of being compiled and will be discussed further at the December SGCIfA committee meeting prior to releasing the results. 57 members and non-members submitted responses to the survey, and these responses will help to guide the committee in shaping our efforts to promote Scottish Archaeology and engagement from all sections of the Scottish Archaeological community. Thanks all for the responses!

## Celebrating Archaeology in Scotland

Craig Stanford

The Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee are delighted to launch this year's issue of *Celebrating Archaeology in Scotland*. This is the fourth issue of the magazine, which acts as the annual report of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy, aims to showcase the great work taking place across the nation and promote how people from all corners of the heritage sector are delivering the aims of the Archaeology Strategy. This year's issue is as topical as ever, highlighting the work archaeologists are doing to understand and mitigate against climate change, to bring hidden and obscured histories to light, and use our heritage to improve wellbeing. Articles range across a wide variety of subjects, from project updates and new research to changes in heritage practice, including several articles on the work that CIfA is doing to deliver new routes into the profession, skill development opportunities, and new archaeological vocational qualifications. Download your free copy today from the link here: <https://bit.ly/StratMag4> and please feel free to share far and wide!

## Micro Season Archaeology at Cambusbeg, Callander

Dr Murray Cook

Close your eyes and think... what does a typical dig look like? How many days and how many people? Perhaps a typical research dig might be four weeks over the summer with a range of academics, students and volunteers, some people on their holidays, slow and steady. By contrast a commercial dig is whatever shape it needs to be, in theory there is a budget for whatever you need, but there is always a deadline, always a client and always a profit to be made.

How do you undertake research if you are already juggling a job which will not support research, when you have zero funding but no deadline and can take as long as you need? Now of course there is a clear argument that you should not undertake research without funding - how will you do the post-ex, the archiving etc, also does this not exclude those who cannot afford to volunteer? This is not the place for a debate on research funding but it is clearly hard to get and virtually impossible for those outside universities, though small amounts of funding can generally be found for expenses. So you must be flexible, ask for favours, crowd funding, non-VAT registered suppliers and ultimately your own pocket must be the failsafe, which of course means that you should never bite off more than you can chew, so trenches tend to be small. Needless to say you have to treat this research as your hobby.

Over the last few years I have been working a day or two a fortnight, all in my own time, on a variety of sites with a variety of local volunteers, anywhere from 2 to 25. Most days we work 10-3 to make the work less onerous, if we don't finish we line our trenches before backfilling and aim to come back in a year, the site's not going anywhere. Of course progress is limited though with sites in remote rural locations the trenches can be left open, albeit covered with tarps.

Callander was lucky enough to be the recipient of Landscape Partnership funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to undertake archaeological training and research. The funding was deliberately structured to escalate the training from survey to excavation with ever smaller degrees of supervision. Within six months of the scheme's completion there was a slight underspend of less than £500. How might this money be spent? If a team of contractors were employed to do a dig this might buy a few days of post-excavation. If, however, the money was used to support post-excavation and the



*To dig a site you must first find it!*

excavation was done by volunteers then this might cover all the potential costs. This would also allow a greater degree of training and confidence building for local volunteers. It was proposed that Callander Heritage Society, of which the author is a trustee, would lead such a project.

An unscheduled broch-like enclosure/substantial roundhouse was selected for excavation. The landowner was on board and the site had previously been

sampled by Northlight Heritage/Clyde Archaeology earlier on in the Landscape Partnership scheme. The site sits in a block of conifer forestry and is normally covered in dense, tick ridden bracken. The Iron Age structure had been robbed out to build a seventeenth to nineteenth century farm settlement with the interior being used as a vegetable plot with deeper organic rich soil.



*Patrick and his 17th century bit of pot!*



*The cleaning of the Iron Age bank/wall.*

We are currently in our third month of slow but steady excavation, a day a week, but without deadlines or backfilling (yet) we have the time and space to fully explore the structure. We are digging a series of staggered trenches amounting to 2m by 20m. We have a team of between 5 and 20 people who come when they can. The vegetable plot within the Iron Age structure appears to contain another longhouse. We have finally hit Iron Age material and are recording the collapse of the substantial wall which appears to show slumped coursing, with that familiar stacking of edge set stones. Our aim is to completely remove the wall to look for core material and pre-structure deposits...wish us luck!

## ScARF Update

Dr Helen Spencer and Leanne Demay



### Highland Archaeological Research Framework

We are thrilled to announce the Highland Archaeological Research Framework (HighARF) is now live on the [ScARF website](#). This ground-breaking new online resource provides a crucial overview of the heritage of the region covering seven chronological periods and an exciting selection of case studies to highlight important archaeological sites, projects and artefacts, and key research questions to guide and inform future work.

The online launch event on Wednesday 29 September was well attended with talks from project co-ordinator Dr Susan Kruse (ARCH), Dr Simon Gilmour (Society of Antiquaries of Scotland), Dr Kirsty Owen (HES), Andrew Puls (The Highland Council), Ian Scrivener-Lindley (The Highland Council) and Dr Helen Spencer (ScARF). HighARF is the culmination of a three-year project led by Archaeology for Communities in the Highlands (ARCH) and was funded by Historic Environment Scotland, supported by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.



*Aerial view of Nybster Broch – discussed in a new HighARF Case Study. ©HES*

## Perth and Kinross Archaeological Research Framework Update

Since our last update, we said farewell to PKARF Project Officer Gavin Lindsay after three years of sterling work on the Perth and Kinross regional framework. Going forward, the project will be guided through the final stages of consultation to completion by David Strachan (PKHT), and Leanne Demay and Dr Bess Rhodes who will be working with Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust on a part-time basis until the project is completed.

Now in its final stages, work on the Perth and Kinross Archaeological Research Framework is progressing at pace with drafts of chronological period chapters being prepared for public consultation. We are delighted to announce the Late Upper Palaeolithic/Mesolithic and Neolithic chapters have entered the final phase of production and drafts are now available to download and review from the [PKARF website](#). Further prehistoric chapters will be available in the coming weeks – watch this space!



*A Carnelian flake found by a volunteer during fieldwalking at Freeland Farm, Perth and Kinross.  
Tay Landscape Partnership ©George Logan*

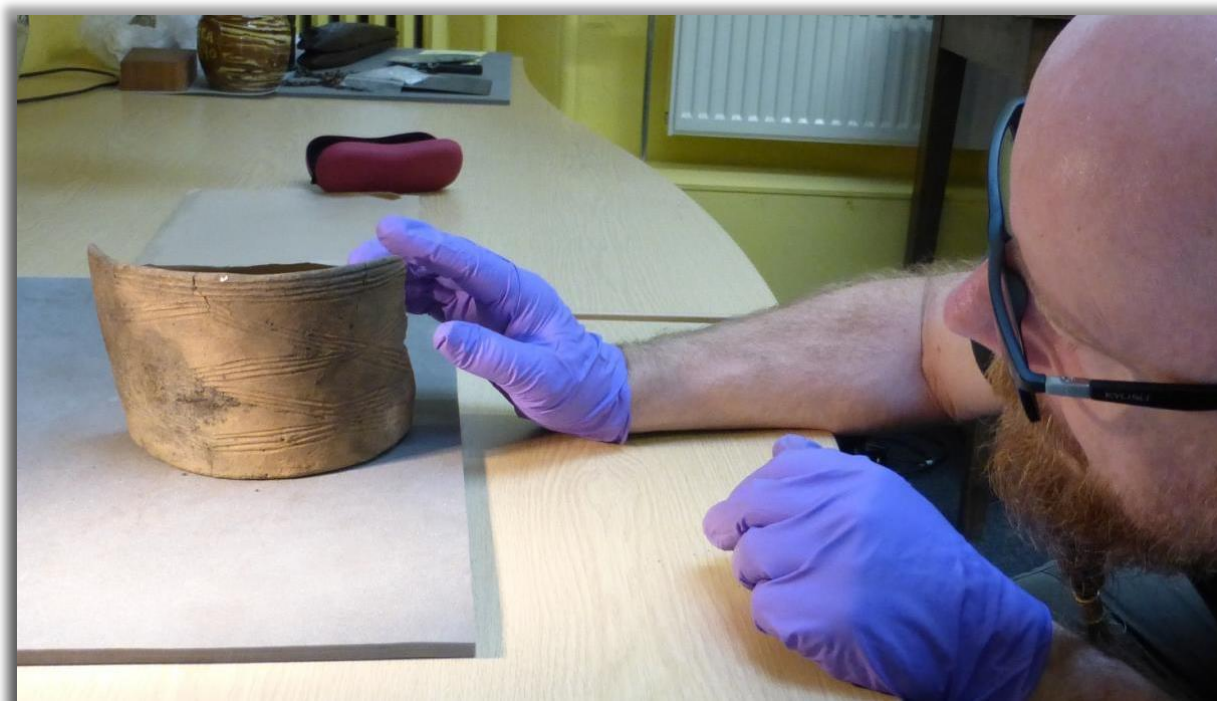
## Tracing the Lines Grooved Ware Catalogue – New data added

The Historic Environment Scotland funded project *Tracing the Lines: Uncovering Grooved Ware Trajectories in Neolithic Scotland* coordinated by Drs Alex Gibson and Mike Copper of the University of Bradford aimed to investigate the nature and timing of the spread of

Grooved Ware beyond Orkney. The Case Study and catalogue is available to access and download on the [ScARF website](#) – check out the recent additions!

### **Exciting new publication from the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland**

The Iron Age settlement at Culduthel is one of the most significant later prehistoric sites identified in mainland Scotland. The publication *Culduthel: An Iron Age Craftworking Centre in North-East Scotland* is out now! Copies can be ordered through the Society's [online shop](#). To celebrate the release of the exciting new publication a lecture by Dr Candy Hatherley hosted by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland took place on Monday 8 November.



*Grooved Ware pot from Kintore, Aberdeenshire, being examined by Mike Copper (Photo: Mike Copper, with kind permission of the University of Aberdeen Museum Collections Centre)*

### **Student Bursaries - A Reminder**

We still have a number of Student/Early Career Researcher Bursaries available! ScARF Student Bursaries are normally available to help with the costs of travel and attendance at conferences or workshops, however, in light of Covid-19 and the cancellation of in-person networking events and workshops, ScARF is keen to support students in other ways. These bursaries are designed to help students studying an aspect of Scottish archaeology who have experienced additional costs incurred as a result of the pandemic for example: purchasing software, membership/joining fees, training, or access to digital resources. Let us know how we can help! More information and criteria can be found on the [Students](#) page of our website.

As always – if you have any comments or would like to contribute to our frameworks, please get in touch [scarf@socantscot.org](mailto:scarf@socantscot.org).

# Dunragit: the prehistoric heart of Galloway

Warren Bailie MCIfA, GUARD Archaeology  
Operations Director



Dunragit is a small unassuming village on the route of the A75 in Dumfries and Galloway. But it was not always so. The surrounding fields contain a wealth of prehistoric archaeology unrivalled in south-west Scotland. Previous investigations have revealed an enormous ceremonial complex of timber circles and avenues and an artificial mound dating to the Neolithic and Bronze Age.

When a bypass around Dunragit village was proposed, it was therefore important to properly investigate and record any archaeology that lay along the route. Transport Scotland therefore brought in [GUARD Archaeology](#) to investigate in advance of construction.

The works are now published as a short booklet and as a more comprehensive monograph, each setting out what the GUARD Archaeologists discovered. The investigations uncovered a range of prehistoric archaeology including the earliest known Mesolithic house in south-west Scotland, as well as Neolithic ceremonial structures, two Bronze Age cemeteries and an Iron Age village.

The remains of a Mesolithic hut and over 17,000 Mesolithic flint microliths and knapping waste were discovered on the edge of a former estuary. Radiocarbon dates revealed that this structure dates to around 6800 BC with a nearby hearth dating as early as 7800 BC.

Part of the new bypass extended across a gravel ridge, the remnants of a raised beach with views across the lower-lying former estuary and Luce Bay further south. Along this



Dunragit Jet necklace after conservation © GUARD

ridge the GUARD Archaeologists discovered a line of early Neolithic postholes dating to c. 3800 BC and extending directly in the direction of the artificial Silbury Hill-like, Droughduil Mound. This suggests that the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age ceremonial complex extend as much as 2.5 km across the landscape and may perhaps have once been a centre of ceremonial activity as significant as other ceremonial clusters such as the Ness of Brodgar in Orkney and Kilmartin Glen in Argyll.

Over 2000 years later, people were burying their dead on this same ridge. Included in these burials were high status objects such as necklaces and bracelets made of jet from



Whitby on the North Yorkshire coast and elaborately decorated pots. Almost forty cremation burials were also uncovered in another Bronze Age cemetery that was clustered around several earth barrows. Analyses of the remains revealed that there were two populations represented within this cemetery with one set of cremations dating to around 2000 BC and a later group dating to around 1500 BC.

Another major discovery along the bypass route was an Iron Age village, where the remains of up to eight roundhouses were revealed. This settlement was occupied from around the later second century BC until the late first century AD. A wide range of artefacts were recovered, including bronze and iron brooches, metalworking debris, a leather working knife and a variety of cereal grains demonstrating that the community here possessed a much wider skillset than most other contemporary settlements in Galloway. The inhabitants were well-connected too; one of the brooches recovered during the excavation was a Romano-British bronze fibula from southern England, one of only two found in Scotland.

Both the Monograph and Booklet, *Dunragit, the Prehistoric Heart of Galloway* by Warren Bailie, are freely available to download from the [Dunragit Blog](#).

## A lang view of the landscape around Edinburgh

Natasha Ferguson MCIfA, GUARD Archaeology Post-Excavation Manager

Changes in the landscape throughout the industrial reformation were significant in Scotland and newly published research reveals a dense microcosm of that transformation on the edges of Edinburgh, from medieval farming through the industrial revolution to the current housing boom as the city expands to the limits of its boundary.

Prior to a housing development at Lang Loan on the southern outskirts of Edinburgh, [GUARD Archaeology Ltd](#) undertook a metal detecting survey, trial trench evaluation and excavations that revealed 118 archaeological features, representing visible landscape transformation from exploratory coal pits of the seventeenth century to larger open-cast quarrying of limestone.

The earliest features uncovered on the site, comprising rig and furrow, relate to medieval farming practices. Residual medieval material was recovered from a ditch running parallel to a limestone quarry scar and assumed to be part of a drainage system related to the later quarry. This material included pottery fragments of a large cooking dish dating to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.

Environmental analysis recovered evidence of carbonised cereal grains, mainly oats but also a small amount of barley and rye. A fragment of hazel charcoal was also recovered and together with an oat grain was subject to radiocarbon dating which provided a consistent date of mid twelfth century to mid thirteenth century. Their presence is suggestive of grain-drying and possibly malting activity in the vicinity. The drying of grains using a kiln was necessary for milling wheat and oats, and for the germination of

barley for brewing. Within this process any burnt grains are cleaned out of the kiln and swept aside into the surrounding area. While any evidence of a kiln has been lost, the linear drain may have accumulated earlier soil deposits before further quarrying activity and significant industrial contamination of the landscape took place.

From the early seventeenth century onwards, small exploratory coal pits peppered the landscape. Fragments of eighteenth-century bottle glass dating to the period c. 1690-1710 may relate to the earliest coal mining activity that is documented in this area. By the early nineteenth century coal shafts had been sunk and large open-cast limestone quarries cut through the fields. The limestone quarrying scars represent the impact of industrial activity on the landscape and likely follow the line of limestone seams. While the main quarry scar was shown on the 1855 Ordnance Survey map, neither the smaller quarry scar nor contemporary quarry pits and shafts encountered by GUARD Archaeologists are marked on any of the Ordnance Survey maps. The results of the archaeological investigations thus reveal in more detail the impact of industrial activity here.

Amongst the assemblage of bottle glass and glazed ceramic fragments dating mainly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a half gold sovereign, minted in London in 1863, was also recovered from the site. At 22 carat gold the value of such a coin was significant and was a considerable loss to the owner. The coin was probably lost through the spread of night soil across the fields for fertilisation at some point during the late nineteenth century.



Gold sovereign © GUARD Archaeology Ltd.

*ARO45: Lang Loan, Edinburgh* by Dave McNicol, Thomas Muir and Natasha Ferguson is freely available to download from the ARO website - [Archaeology Reports Online](#).

## A well-trodden prehistoric path

Maureen Kilpatrick MCIfA, GUARD Archaeology Project Officer

The earliest known use of the upland areas of East Renfrewshire during the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age periods has recently been unearthed by GUARD Archaeology.

A newly published report reveals the results of GUARD Archaeology's excavations at Maidenhill on the southern outskirts of Newton Mearns in East Renfrewshire, conducted between 2017 and 2018. The remains of early Neolithic and later pits, and evidence of Bronze Age burial practices were uncovered. Radiocarbon dates were obtained from a variety of features indicating activities throughout much of the fourth millennium BC and the second half of the third millennium BC.

The ceramic assemblage from Maidenhill, when viewed with associated artefacts and comparison of features in which it was found, displays remarkable similarities with other archaeological sites in Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire. A common culture is embedded in the pottery – in vessel manufacture, in shapes, designs and decorative motifs and the placement of these motifs. There may be slight differences in the execution of designs, indicating individual potter's interpretations of the attributes of that common culture, but overall suggests close association between settlements of the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age in this part of Scotland.

The evidence people left behind provides a picture of activities from the very end of the late Mesolithic, through the early and middle Neolithic, and into the early Bronze Age. As no permanent settlement was discovered, this landscape seems to have been a zone of transition, with people moving through it: they camped for what appears to have been short periods of times, and at certain times of the year. From the almost ubiquitous occurrence of hazel nutshells from pit fills, autumn seemed to be the time of greatest activity – gathering wild food, perhaps even hunting, as bones and flint fragments indicate. Grains of cereals were absent reinforcing the suggestion that travellers lived off the land.

The prehistoric camp sites are marked by fire-pits, refuse pits, the occasional post-hole and stake holes. After use some of the pits received deposits of specific items. These included exotic items of pitchstone, a fragment of a polished stone axe, and Antrim or Yorkshire flint, all from beyond the immediate area, as well as sherds of locally made pottery, which could have had meaning beyond that of the commonplace disposal of rubbish. Pits with similar special deposits have been found in the wider area such as at Strathaven in South Lanarkshire, at Hillhouse in South Ayrshire and Drumclog in South Lanarkshire. The movement of peoples carrying with them exotic pieces of stone indicate that there may, already in the early Neolithic, have been established routes between the Firth of Clyde and Irish Sea area to the Firth of Forth and the North Sea.

The evidence revealed by the excavations at Maidenhill indicates that prehistoric activity was occurring from an early period around the edges of the upland areas, and that those individuals who passed through this landscape brought with them ideas and practices from further afield.

ARO46: A well-trodden path: the prehistoric landscape of Maidenhill, Newton Mearns, East Renfrewshire by Maureen C. Kilpatrick is freely available to download from the ARO website - [Archaeology Reports Online](https://www.archaeologyreports.com/).



Excavation of archaeological features at Maidenhill. © GUARD Archaeology Ltd.

## Membership

Membership of the Scottish Group is free for CIfA members and is £10 per year for non-CIfA members. Please feel free to circulate this newsletter and we would ask you to encourage your friends/colleagues to join the Group.

For more information [see our webpage, here](#).

Keep in touch with us via [the Scottish Group's Facebook page](#), where we share information about events and the work of the Group. We also have a presence on [Twitter](#) and Instagram- both under the handle @CIfA\_Scottish.

Newsletters are published four times a year and contributions from members are welcome.

Our next issue will be released in March 2022.

To make a contribution to forthcoming editions of the newsletter please email [josh.gaunt@headlandarchaeology.com](mailto:josh.gaunt@headlandarchaeology.com) or [secretary.cifa.sg@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.cifa.sg@gmail.com)

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## Upcoming meetings

As a member of the CIfA Scottish Group, you have the right to attend our group committee meetings if you so wish. Committee meetings are held each quarter. Members can attend in person (when possible) or remotely with an internet connection via our videoconferencing facilities.

The next meeting is Tuesday 30 November at 1pm, via Zoom.

If you would like to attend, please send an email to [secretary.cifa.sg@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.cifa.sg@gmail.com).

