

Scottish Archaeological Forum - Roots of Nationhood Conference

DAY 1 - Saturday 28 November: Session 1 - Scotland: Core or Periphery?

Session Chair: Professor Julian Thomas, University of Manchester

Slot 1: 11.15

Name: Dr Kenny Brophy, University of Glasgow
Title: Core and periphery: making sense of Scotland's Neolithic

Abstract: In 2001, Gordon Barclay published a historiography of Scottish Neolithic studies. His arguments were powerful - that Neolithic studies in Scotland had been dominated by English narratives (based on southern English evidence) and external caricatures of Scotland as a Highland nation. This had previously led to Ian Kinnes' accusation in the 1980s that Neolithic studies in Scotland were 'derivative' and 'parochial'. These positions are both fair, but in my paper I want to explore the current situation within Neolithic studies. An explosion of evidence through cropmarks and developer-funded archaeology, and developments in theoretical approaches, have created the conditions for alternative and new narratives to be developed with some confidence within Scotland, a situation paralleled in Ireland for much the same reasons.

It seems now that we have a Neolithic of contrasts in Scotland, uniform and regionalised, innovative and derivative, if current arguments are to be believed. For instance, while we can see elements of the 'British' Neolithic that may have had their origins in Scotland (cursus monuments, henges, Grooved Ware) and been disseminated southwards, there are also arguments developing that farming and ceramics were not an indigenous development, and we should look to France for the origins of Scotland's Neolithic. These competing positions will be considered in this paper, that places Scotland both at the edge, and centre, of developments in northern Europe in the 4th and 3rd millennia BC.

Slot 2: 11.45

Name: Dr Anne MacSween, Historic Scotland
Title: Changing regional and local identities in the later Neolithic of Scotland as reflected in the ceramic record

Abstract: Throughout the first half of the third millennium BC a distinctive style of pottery known as Grooved Ware was used by Neolithic communities over much of Britain and Ireland. Its widespread use has been interpreted as indicating links which are much wider than a shared taste in ceramic styles, and the association of Grooved Ware with stone and timber circles and recurring elements of material culture has been used to add weight to this.

This paper will consider how the interpretation of Grooved Ware pottery has changed as more assemblages are recovered, and how the southern English focus of much of the early research influenced the narrative which emerged. The increase in available data from Scotland in recent years has made it possible to argue for a northern Scottish origin for Grooved Ware. If this was indeed the origin, how and why did Grooved Ware's use spread so far?

Comparison of the pattern of use of Grooved Ware with that of ceramic styles within the earlier part of the Neolithic will be used to suggest that the detailed study of the ceramics of the Neolithic of Britain and Ireland has much to offer the wider debate on local and regional identities.

Slot 3: 12.15

Name: Louisa Hammersley, University of Glasgow
Title: Culture Contact and the Maintenance of Cultural Identity in Northern Britain

Abstract: There has been a long history of interest in Roman and indigenous interaction in North Britain; however, these enquiries have generally placed more emphasis upon the Roman experience of events at the expense of the local populations' perspective. More recent approaches have forced the re-appraisal of material culture and consideration of the different ways in which Roman and provincial societies may have experienced the same events and how these communities adopted, adapted or used foreign material culture. Consequently, it is crucial to afford the evidence of Northern indigenous settlements and material culture more attention in order to enable a more realistic and holistic story of this period to be written. This requires the reversal of two fundamental principles which have previously dominated academic debate for this period. Firstly, we must cease to consider Northern Britain as peripheral to both Rome and the south of Britain and instead look upon the region

as a core of cultural belief systems. Secondly, rather than thinking of indigenous populations as being passive individuals within the oppressive state of assimilation, we should instead consider individual and collective agency as well as aspects of resistance on both the material culture and cultural landscapes. From this perspective, foreign objects were being assimilated into existing cultural traditions as opposed to provincial peoples being assimilated into Roman cultural mechanisms.

A detailed analysis of Roman pottery recovered from non-Roman contexts, using case studies and modern theoretical models, is an effective method from which to consider the complex processes of interaction between the Romans and local communities in the North. This will facilitate a deeper appreciation of preferential adoption strategies and clarify any significant change in functionality which may have implications on our understanding of issues such as the maintenance and reinforcement of cultural identity, agency, acculturation, resistance, symbolism and ideology.

Slot 4: 12.15

Name: Adrian Maldonado, University of Glasgow

Title: The Early Medieval Antonine Wall

Abstract: The archaeology of the Forth-Clyde isthmus is dominated by the World Heritage Monument of the Antonine Wall, the Roman frontier built in the 2nd century AD. While most research in the area has tended to focus on the readily visible military structures, the impact on the contemporary indigenous population is increasingly a subject of study. Considerably less attention has been given to the evidence for post-Roman use of the Wall and how it was remembered (and forgotten) in the subsequent centuries. How can we reconcile the transitory nature of the military occupation of the forts with the 39-mile barrier that remained engraved on the landscape? This paper will briefly summarise the historical notices of the Antonine Wall, then consider the archaeological and toponymic evidence for early medieval occupation along the Forth-Clyde isthmus. The vallum ditch did not seem to present any real boundary in the sense of a physical barrier, but rather became a focus for an evolving mythology of movement and crossing over. This research is intended primarily as an exploration of how (and why) early medieval peoples created their past.

DAY 1 - Saturday 28 November: Session 2 - Origins of Scotland and Alba

Session Chair: Professor Dauvit Broun, University of Glasgow

Slot 1: 14.15

Name: Professor Dauvit Broun, University of Glasgow
Title: The Origins of Scotland

Abstract: Scotland is 'Scotland' and 'Alba' in the two main vernacular languages spoken by its inhabitants. Both words originally denoted a quite different entity: Scotland before about 900 was the English word for Ireland, and Alba was the Gaelic word for Britain. The traditional explanation for how Alba came to be used for only the northern part of Britain, north of the Forth, is that a new kingdom was created by a 'Scoto-Pictish union' in 843 when the Picts were overwhelmed by Scots/Gaels, and that this needed a new name, resulting in the adoption of Alba. This view of early Scottish history has recently collapsed, however. In this paper it is argued that Alba was simply a Gaelic translation-loanword from the Pictish word for 'Pictland', and that it represented an ancient form of identification that focused on geography rather than kingdoms or peoples per se: in this case, the island of Britain, and in particular the northern part defined by the near-division of the island by the Firth of Forth and the wetlands north of the River Forth. This geographical definition of 'Scotland' continued into the thirteenth century, despite the fact that it had ceased from the tenth century to correspond to any major cultural or political boundary. The paper finishes with a discussion of the radical change of meaning which saw 'Scotland' adopted for the whole of the kingdom's territory in the thirteenth century, which corresponds with the modern definition of Scotland and Alba.

Slot 2: 14.45

Name: Dr Stuart Nisbet, University of Glasgow
Title: Old Country Myths of the Old Glasgow Gentry?

Abstract: From the seventeenth century, the city of Glasgow grew from a local market centre to become a Merchant City. Popular writing celebrates the connections of its merchants with North America and Virginia tobacco, in the city's eighteenth century heyday. This defines a key part of Glasgow's regional and global identity, as Second City of Scotland, and also of the much wider British Empire.

The status of the city's colonial merchants is related closely to their built heritage. This is based on the 'sense of place', celebrated in classic texts such as 'The Old Country Houses of the Old Glasgow

Gentry'. The remains of their estates and their landed titles have assumed an iconic status in the consciousness of the city and beyond. Titles such as 'McDowall of Castle Semple' still roll off the tongue, as symbols of wealth and success.

The wealth of the merchants was based almost wholly on goods produced abroad. To put their lives in context, a neglected view is to explore their careers from the colonial end. This is particularly apt for the merchants whose entire lives were spent in the colonies, only to retire at the very end of their careers to a Scottish country seat. Does their life and conduct abroad support the celebrated accounts permeated at home?

This paper explores the hitherto hidden colonial background of one of the city's earliest and most celebrated Caribbean merchants. This is achieved through the archaeology and history of his sugar estates, and his personal ownership of hundreds of enslaved Africans. The colonial experience is compared with the story still permeated in the popular Glasgow histories. Challenging questions are raised about the myth of West of Scotland colonial merchant identity.

Slot 3: 15.15

Name: Dr Oliver O'Grady, Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust
Title: 'Have you found the real one yet?!': Archaeological enquiry at Royal Scone, investigating the remains of a national edifice

Abstract: Royal Scone has a powerful place in the collective sense of Scottish national identity and historical narratives. Arguably for the average observer this is largely based on Scone's close historical association with the Stone of Destiny and perhaps a general awareness that it was the site where 'Robert the Bruce' was crowned; possibly on a hill - Omnis Terra 'everyman's land' - created from soil discarded from the shoes of those giving homage to the king, if one following Hume's famous account. There are few places so alive with pseudo historical action, impressive documented historical longevity and nationalist appeal. However, as a place the realities of Scone today contrast markedly with the vivid narrative of the inauguration stone and the apparently unique ideological and political importance of the site for over six centuries during the medieval period. It can be said of Scone that it is one of Scotland's most significant historical sites and yet, until very recently, almost nothing was known of the archaeology of this place. With this paper I will be drawing on four years experience of archaeological investigations in the grounds of Scone Palace to consider how as professionals we should conduct enquiry of such emblematic places in the national psyche.

Comparisons between Tara and Scone are often made - yet the discrepancy between the archaeological understanding of each site is marked. Why has Scone been neglected in this way? Politically minded commentators might lay blame with perceived dominant Unionist agendas at work for much of the 20th century or we could rather point an accusative finger at post-medieval land use at what is, after all, a defunct institutional and ceremonial site. Perhaps more uncomfortably the responsibility should be placed at the foot of Scottish medieval archaeologists? The answer to this question no doubt depends on the listener. I hope to illustrate that a considered and scientific investigation of the archaeology of Scone abbey and the adjacent Moothill assembly mound reveals a lost history no less intriguing than nationalist narratives woven around the place.

Slot 4: 15.45

Name: Dr Jonathan Cox, University of Edinburgh
Title: Friends and Enemies, Highlanders and Lowlanders: Conflict and Co-operation in Scottish Politics, c. 1371 - c. 1452

Abstract: In this paper I will explore how geography, landscape and language figured in defining Highland and Lowland Scots in the later middle ages. This was a distinction the three main late medieval Chroniclers, John Fordun, Andrew Wyntoun and Walter Bowerall addressed. Fordun described Highlanders as 'savage and untamed... given to rapine', and Wyntoun and Bower saw Highlanders as forces of ill, as ready to slay others as they were to throw away their own lives in violent pursuits. Wyntoun, roundly blamed the burning of Elgin cathedral on '...wyldwykkyd Heland men'. All three of these chroniclers were very keen to define Highland Scots as distinctly different from more peaceful, law-abiding Lowland Scots.

If these three churchmen were eager to separate Highlanders from Lowlanders, they stood apart from many of the major Northeastern Scottish magnates. They were Lowlanders in origin, who were apparently as willing to cooperate as to compete with their Highland neighbours. Indeed, some of the most famous incidents of Highland rapacity - the previously mentioned burning of Elgin Cathedral in 1390, the battle of Glasclune/Glen Brerechan in 1392, and the harrying of St Andrews Episcopal lands in 1445 - took place with Lowland influence, and Lowland leadership. Indeed, in 1452, when the three premier earls of Scotland formed a bond to take a stand against James II's authority, this bond not only included the Lowland earls of Douglas and Crawford, but also the Highlander, John MacDonald lord of the Isles and earl of Ross.

This paper will argue that the model of Highland-Lowland conflict was partially a rhetorical device created by Scottish chroniclers to

help contrast their ideas of good and bad lordship. This paper will also advance the point that the ability to cooperate with Highland lords was a skill necessary for Lowland lords to dominate northern Scotland.

DAY 2 - Sunday 29 November: Session 3 - Forging Scotland's Identities at Home and Abroad

Session Chair: Dr Siân Jones, University of Manchester

Slot 1: 10.00

Name: Dr Diarmuid Scully, University of Cork
Title: Caledonia and Rome: the forging of Scotland's identity in the Ancient World

Abstract: This paper explores Graeco-Roman representations of Scotland and its peoples in the context of Roman imperialism and Classical stereotyping of distant places and peoples, and in particular the other peoples of the Atlantic archipelago. The Ancients located Scotland - Caledonia - at the ultimate edges of the remotest archipelago in north-western Ocean. North of the Orkneys, they knew only of Ultima Thule: a mysterious island on the edges of a vast uninhabitable Arctic zone. To Scotland's west lay Ireland, the reputed home of murderous, incestuous cannibals. To the south lay the Roman province of Britannia (depicted as almost another island, separate from Scotland): long after its conquest, its inhabitants were depicted as savages, noble or depraved.

The paper compares Graeco-Roman treatments of Caledonia and its inhabitants with representations of the Irish and Britons, and also the Germans, viewed by Tacitus as the Caledonians' ancestors. It considers the impact of Classical theories of environmental determinism on these representations: to what extent were ethnic stereotypes of the Calendonians shaped by ideas concerning geographical location and climate? The paper further considers links between ideas concerning Scotland's location, the ethnic stereotyping of its peoples and Roman imperialism. It will argue that Roman interest in Scotland, which extended to the annexation of the Orkneys, was driven by a thirst for glory: the conquest of the uttermost ends of the earth, on the boundaries between this world and the world of the gods and heroes. The peoples of Scotland themselves (usually given the collective name of *Picti* from the late third century A.D.) appear as worthy adversaries of Rome, and their heroic barbarism becomes an implicit criticism of imperial decadence.

Slot 2: 10.30

Name: Dr Ewan Campbell, University of Glasgow
Title: The Scots/Irish Debate Revisited

Abstract: It is over ten years since the author first put forward the controversial thesis that the early medieval Scots of *Dál Riata* were not immigrants from Ireland, but the native Gaelic-speaking people of western Scotland. This conference seems an appropriate venue to take stock of the response to this proposal, looking at both scholarly and popular reactions, and what they can tell us about the power of national identity myths.

Slot 3: 11.00

Name: Thomas McErlean, University of Ulster
Title: Dál Riata and Scottish Identity, the view from Antrim

Abstract: Since at least the 10th century an Irish origin for the Scots has been a prevailing narrative of Scottish identity. The main basis of the narrative is the claim in the Irish sources of the takeover, sometime in the late 5th or early 6th century, of Argyll, by Fergus Mor mac Erc and his brothers from the Irish kingdom of Dál Riata in North Antrim and through them the creation of an Irish genealogy for the subsequent Kings of Scotland. A much stronger underpinning of the Irish origin legend rests on the presence of the shared Q-Celtic language and Gaelic culture of both countries. In recent years this central tenet of Medieval Scottish identity and its status as either a deliberately created myth or one based on genuine historical tradition or a mixture of both has been subject to a stimulating and rigorous critical re-assessment with one recent commentator suggesting that there is no support for the movement of people between Ireland and Argyll in the archaeological evidence and if it took place at all it was of a very minimal nature. This paper hopes to add to this debate from an Irish perspective by evaluation of the Early Medieval archaeology of North East Ireland with special focus on the Irish part of Dál Riata located in North East Antrim and by a review the cultural interaction between North-East Ireland and Western Scotland in the Early Medieval period.

Slot 4: 11.30

Name: Dr Siân Jones, University of Manchester
Title: From the Glasgow Empire Exhibition 'An Clachan' to the Nova Scotia Highland Village: negotiating authenticity and identity in the Scottish diaspora.

Abstract: An Clachan, the Highland Village, will raise many memories in the minds of returned exiles and will give to others some impression of the real old Scotland, the land of the Gael, the Scotland that is fast passing before the relentless rush of modernity." This extract from the 1938 Glasgow Empire Exhibition Catalogue highlights the role of the highland village as an archetype of Scottish National culture, as well as the production of cultural memory in the Scottish diaspora. The Highland Landscape and its Gaelic culture had become important elements in Scottish national identity by the end of the nineteenth century, and by the 1930s there was growing anxiety about the loss of this national heritage in the face of modernisation. The inter-War period saw a number of developments concerned with the preservation and representation of this heritage with a particular focus on Gaelic Highland culture and the 'black house'. The Empire Exhibition's 'An Clachan' provided a representation of an unchanging authentic cultural heartland, which informed a sense of national rootedness in an exhibition dedicated to progress and modernity. At least some of the exiles were impressed as the Exhibition Catalogue suggests they should be. A delegation from Nova Scotia, including the then Premier, Angus, L. Macdonald, were inspired that a similar Clachan would be an ideal way to preserve and promote Scottish heritage in Nova Scotia. In this paper I will explore the history of the Nova Scotia Highland Village Museum and its relationship with the Empire Exhibition 'An Clachan'. In the process I will discuss the ways in which both sites have provided the locus for the negotiation of authenticity and identity engaging with ideas of tradition, progress and modernity.

DAY 2 - Sunday 29 November: Session 4 - Local and National Identities:
Symbols, People, Places

Session Chair: Dr Simon James, University of Leicester

Slot 1: 13.00

Name: Robert Lenfert, University of Nottingham
Title: Building Islands for Building Houses: five millennia of Scottish loch dwellings

Abstract: Scottish lochs have served as the focus for the construction and occupation of crannogs, or artificial islands, from the Neolithic to the 18th century, comprising a major, yet perplexing component of the settlement record. The labourious ingenuity associated with their initial appearance and subsequent flourish during the Iron Age springs to mind early interpretations of the massive stone towers of the north and west as an 'imported technology' from a 'broch people' who brought this skill with them from neighbouring areas. However, as time and research has borne out, crannogs are an indigenous conception not found outside the British Isles.

This paper wishes to illustrate evidence of 'Scotland' as an entity before a political conception by providing a striking example of crannog distribution, especially in the south-west and Argyll, while crannog use is conspicuously absent opposite the Solway Firth in Cumbria. Additionally, a sense of 'place and home' springs to mind when examining the motives behind creating not only a monumental dwelling, but literally the ground upon which it rests. This affinity for living closely to both land and water speaks volumes about the occupant's view of *their* surroundings, whether during the Neolithic or post-Medieval period.

In theory, all the trappings required for 'iconic status' appear present. Despite this, it is somewhat surprising that crannogs remain largely disassociated from a Scottish identity in lieu of less-certain modern adaptations regarding the 'invention of tradition'. This paper wishes to redress this notion, discussing how and why this persists, while promoting these unique sites as celebrated examples of Scotland's inventive character and adaptability, subsequently raising awareness for the protection and interpretation of this persistent symbol of Scottish identity.

Slot 2: 13.30

Name: Dr Steven Timoney, Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust

Title: Pictish, Celtic, Scottish: The Longing for Belonging

Abstract: This paper is based on research into public perceptions of archaeological sites. Qualitative methods, primarily in-depth interviews, were used as a method of identifying and analysing the processes through which people engage with sites. These encounters reflected both recurring themes and specific and sometimes unique demands on sites by participants. One of these overarching themes was a sense of identity, at the same time collective and yet unique, influenced by the present and perceptions of identity, as well as ideas and (pre)conceptions about the past. These perceptions are bound up within notions of romance, landscape, belonging, and authenticity.

These constructed identities exist amongst the Scottish diaspora, but are also created by those who live within Scotland. This paper seeks to illustrate the complex ways members of the public identify with archaeological sites, and how knowledge and interactions of these sites and the past are used to construct and promote identities. It will also look at what terms such as Pictish, Celtic and Scottish mean to members of the public on an individual as well as collective basis, when considering archaeology and identity, past and present.

Slot 3: 14.00

Name: Dr Sarah Thomas, University of Glasgow

Title: Local and foreign clergy: the provision of clergy in the late mediaeval diocese of Sodor

Abstract: In the late middle ages, foreign or non-native clergy were often perceived to be a great problem in both England and Scotland. However, in the diocese of Sodor in western Scotland, foreign clergy were a rare species since the majority of clerics seemed to have come either from the Hebrides or from the neighbouring diocese of Argyll. This paper examines the social and geographical origins of the clergy in the diocese of Sodor and in particular their links to the MacDonald Lords of the Isles. These links were significant because the MacDonalds were patrons of many of the parish churches within their lordship and could therefore offer career advancement to clerics. The paper will discuss to what extent the Lords controlled access to ecclesiastical benefices in the Lordship. It is in this context that the relative scarcity of foreign or non-native clergy will be discussed; was it simply the restrictions of the lay patron which meant that non-native clergy failed to obtain benefices or did other factors come into play? Other issues which may have deterred such clergy include language and income. Why is it that despite the links between the Lords of the Isles and Ireland there is only one Irish cleric found in the diocese of Sodor in the fifteenth century? A related matter is the relative lack of Scottish Crown interference in the affairs of the

diocese; it is only after the forfeiture of the Lordship that the Crown really manages to get control of the provision of clergy to Sodor benefices. Therefore, this is interesting case of localism in a period of growing royal power and centralisation.

Slot 4: 14.30

Name: Elizabeth Curtis, University of Aberdeen
Title: Stone Circles, Skulls and Sepulchre: Identity and Prehistory in mid - late 19th century Scotland.

Abstract: In this paper I will explore the ways in which the development of a national prehistory resonated with ideas of national identity in 19th century Scotland with particular reference to sites of ancient sepulchre, links to the land and stewardship

In addressing the problem of the attribution of Scandinavian origins to many of Scotland's ancient monuments, Daniel Wilson advocated the adoption of the Continental inductive scientific approach to archaeological investigations. Drawing directly from the work of J.J Worsaae and C. J Thomsen, he began the process of the development of the systematic identification, collection and classification of Scotland's prehistory.

I will consider the role of other sciences such as anatomy and chemistry in the development of a distinct Scottish prehistory through case studies of fieldwork and excavations of stone circles, particularly in the verification of the hypothesis that they were primarily places of ancient sepulchre. This will include the contributions of people such as John Stuart and the publication of the *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, James Bryce and his excavations of the stone circles on Machrie Moor on Arran and Fred Coles' corpus of stone circles published at the turn of the twentieth century.. Lastly I will explore ideas of stewardship of both the land and ancient sites built on it in the north east of Scotland reflected ideas of Scottish identity and how these were expressed in both words and images.

Slot 5: 15.00

Name: Dr Murray Stewart Leith, University of West of Scotland
Title: When Worlds Collide: Identity, Historical Roots and Politics

Abstract: What is the Scottish Nation; who is a member and what are the political and social boundaries of Scotland and Scottishness? Although these questions have never been far from both political and academic discussions, the advent of devolution, and the ongoing debate over independence keep them firmly on the contemporary agenda - yet this is not in itself new. Since the 1960s, when the SNP became a continuing feature of the Scottish political scene, political parties have been engaged in an ongoing battle for public support, firmly engaging with questions about national identity; questions involving history, place, myths and legends - cornerstones of national belonging in the modern era.

From 1707 onwards, and more recently, immediately prior to and since devolution, and during the ongoing debates on independence, specific historical events, places and themes have been employed as political tools to support, or challenge Scotland's place within the Union. By considering just how the political parties of Scotland (and Britain) engage with, and employ, such notions, this paper will directly examine the nature of national identity within Scotland today, and what components are employed to create a sense of Nationhood and belonging. What is Scotland today - what sense of place, of people, of time, are brought to bear by political leaders to frame the nation. In short, what historical roots are utilised to create the modern conception of the Scottish nation?