



Winter Newsletter 2022

Dear Scottish Group members,

Time again for another winter offering of articles – a roundup of various projects that have taken place over the last six months, and some upcoming news too!

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, 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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Beauly Substation - Archaeological Excavations

Kevin Mooney

WSP and AOC Archaeology working on behalf of SSEN Transmission have excavated the remains of a prehistoric roundhouse at a potential new substation extension location near Beauly. The excavations, part of wider survey work ahead of plans to reinforce the existing 132 kV substation at Beauly, encountered the substantial remains of a prehistoric roundhouse, characterised by a substantial stone and turf foundation. A full excavation of the structure revealed the banked remains of a circular wall around 40 cm in height and 8 m in diameter, along with evidence of an internal roof support and the presence of a ring of structural post holes. Archaeologists on site also recovered fragments from two stone saddle querns, along with lithic and coarse ceramic fragments.

A key commitment during the project allowed for the training and engagement of early career professionals on both Client and contractor sides. This provided staff access to vocational training and provided visibility of the archaeological process.

The development at Beauly is part of a major reinforcement project to upgrade the electricity transmission network in the area to support a recent sustained increase in renewable electricity generation. The project involves replacing some of the aging assets at the existing 132 kV substation, which are reaching their end of their operational life. SSEN Transmission Project Manager Simon Johnstone said: **"The finds near the existing substation at Beauly have provided a fascinating glimpse into the past which would have**



Archaeologists excavating the roundhouse foundations

gone undiscovered had works not taken place in the area. We have worked closely with archaeological teams from WSP, AOC Archaeology Group and Northlight Heritage over the past few years to accurately excavate, record and document features in line with environmental guidance and best **practice.**”



Excavations were part of a site survey for a new extension to the existing Beaully substation

WSP’s Principal Archaeologist Kevin Mooney, who has been managing the archaeological works said: “The area surrounding Beaully has a rich history which spans early prehistory through to the later Medieval periods. The presence of Neolithic stone carvings and Bronze Age burials through to the defensive Iron Age hill fort and Pictish carvings indicate that **this location has always been an important focus for human activity.** SSEN Transmission’s archaeological excavations complete another piece of the puzzle and help us to research and understand how the early inhabitants of Scotland lived.”

To learn more about the ongoing development in Beaully visit:

<https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/beaully-132kv-reinforcement-project/>

OASIS V: Launching soon in Scotland

Peter McKeague, Historic Environment Scotland

The SGCIfA [Summer 2020](#) and [Spring 2022](#) newsletters highlighted the impending release of the updated OASIS form, known as OASIS V. We aim to launch the revised and updated form at the end of November after the current reporting cycle for Discovery and Excavation in Scotland has completed. An email will be sent to existing users when the switchover happens.

The revised form, which replaces the existing OASIS form, represents a significant milestone for reporting fieldwork across Scotland.

- Simplification: users no longer have to report their fieldwork in both OASIS and Discovery and Excavation in Scotland from December 2022.
- Is standards driven: use of controlled terminologies and picklists ensures improved quality of information and enables data sharing and data analysis
- Your information works harder: OASIS V includes the option to say how your project results helps answer key questions identified by the ScARF regional Research Frameworks.
- Better analysis: use of agreed terminologies will enable a better understanding of the type of archaeological work undertaken across Scotland by year and over time.

We need to migrate existing records in OASIS IV to OASIS V and will take the lead from the Archaeology Data Service on the best approach to do this. No records will be lost during this process.

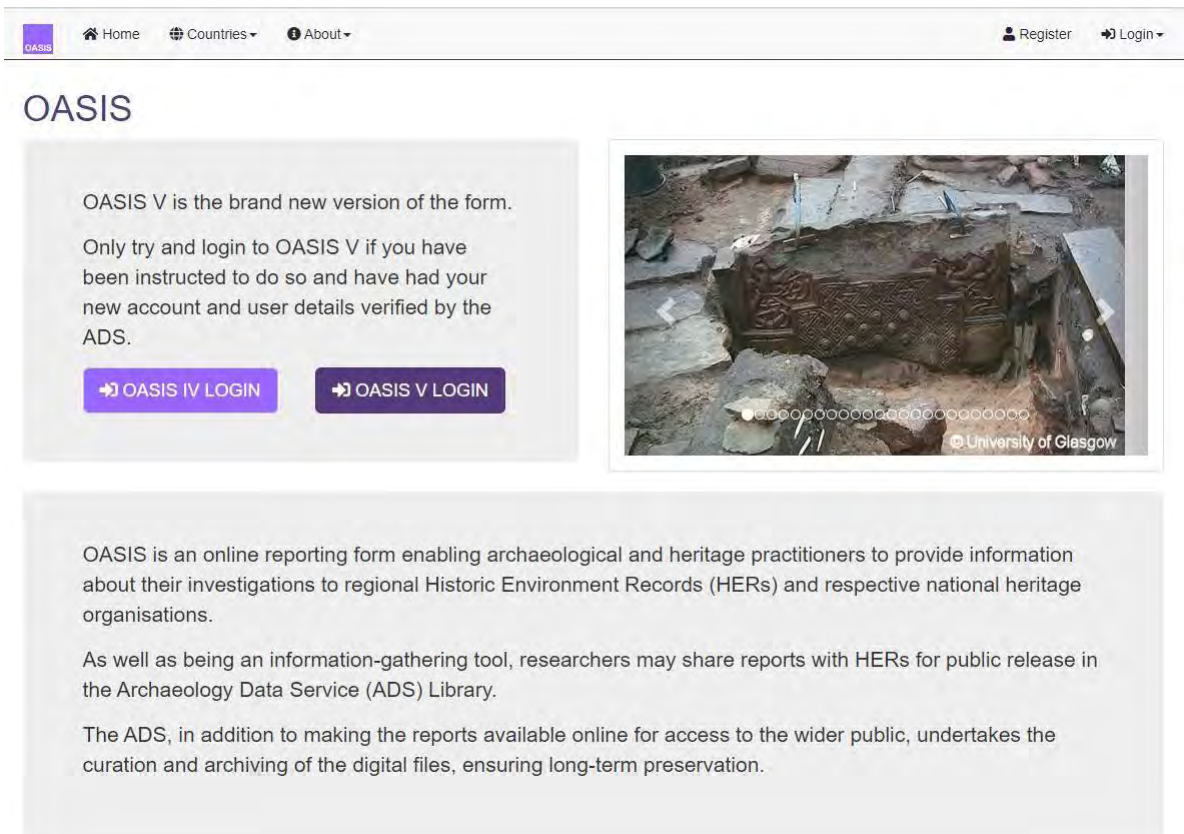


The screenshot displays the OASIS V interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Countries', 'Projects', 'About', 'Search', and 'New project' buttons. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column shows a 'Table of Contents' for the record 'OASIS id: royalcom1-509546', listing sections like 'Summary', 'Activity type', 'Location', 'Reviewers/Admin areas', 'Work undertaken', 'Report details', 'People', 'Keywords', 'Results', 'Archives', 'Additional info', 'Geophysical Survey', and 'Admin'. The right column shows the 'Summary' for 'Field Survey, Geophysical Survey at Lurg Moor', including a 'DES Summary' and 'ADS Library Summary'. The summary text describes a geophysical survey and excavation project at Lurg Moor, mentioning magnetometry and earthworks. A map of the site is visible on the right side of the summary. Navigation buttons for 'Previous page' and 'Next page' are present at the bottom of the summary section.

OASIS V: redesigned landing page showing table of contents and summary entry for Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

HES staff will be available to help users with using the new form and will be available to provide online training for both Historic Environment Record Officers and existing OASIS users.

Archaeology Scotland will also provide training and support for community groups and researchers used to reporting their work through the existing Discovery and Excavation in Scotland form.




OASIS

OASIS V is the brand new version of the form.

Only try and login to OASIS V if you have been instructed to do so and have had your new account and user details verified by the ADS.

[➔ OASIS IV LOGIN](#) [➔ OASIS V LOGIN](#)



OASIS is an online reporting form enabling archaeological and heritage practitioners to provide information about their investigations to regional Historic Environment Records (HERs) and respective national heritage organisations.

As well as being an information-gathering tool, researchers may share reports with HERs for public release in the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) Library.

The ADS, in addition to making the reports available online for access to the wider public, undertakes the curation and archiving of the digital files, ensuring long-term preservation.



Perth and Kinross Archaeological Research Framework: now available!

The Perth and Kinross Archaeological Research Framework ([PKARF](#)) has now launched! It is available to read and explore on the ScARF [website](#).

ScARF's newest framework, created by Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust (PKHT), provides an important and accessible resource to anyone interested in the archaeology of Perth and Kinross. PKARF complements the Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (ScARF), offering a finer resolution picture that will help inform our understanding of past human activity at both regional and national levels. This framework assesses the gaps in our knowledge and helps to inform future research in the Perth and Kinross region.

This new, free to use resource has taken over three years to create, with over 100 experts and local community members taking part in its creation. The website showcases what is known about the archaeology and heritage of the region. There are sections covering all time periods from the Mesolithic period right up to the twentieth century as well as case studies featuring the most important sites and objects discovered. Each time-period is split into sections such as **'Religion and Ritual'** and **'Daily Life'** which delve deeper into the evidence for the lives of people who lived in Perth and Kinross over thousands of years. The framework also lists some key questions for archaeologists and researchers to try and answers to in the future.

Link to the framework: <https://scarf.scot/regional/perth-and-kinross-archaeological-research-framework-2/>



The excavation team at King's Seat © Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust

SIRFA - Orkney Symposium Announced

After a long delay due to Covid-19 restrictions, ScARF have announced that the Orkney symposium for the Scotland's Islands Research Framework for Archaeology (SIRFA) will take place from Friday 24 to Monday 27 March 2023. It will be held both in Orkney and online as a hybrid event. The project began in July 2018, with two symposiums having already taken place in the Western Isles in January 2019, and Shetland in September 2019. Now, with the final Orkney symposium fast approaching, the SIRFA project is entering its final stages.

The event will be open to all stakeholders of archaeological research in the Scottish Isles, including: individuals and organisations whose work involves archaeological research, as well as anyone who engages with the outcomes of research such as museums professionals, commercial archaeologists, academic researchers, archaeology students, community heritage groups, independent researchers and local and national government agencies. The purpose of the event is to identify research gaps and areas of research potential.

Visit the [ScARF website](#) for regular updates and more details about the conference.

Please contact ScARF at scarf@socantscot.org if you have any questions about SIRFA.



Participants at the SIRFA symposium in Shetland © ScARF

Scotland Digs 2022: Climate Action Archaeology

For the fourth consecutive year, fieldwork organisers banded together to celebrate the summer dig season as part of the Scotland Digs campaign which collated and disseminated opportunities and updates for the public. Coordinated by the Dig It!, project, Scotland Digs 2022 consisted of an online hub, social media content, a webinar for fieldwork organisers, new artwork and a Climate Action Archaeology theme.

The campaign launched with a free 'Communicating Climate Change Through Archaeology' webinar led by Erin Fowler, an environmental and feminist geographer with experience as a youth climate activist. Anyone who registered for the campaign received a social media pack which covered everything from improving social media accessibility to integrating climate action messaging.

Fieldwork organisers then used the Scotland Digs 2022 press releases to highlight that members of the public can get involved with archaeology by advertising free (or under £15) events, which also helped enhance public understanding about different types of fieldwork activities. The stories appeared in newspapers with a print circulation of over 207,000, plus websites including the *BBC*, *The Scotsman*, *The Herald* and *The Press & Journal*.

Events such as open days, tours and volunteering opportunities were promoted on the campaign webpages on the Dig It! website, in the Dig It! Digest and on social media. Archaeologists also posted about their work using the hashtag ([#ScotlandDigs2022](https://twitter.com/ScotlandDigs2022)), which enabled the public to follow along, regardless of their ability to visit the sites.

This included fieldwork at the Ness of Brodgar in Orkney by the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) Archaeology Institute and Friends of the Ness of Brodgar, a prehistoric monument on the Isle of Arran by the University of Glasgow, and the search for Mesolithic hunter-gatherer-fishers in the Cairngorms by University College Dublin.

Volunteers were also integral to uncovering an Iron Age complex in the Highlands with the UHI Archaeology Institute and Yarrows Heritage Trust, exploring centuries-old **weaving mill workers'** accommodation near Stirling with Dr Murray Cook, investigating Pictish strongholds in Fife and

Moray with the Northern Picts project, recording an “industrial ghost town” in Dumfries & Galloway with the Can You Dig It project, excavating further evidence of a Norse farmstead on the Isle of Skye with Mull Museum and Argyll Archaeology, and more.

Commercial archaeology units were also highlighted as part of the campaign, such as **GUARD Archaeology Limited’s investigation of a hillfort in the Borders**, **Archaeological Research Services’ excavation of an Iron Age craftworking site in Moray**, and **CFA Archaeology’s fieldwork in an area containing a known prehistoric burial cairn and a medieval settlement in the Borders**.

Thanks to the efforts of fieldwork organisers, thousands of people learned about Scottish archaeology by visiting the campaign webpages and even more found out about it on social media. The hashtag received over 62,000 engagements (interactions people had with the posts) and over 15 million impressions (projected times users saw posts containing the hashtag).

Scotland Digs 2022 concluded with the release of [artwork](#) tied to this year’s climate action theme.



Sotersta Artwork (Image Copyright Suzie Mackenzie 2022)

In July, the public joined Archaeology Shetland to test pit and record the remains of the post-medieval croft house of Sotersta which revealed that the site may have been continuously occupied and modified for millennia. They then worked with artist printmaker Suzie Mackenzie who used recycled materials including foil, plastic and brown paper to construct a printmaking plate which was built up in layers to reflect the way the site and materials had been reused.

The public also helped excavate gardens at the site of a 14th-century Franciscan Friary in Inverkeithing. Finds included oyster shells, some of which may have been used to fill gaps in the walls over the centuries and some of which had holes suggesting that they may have been hung or had decorative uses. Dr Gavin MacGregor led the explorations which were funded by the NLHF and HES through the Inverkeithing Heritage Regeneration scheme delivered by Fife Historic Buildings Trust on behalf of Fife Council. The team were then paired with illustrator and comic maker Aimee Lockwood who focused on the construction of the buildings and how the site has been used over the centuries.



Inverkeithing Artwork (Image Copyright Aimee Lockwood 2022)

The Swandro-Orkney Coastal Archaeology Trust also returned to the Knowe of Swandro with the University of Bradford, where archaeologists and volunteers unearthed textile-working artefacts thanks to funding from individuals and institutions including HES and Orkney Islands Council. Renuka Ramanujam, a multidisciplinary artist and designer who specialises in printmaking and textiles, then captured the encroaching ocean and its effect on the site while highlighting that the erosion has been sped up by human impact.

Fowler said:

"Recycling and reusing materials is vital in our journey towards a sustainable future, particularly with regards to large contributors to waste such as the construction sector, and the Shetland croft house is a great example of how we can learn about sustainable building practices from the past. The Fife excavation is also a good reminder of how using local natural materials—in this case, oyster shells—was common practice throughout human history and that Scotland still has an abundance of rich materials which can be used to help reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and support local economies. Furthermore, it's crucial that we take action to prevent further loss at sites like Swandro in Orkney, for example, by transitioning towards a circular economy with their textile-working artefacts as a source of inspiration."

Dr Jeff Sanders FSAScot, Dig It! Project Manager, said:

"We've seen a summer of discovery that celebrates both the amazing depth of Scotland's past and the array of organisations and individuals bringing that story to life through archaeology in the Year of Stories 2022. They've also inspired a range of talented artists who've captured the long-standing relationship between people and the climate, while empowering us by drawing on the past to encourage meaningful collective and corporate action."

If you'd like to get involved with Scotland Digs 2023, please contact digit@socantscot.org.

Dig It! is coordinated by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and primarily funded by HES



Swandro Artwork (Copyright Renuka Ramanujam 2022)

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 here](#).

Keep in touch with us via the Scottish Group's Facebook page, where information about events and the work of the Group will be publicised.

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

To contribute to forthcoming editions of the newsletter please email secretary.cifa.sg@gmail.com

Upcoming meetings

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

The next committee meeting date is TBC.

If you would like to attend, please send an email to secretary.cifa.sg@gmail.com.

