

Society of Antiquaries
of **Scotland**



CIfA Community Archaeology Group
Tea Break

Managing the Message: Archaeology
in the Media



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This is now what passes for "science" from the BBC. Hackneyed cliches, faux mystery, factually incorrect statements.
1. Archaeologists are, once again, "baffled"

www.bbc.co.uk/news/article...



BBC NEWS

Mystery of Welsh medieval cemetery deepens
Skeletons and artefacts unearthed from the site near Cardiff Airport are baffling archaeologists.

© www.bbc.co.uk

08:20 · 5 May 2026 · Everybody can reply

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Daily Mail

Science

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Lost medieval castle 'linked to Mary, Queen of Scots' is FOUND after 450 years: Archaeologists uncover remnants of Eddlewood Castle in South Lanarkshire

• READ MORE: Scotland's oldest tartan dates back to the 16th Century experts say

By JONATHAN CHADWICK, ASSISTANT SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY EDITOR X
PUBLISHED: 17:11, 5 November 2024 | UPDATED: 09:20, 6 November 2024

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A 'lost' castle linked to Mary Queen of Scots, Scotland's legendary 16th century monarch, may finally have been found, experts reveal.

Artefacts that may confirm the existence of Eddlewood Castle have been uncovered in woodland near Hamilton, South Lanarkshire, Scotland.

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Leo Kearsae despairs at 'woke ideologues' as children's book claims ancient Scottish natives were black: 'Nonsense!'

In Shetland, volunteers led by Archaeology Scotland and Scape Trust excavated a Bronze Age site at Gletness near Nesting.

They found a complex burnt mound and what might be the remains of a well.

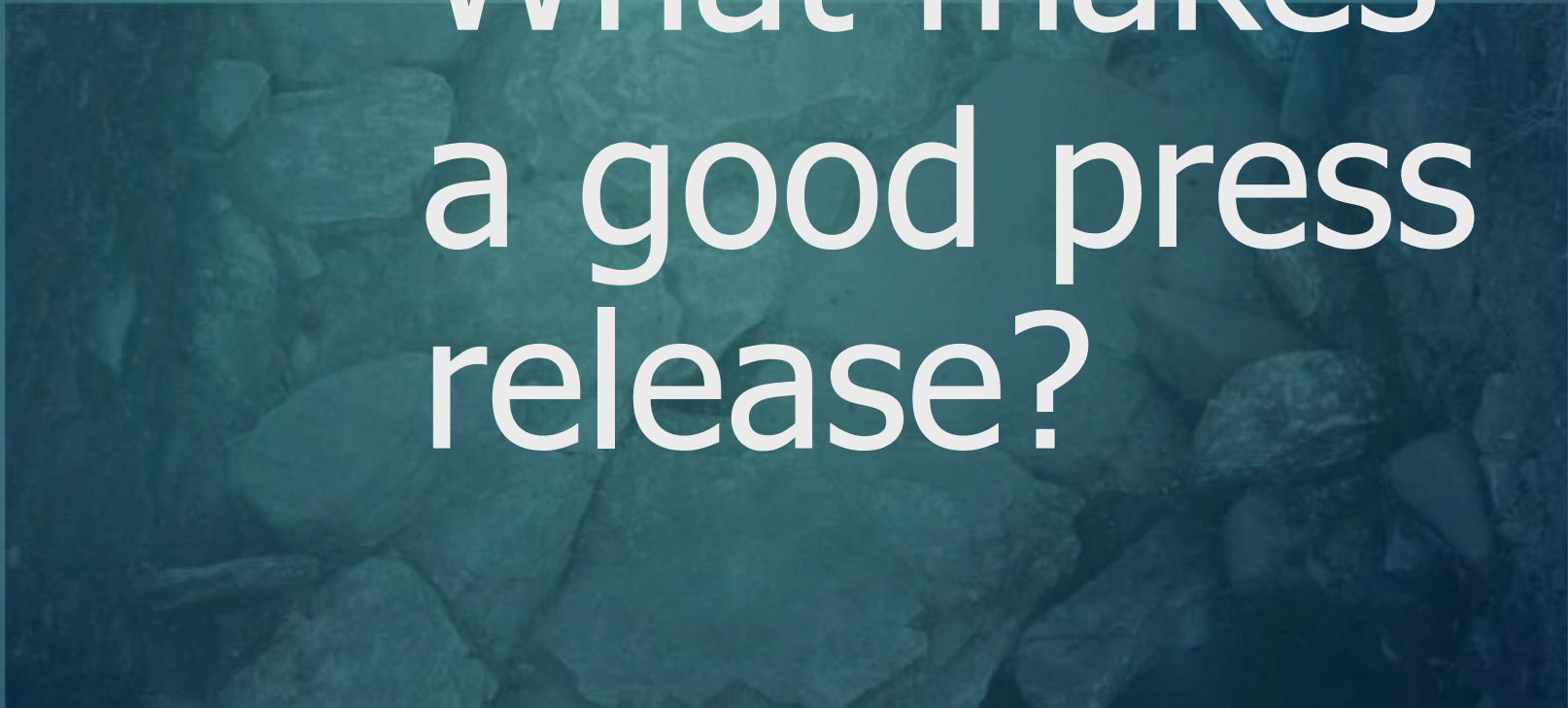
Burnt mounds are thought to be the by-product of a method of heating water by dropping hot stones into a water-filled trough.

The archaeological evidence of these mounds include piles of ash, charcoal and fire-damaged stones.

Complex burnt mounds are stone structures that have small rooms inside them.

Dig It! said the reason why people were heating water in this way remained a mystery, but theories include heating water for cooking or to make a drink.

What makes a good press release?



Smithsonian magazine

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Archaeologists Are Digging Up Scotland's Very First Outdoor Skatepark

Kelvin Wheelies skatepark, which hosted the country's first national skateboarding competition, has been buried under rubble for decades

Ella Feldman - Daily Correspondent
August 28, 2025

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Archaeologists probe Kelvingrove Park to uncover lost skateboard arena

20TH AUGUST UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

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Kelvingrove Park

bbcscotnews 2 w

For five years it hosted the country's finest and keenest skateboarders, witnessing flips and tricks as a new subculture boomed in popularity.

Now Scotland's first ever outdoor skatepark is to be resurrected by a team of archaeologists hoping to preserve the site's legacy.

The University of Glasgow team will work with volunteers and students to undertake excavation and survey work at the former Kelvin Wheelies park in Kelvingrove Park.

Dr Kenny Brophy of the university said the project represented a chance to



All Sections

THE SCOTSMAN

Heritage

Search for Scotland's first 'radio' skatepark lost in the undergrowth of Glasgow's Kelvingrove Park

By Alison Campsie

Published 20th Aug 2025, 14:51 BST

Unmute

REPORTING SCOTLAND



ts to excavate Glasgow with help from skaters

te of Scotland's first skatepark, Kelvin been covered in rubble for decades

Libby Brooks Scotland correspondent

Wed 20 Aug 2025 16:58 BST

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Structure

Headline

Press Release + Images

Embargoed for: 00:01 on Wednesday 25 March 2026

Archaeology Could Unlock Evidence of Highland Origin for the Book of Kells



First line

Scotland's oldest antiquarian society is supporting a new research project, the results of which may help establish that a medieval manuscript once dubbed 'the most precious object of the western world' could have been created in Easter Ross.

Announced today, the £2,779 grant from the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland will enable Master Craftsman Thomas Keyes to conduct an experimental archaeology project later this

It remains the only example of an early medieval vellum-working site in Northern Europe and is considered to be a possible production site for the Book of Kells, which has been held at Trinity College Dublin since the 17th century.

The Book of Kells

The Book of Kells is an illuminated account of the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. According to tradition, monks created the book at St Columba's monastery on Iona, an island off the west coast of Scotland, before it was moved to the abbey of Kells in Ireland. However, the location and exact period of production, as well as the identity of its original creators, remain the subject of debate.

Unlike evidence for production on Iona, which is largely documentary, Portmahomack has physical evidence that demonstrates that this monastic site could produce an early medieval manuscript as complex as the Book of Kells; the only site with this type of compelling evidence currently known in Scotland.



Subheadings
/signposting

The Excavations

During the 8th century AD, a thriving monastery existed at Portmahomack in Easter Ross.

Between 1994 and 2007, archaeologists led by Professor Martin Carver FSAScot and Cecily Shakespeare FSAScot excavated an area around the church of St Colman at the site, the



Quotes

Keyes said:

"The parchmenarie (parchment making workshop) at Portmahomack is both unique and unusual. Usually, lime is used in the production of vellum parchment, but this is not found locally. Seaweed lye may have been used instead which is a less caustic process where bacteria grow in the solution to process hides. Pages from some manuscripts from the period, including the Book of Kells, have numerous pock mark holes which could be evidence of bacteria eating through the hides as they were being processed. Reconstructing the hide soaking tank will shed light on the finer details of this process and the parchment samples produced can be compared directly with original manuscripts."

The results will be published online by Tarbat Discovery Centre and shared in a public lecture in late 2026. The new vellum will be used in other projects to create more examples of the type of manuscripts produced at Portmahomack over 1,200 years ago.

Calum Thomson, Chair of [Tarbat](#) Historic Trust, said:

"The [Tarbat](#) Discovery Centre has been delighted to work with Thomas over the past few years on the Stories on Skins project. The possibility that [Portmahomack](#) was where the Book of Kells was first produced is incredibly exciting for the region and this new research could provide more evidence for this. We look forward to welcoming visitors to our museum to learn more about the early [Pictish](#) monastic site and see the four amazing manuscript pages already created by Thomas."

The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland supports high-quality research relating to Scotland's past. This round awarded £20,760 of Scottish history and archaeology, including a project midden created over 5,500 years ago at Tarradale in the Highlands, and radiocarbon dating of human skeletal material from a possible Viking structure on Nave Island in the Inner Hebrides.

Call/s to action

Anyone who is interested in Scotland's history and archaeology is welcome to apply for Fellowship of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, and the next deadline for applications is 30 September 2026. Society grants are also open to everyone, and the next deadline is 30 April 2026. Visit www.socantscot.org to find out more.

The Society is also currently raising £1.5 million to secure a permanent home and create a national centre for heritage research, collaboration and public engagement. To find out more or support the campaign, visit socantscot.org/heritagehub.

Ends

HIGH-RES AND ADDITIONAL IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH DROPBOX AT:

https://www.dropbox.com/sc/fo/2swhmmpq53o2106rse7st/AF2MWF36xmnKwGoLHK_AqWk?rlkey=ux0hpmf17p54pe5oom4ar38a5&st=hylvvvg8r&dl=0

Notes to Editors

- The 11th-century Annals of Ulster described the 'object of the western world' (or 'primh-mind jarthair domain') in an entry recording its theft in AD 1007. The manuscript had been stolen from the western sacristy of the church at Kells, County Meath, and was recovered two months later.

The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland

- The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland is a membership charity (Charity No. SC010440) which actively supports the study and enjoyment of Scotland's past.
- Founded in 1780 and incorporated by Royal Charter in 1783, the Society's purpose is 'to investigate both antiquities and natural and civil history in general, with the intention that the talents of humanity should be cultivated and that the study of natural and useful sciences should be promoted'.
- For more information, visit www.socantscot.org

About the Society's heritage hub campaign

Notes to editors

Link to images

Image notes to editors

Image Notes to Editors:

1. Scraping hide over beam (Credit - Norman Strachan)

- Caption:** Master Craftsman, Thomas Keyes, has been awarded funding from the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland to conduct an experimental archaeology project which could reveal whether the Book of Kells has Scottish origins
- What:** Master Craftsman, Thomas Keyes, scraping animal hide over a beam in a replica early medieval vellum workshop
- Where:** Tarbat Discovery Centre, Tarbatness Road, Portmahomack, Tain IV20 1YA
- Image Credit:** © Norman Strachan

2. Folio 34r of the Book of Kells (Credit - Public Domain, [WikiCommons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Folio_34r_of_the_Book_of_Kells.jpg))

- Caption:** A new archaeological experiment funded by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland could provide further evidence that the Book of Kells may have been created in Easter Ross
- What:** Folio 34r of the Book of Kells, the Chi Rho page, expanding the first two letters of the word Christ
- Where:** A page from the Book of Kells, which is housed in Trinity College Dublin
- Image Credit:** Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=44550>

3. The northern early medieval workshops at the Portmahomack monastery site, looking north towards the Dornoch Firth (Copyright - FAS Heritage)

- Caption:** Excavations between 1994 and 2007 uncovered evidence of an early medieval washing tank used to prepare animal hides for the production of vellum, a replica of which will now be built and tested by Master Craftsman Thomas Keyes thanks to a £2,779 grant from the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland
- What:** The archaeological remains of the early medieval workshops at Portmahomack, looking north towards the Dornoch Firth
- Where:** Tarbat Discovery Centre, Tarbatness Road, Portmahomack, Tain IV20 1YA
- Image Credit:** © FAS Heritage

For additional details contact:

Sally Pentecost

Communications & Events Officer

Society of Antiquaries of Scotland

Email: sally@socantscot.org

Contact details

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Complex burnt mounds are stone structures that have small rooms inside them.

Dig It! said the reason why people were heating water in this way remained a mystery, but theories include beer-making or saunas.



Tips on writing

- 
- What's the hook? Think superlatives (oldest, biggest, etc.)
 - What does it reveal about our past, present or future?
 - Focus on the human experience
 - First 3-5 words of headline must catch attention
 - Don't be afraid to foreground popular aspects
 - Be selective (*not everything needs to be a press release!*)

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The best thing you can do...

Cultivate Relationships with Journalists

- Keep an up-to-date spreadsheet of journalist contacts
- Send press release ~two days before the embargo lifts
- Send a heads-up email to reliable contacts a few days before that
- Get your experts ready for interviews for the week of release

Our fave journalists

- Jody Harrison – *The Herald*
 - jody.harrison@heraldandtimes.co.uk
- Alasdair Ferguson – *The National*
 - Alasdair.Ferguson@thenational.scot and alasdair.ferguson@newsquest.co.uk
- Alison Campsie – *The Scotsman* and *Press & Journal*
 - alison.campsie@jpimedia.co.uk; alison.campsie@nationalworld.com;
alison.campsie@iconicmediagroup.co.uk
- Libby Brooks – *The Guardian*
 - libby.brooks@theguardian.com
- Steven McKenzie – BBC (Highlands)
 - steven.mckenzie@bbc.co.uk



Roman Antonine Wall Fortlet discovered in back
Bearsden

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Newly published research by GUARD Archaeology has revealed how a hit

Ruins of Roman fort found in back gardens



GUARD ARCHAEOLOGY

This is how experts think the fortlet might have looked

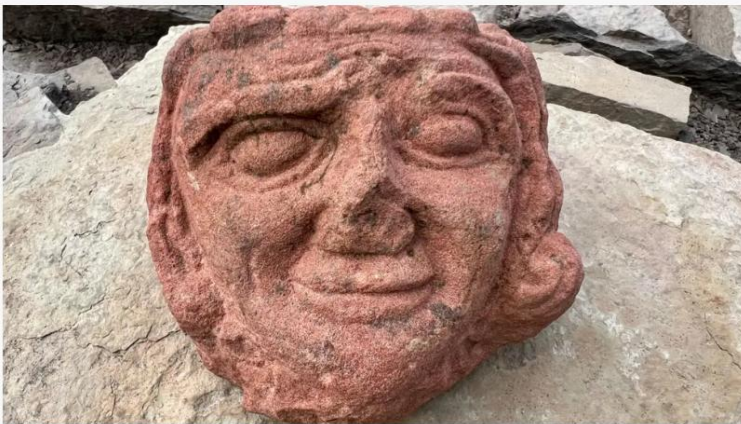
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Carved stone head could be more than 900 years old



The head was discovered by an archaeology student

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News / Glasgow & West

Remains of prehistoric settlement discovered at Glasgow castle

The 'lost community' at Crookston Castle dates back thousands of years



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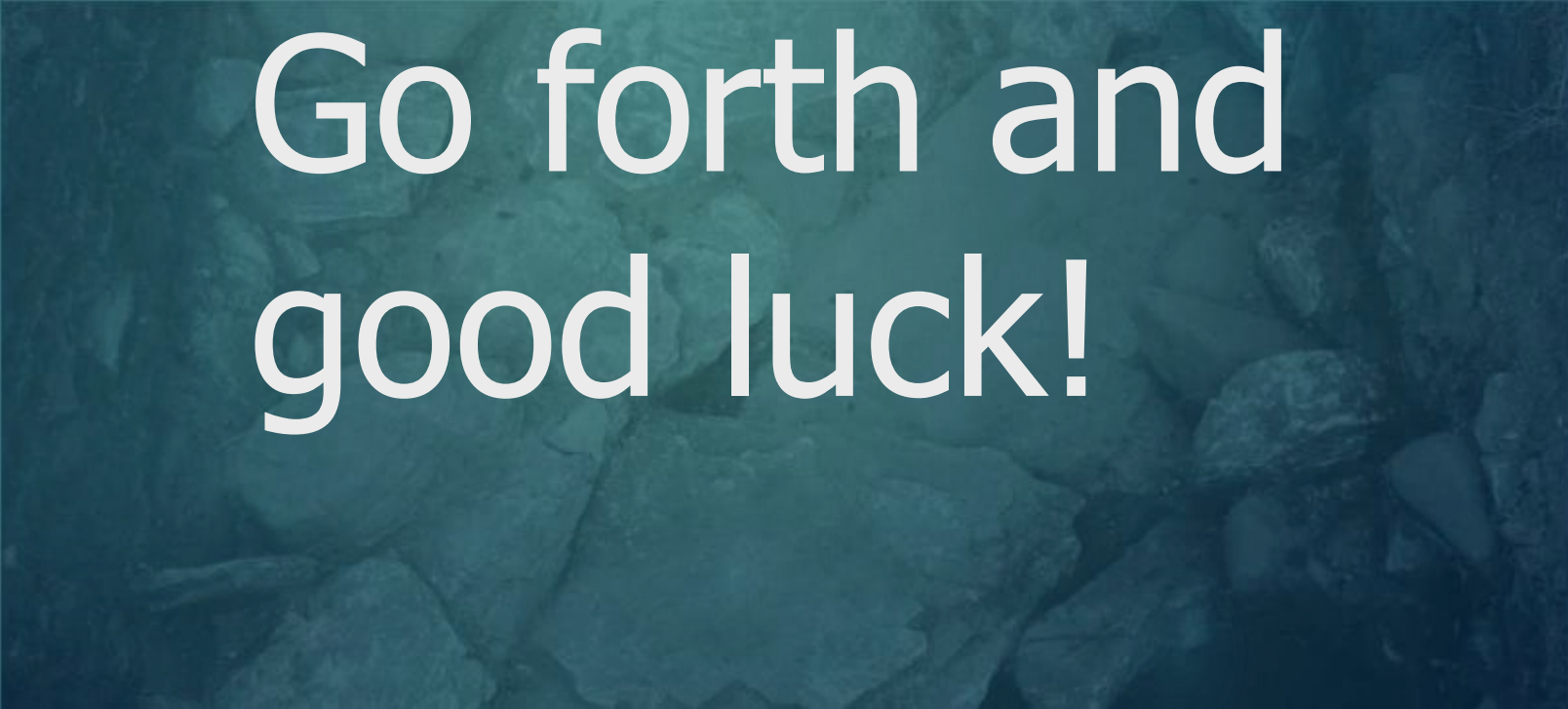
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Go forth and good luck!



Any questions?

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