

# SCOTLAND'S ARCHAEOLOGY STRATEGY

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.

[www.archaeologystrategy.scot](http://www.archaeologystrategy.scot)

## **Foreword by Professor Stephen Driscoll, Chair of the Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee, September 2015**

It is a great pleasure to be introducing Scotland's first Archaeology Strategy, launched by the Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs on the occasion of the European Association of Archaeologists Annual Meeting in Glasgow. Archaeology matters. With this Strategy we are beginning a ten-year process of making archaeology central to Scottish life. We envision this Strategy as an open conversation about archaeology's contribution to society in Scotland and the importance of situating our heritage in a global context.

Two years ago, as a member of the Historic Scotland Advisory Committee, I was invited by Historic Scotland to Chair a newly created Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee. This group was constructed to represent a wide spectrum of interests in Scottish archaeology, not simply professional or institutional views. We saw that our primary task was to create and drive forward a strategy for archaeology which would complement and support the Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland – *Our Place in Time* and *Going Further* – the Museums, Galleries Scotland Strategy. Our aspiration was to articulate an effective and ambitious archaeology agenda within this new strategic landscape.

2015 is an important moment for archaeology given the major reorganisation of Scottish archaeology represented by the creation of Historic Environment Scotland, the new lead public body for the historic environment. In addition, *Dig It!* is a year-long festival of popular archaeology reaching every corner of the country and we are also hosting the largest professional gathering ever held in Scotland, the European Association of Archaeologists Annual Meeting. 2015 marks a new level of ambition within Scottish archaeology and clearly now is the time to begin the national 'conversation about archaeology'

In seeking to make this Strategy relevant we have sought out a wide range of views, we have consulted widely, and are extremely grateful to all who participated in the consultation on this Strategy earlier this year. We have worked hard to articulate a vision and identify shared aims, but in many ways this has been the easy part of the journey. We face significant challenges: as archaeology matures it gains more responsibility for managing cultural resources; as it professionalises it risks losing contact with its grassroots; as it discovers more there is more to analyse, disseminate and store. With this maturity comes reflection, and this strategy enables that conversation as to where we as a discipline wish to go.

I and the Committee are looking forward to working collaboratively to deliver on the vision and aims and objectives outlined in this document – to make archaeology matter.

### **Members of the Committee:**

Dr Christopher Bowles, Dr Simon Gilmour, Mark Hall, Peter Hinton, Dr Rebecca Jones, Dr Susan Kruse, Dr Alan Leslie, Eila Macqueen, Roderick McCullagh, Dr Karen Milek, Matthew Ritchie, Simon Stronach, Robin Turner and Luke Wormald.

## What is archaeology and why does it matter?

Archaeology is *the study of the human past through its material remains*.

Through archaeological research and analysis of our places, artefacts and ecofacts, everyone can explore, better understand, value and care about the prehistory and history of Scotland's people, culture and landscape.

Archaeology is important because it is one of the principal means of studying and understanding Scotland's historic environment. The remains found in Scotland's places and the material culture in our museum collections connect us to the people in the past. This connection shapes our sense of identity and belonging, enhancing our wellbeing.

Archaeology is vital to the telling of Scotland's story: history and prehistory. Research provides information about the people who lived in the past: their everyday activities, industries, rituals and adornments. Archaeologists study texts and place-names, standing buildings and ruins, ancient monuments and landscapes, objects, soils, shipwrecks, and buried remains from deep under the sea to the highest mountains. Ideas generated by archaeology are embedded in our business, art, literature, culture, religion and politics. Archaeological study provides environmental, cultural, social and economic benefits, as well as learning experiences for all ages which inspire creativity.

The remains of past peoples and their activities contribute to the quality of Scotland's places: urban and rural settlements, landscapes and marine environments. To ensure that the past contributes as much as it can to Scotland's communities and economic growth, we must continue to develop our understanding of our historic environment. We gather that knowledge collaboratively, and our rich history of antiquarian research and level of community participation are seen as a model by other countries. Indeed, local history and archaeology groups play a key role in discovering, understanding, caring for, promoting and enjoying our past, as well as bringing a broad range of skills to archaeological practice. Information is produced by the voluntary, commercial, academic, government or museum sectors. This research, recording and analysis, coupled with continued professional development and standards, supports and informs the conservation of the historic environment - locally, nationally and internationally.

Our historic environment is dynamic and constantly changing through natural processes, development, land management and climate change. The resource is finite and exploring innovative approaches will enable us to record useful information. Archaeologists also play a key regulatory role in managing the historic environment, through development planning, land management and curating the nation's collections.

Archaeologists are based in a wide range of public, private, educational and charitable organisations or are independent researchers, across Scotland and further afield. They use their knowledge, skills and passion to communicate the importance of understanding, caring for, protecting and valuing the material remains of our past. Communities can be empowered to pursue their own interests, and archaeology can bring individuals and communities together. Archaeology can help everyone

celebrate the diversity of our heritage, regardless of their race, religion, gender or ability, and tell stories that reach beyond our borders, such as trade and migration.

The quality of the resource available in Scotland – sites, landscapes and collections – is world-class, and research is a committed and dynamic activity attracting strong interest from Britain, Europe and beyond. We welcome international collaboration and should continue to situate our archaeological activities within the wider world, bringing benefits back to Scotland.

## **Background**

The need to have a national strategy for archaeology was identified in a review of Historic Scotland's Archaeology Function in 2012. This needed to fit into changing contexts, particularly the Historic Environment Policy Review which led to the creation of the Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland, *Our Place in Time* (2014). Obligations to our historic environment are also enshrined in Scottish, UK, European and international legislation, charters and policies.

In late 2013, Historic Scotland convened a Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee, with representatives from key areas of expertise across archaeological and related activities, to help create and promote this Strategy as one for the archaeology sector. A consultation on the Strategy ran from March to June 2015, resulting in almost 200 people attending 25 workshops across Scotland. 73 written responses were received and all responses have been assessed and analysed in the creation of this Strategy.

Information gleaned through archaeological research and analysis feeds into a knowledge base which is used to conserve our historic environment. *Our Place in Time*, Scotland's Historic Environment Strategy (2014) sets a broad strategic framework for the historic environment. This Archaeology Strategy focuses on researching and explaining our historic environment through archaeology. Objects recovered through archaeological endeavours usually become part of museum and archive collections, and those collections form key components for further study and analysis. Through this connection, this Strategy also seeks to contribute to the implementation of *Going Further, the National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries* (2012).

## 2025 Vision – To Make Archaeology Matter

*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.*

### Aims

This Archaeology Strategy will produce action plans over the next ten years to contribute to the delivery of archaeological aspects of *Our Place in Time*, the Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland, and Going Further – the National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries.

Following consultation, five high-level Strategic Aims have been identified to help deliver this Strategy and contribute to the two higher-level strategies:

1. Delivering Archaeology
2. Enhancing Understanding
3. Caring and Protecting
4. Encouraging Greater Engagement
5. Innovation and Skills

Through this, the archaeology sector will better support:

- a) outcomes across the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework, particularly the following:
  - protecting and enhancing our built and natural environment
  - taking pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity
  - [being] better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation
  - living in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe.
- b) the wider vision for Scotland's historic environment, that it is: understood and valued, cared for and protected, enjoyed and enhanced. It is at the heart of a flourishing and sustainable Scotland and will be passed on with pride to benefit future generations.  
*Our Place in Time: Scotland's Historic Environment Strategy, 2014.*
- c) the vision for Scotland's Museums and Galleries to be: ambitious, dynamic and sustainable enterprises: connecting people, places and collections; inspiring, delighting and creating public value.  
*Going Further: The National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries, 2012.*
- d) the delivery of better places and growing the economy sustainably, through Scottish Government policies, including the Scottish Planning Policy.
- e) other relevant historic environment-related strategies and activities.

## **Audience**

This Strategy aims to be representative of all those who are or wish to be involved in Scotland's archaeology. Our **archaeological community** includes people of all ages and abilities and is made up of paid and unpaid, university-based, public-sector, private-sector, third-sector, independent, local, national and international researchers.

The process and results of archaeological discovery should be shared widely and provide benefits for the people of Scotland. The Strategy will aim to introduce archaeology to new audiences.

This Strategy is also relevant to those who work in related disciplines, for example, architectural and art historians, human geographers, geologists, museum and archive curators. The Strategy aims to provide other societal, governmental, business and academic bodies with a demonstration of the scale, significance and potential of archaeology.

## **Acknowledgements**

The development of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy would not have been possible without the support of a large number of individuals.

The Strategy has been led by the Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee, with the support of Historic Scotland's Archaeology Strategy Team.

The following are gratefully acknowledged:

Archaeologists, paid and unpaid, across and beyond Scotland

for their participation in the consultation process, which saw almost 200 people attend 25 workshops across Scotland, together with the 73 individuals and organisations who formally responded to the consultation process.

Organisations and individuals who hosted consultation events

including Aberdeenshire Council; Aberdeen University; Addyman Archaeology; ALGAO Scotland; AOC Archaeology; ARCH Highland; Built Environment Forum Scotland; ClfA; Comhairle nan Eilean Siar; Glasgow University; Headland Archaeology; Historic Scotland; Museums and Galleries Scotland; National Museums Scotland; RCAHMS; SCAPE Trust; Shetland Amenity Trust; SUERC; UHI Orkney College; UHI Perth College; and the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, who incorporated the consultation into their Rhind lecture series for 2015.

## **Aim One - Delivering Archaeology**

### **To broaden and deepen the impact and public benefit of archaeology within and beyond Scotland**

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- a. Through communication and innovative practice, to foster a culture of collaboration and ambition locally, nationally and internationally
- b. To upgrade the way that archaeological projects are structured, funded and delivered. To achieve proper resourcing, planning, execution, archiving and dissemination and to raise standards and ethics.

Archaeology is about the study of the human past through its material remains. That study can be practised by anyone: academics, commercial and voluntary sector researchers from Scotland and beyond. Improved communication between all groups at all levels, locally, nationally and internationally, will enrich society by delivering quality research. Such communication and partnership working should be established at the start of projects in order to maximise potential, leave worthwhile legacies and expand cross-sector interests. Encouraging open access (publication), open data (digital information and archive) and curated finds should expand the use and re-use of archaeological results, adding to the cost-effectiveness of archaeology.

All archaeologists, in whatever capacity, are obliged to communicate results proportionately to the significance of the project's findings, and to ensure that any records, archives and materials are suitably deposited. Accessible, comprehensive, appropriate and considered Project Designs will ensure that broader opportunities for research, public engagement and public benefit are identified. Crucially, that benefit includes defining post-excavation responsibilities for all excavations.

We should pursue and promote good practice in archaeology to maximise public benefit. Anyone undertaking archaeological activities should be encouraged to uphold appropriate standards in their conduct. Their work should be compliant with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) Standards and Guidance and any other relevant standards. Compliance with the key principles of the CIfA *Code of Conduct*, which defines the ethical responsibilities of all archaeologists, should be emphasised: to record reliably; to report promptly and to avoid unnecessary damage to or destruction of the historic environment.

Scotland's archaeological resource is world-class but finite. To keep it outward facing and to encourage synergies with parties elsewhere in the world, we should disseminate research findings at international conferences and encourage and host workshops. Promoting an international dimension to archaeology in Scotland recognises her contribution not only to the development of our understanding but to the practice of European and world archaeology. International partnerships enable global perspectives to be rooted in local delivery.

## **Aim Two - Enhancing Understanding**

### **To increase knowledge, understanding and interpretation of the past**

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- a. To promote and support research and ensure that all investigations into our past are clearly underpinned by research objectives
- b. To make knowledge discoverable, accessible, referable and reusable now and for future generations.

Archaeology is about discovery through research that recognises there are multiple stories about the past. Enhanced understanding can be created by anyone and as part of all archaeological activities a research ethos must be promoted. We should continue to develop and support research frameworks and strategies at local, regional and national scales which encompass all aspects of archaeology. This helps us target knowledge gaps with appropriate activities and resources. Existing research frameworks and strategies should be acknowledged and used whenever applicable.

Relevant, sustainable archaeology for all means encouraging cross-sector and multi-disciplinary approaches and using international frameworks and collaboration where appropriate. This will emphasise and promote the international quality of Scotland's archaeology and provide maximum public benefit.

To ensure that research is innovative and useful, we should explore and promote accessibility, quality of knowledge and engagement across society. This should facilitate connections between everyone interested in archaeology in Scotland and support new audiences. By acknowledging the pool of expertise across archaeological practitioners and communities, we will increase our knowledge and understanding of Scotland's past and make interpretation more engaging and relevant.



## **Aim Three – Caring and Protecting**

**To ensure that the material evidence of the human past is valued and cared for by society and managed sustainably for present and future generations**

### **OBJECTIVES**

- a. To enhance existing and develop new methods that encourage the sustainable management and protection of our archaeological resource
- b. To ensure those managing change have access to expert advice and data
- c. To ensure that, where an archaeological asset is subject to change, the information that it contains is transformed into high quality, accessible knowledge and enhanced understanding
- d. To ensure the management of collections in museums and archives supports their accessibility for learning, research, creativity and participation.

Managing the historic environment sustainably is important in order to protect and, when appropriate, realise through archaeology the potential information about the past in these assets.

The historic environment is a finite resource. Managing and protecting sites and landscapes requires knowledge and understanding. Impacts on the historic environment are wide ranging and include development pressures, climate change, agricultural and environmental erosion, dereliction, vegetation and animal colonisation, and unsympathetic use and resultant mitigation actions. Managing these impacts, and protecting assets and the information they contain, often requires active intervention which should be led by expert advice. Historic environment managers, archaeological curators and, often, community-based interests will inform change and protection, sustainably manage those changes, and seek opportunities to collaborate with those managing other pressures. Those undertaking and managing change need access to suitably qualified experts who are able to keep abreast of new discoveries, ideas, innovations and research as they evolve and provide advice based on current best practice. This should be informed by Historic Environment Records, supporting the Scottish Historic Environment Data Strategy.

Museums and archives provide collections of material culture which provide a resource for study as well as enjoyment. Such collections need to be cared for, presented and managed by curatorial experts. Linkages between people, place and objects must be developed and maintained, along with creative strategies to promote and enhance links between national and local museums and archives, and between such collections with learning, research and creativity.

## **Aim Four - Encouraging Greater Engagement**

**To enable and encourage engagement with our past through creative and collaborative working, active involvement, learning for all ages and enhanced archaeological presentation**

### **OBJECTIVES**

- a. To encourage creative and collaborative archaeological activities, developing better ways of engaging people with the process and results
- b. To maximise the role archaeology can play in learning for people of all ages, benefiting from everyone's contribution towards valuing, understanding and promoting our past
- c. To increase and improve the presentation and interpretation of archaeological information.

Archaeology has a significant role to play in enriching and improving people's lives. Engagement with, and participation in, archaeology creates powerful cultural bonds between people and places. People engage in different ways and at different levels and in order for Scotland to achieve the maximum benefit from its archaeology, more creative and collaborative working should be encouraged for all, enriching access and generating valuable, long-term legacies.

Scottish archaeology has long enabled learning and discovery, contributing to knowledge and skills development and encouraging community engagement. Formal and informal learning has helped people of all ages to understand, appreciate and enjoy aspects of our past. By promoting a wide range of learning and active involvement opportunities we can broaden participation, encourage people of all ages and abilities to join Scotland's archaeological community, and ensure that archaeology continues to make a major contribution to the nation's wellbeing. Archaeology has the capacity to make a significant contribution to the *Curriculum for Excellence* so that opportunities to learn and participate in a variety of ways can continue throughout people's lives.

We can also increase the impact of the study of the past by promoting and improving presentation and interpretation, conveying our collective enthusiasm for heritage to a wider audience. Sharing and celebrating the value of archaeology can take many different forms, ranging from scientific publication and innovative visualisation to storytelling and the creative arts. By increasing and enhancing the communication of archaeological work we will continue to contribute to the cultural, environmental, economic and social life of Scotland. By enhancing the protection, investigation and presentation of our archaeological heritage we can hope to encourage greater engagement by current and future generations.

## **Aim Five – Innovation and Skills**

**To ensure that people have the opportunity to acquire and use the archaeological skills that they need or desire, and that those skills provide the underpinning for innovation in the understanding, interrogation, learning and funding of archaeology**

### **OBJECTIVES**

- a. To develop and promote the supply of training and learning resources and opportunities at all levels to equip current and future generations
- b. To demonstrate the importance of archaeological skills to employers and clients in order to promote demand
- c. To improve collaborative links, knowledge transfer and creative synergies between universities, communities, museums, businesses, local authorities and the arts sector
- d. To support the innovation, development and application of cutting-edge scientific techniques, more creative ways of funding, organising and managing archaeological projects, and new approaches to communicating and teaching archaeology.

Archaeology requires the application of a wide range of skills, from the discovery and interpretation of historic environment features and artefacts to engagement, communication and teaching. An adequate skills base and effective succession planning are essential to ensure that archaeology makes an effective contribution to society. Employers and clients paying for archaeological activity must be confident in the quality of the services they procure, including the accredited skills and competence of suppliers. Opportunities should be made available to *everyone* who has an interest in acquiring the skills to practise archaeology; everyone interested in archaeology has a role to play.

Exploring new ways of thinking about the past, gathering and maximising knowledge, and developing and adopting emerging technologies, will open up new avenues of funding, expand the knowledge base, improve interpretation of the past and capture everyone's interest and imagination. Archaeology can be a fertile development ground for innovative scientific methods, new technologies and the creative arts, and we should seek to improve links, synergies and collaborations between Scotland's creative industries, businesses, museums, scientists and communities. Developing new approaches to funding, organising and managing projects, and thinking creatively about how to share archaeological skills and knowledge accessibly and inclusively, will maximise the public benefit of archaeological and heritage resources.

## **Delivering Scotland's Archaeology Strategy**

The delivery of this Archaeology Strategy will be led by the Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee (SSAC). Both the Committee and the consultation process identified activities that form the basis of action plans, over the next ten-years which, reviewed annually, will help deliver the aims and objectives of this Archaeology Strategy. The Committee welcomed the offer of help from the sector in the delivery of the Strategy, with 88% of respondents saying that they would like to be involved in taking the Strategy forward.

We anticipate that there will be a development phase in the initial period, comprising consulting and setting up working groups, as well as liaising with relevant existing groups already operating elsewhere. Action plans will be worked up with timetables. This will then lead into the creation of implementation plans and the implementation phase of the Strategy.

We support actions undertaken to deliver the other strategies with which this Archaeology Strategy engages and intersects; particularly those identified through the various groups involved in delivering *Our Place in Time*, the Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland, *Going Further*, the National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries, and the Scottish Historic Environment Data (SHED) Strategy. We will collaborate with existing groups such as the Archaeology Training Forum to deliver aspects of this Strategy.

Delivery will bring about increased collaboration across the archaeological sector and with colleagues working in other areas.