

NOTES FROM UNFOLDING ARGYLL'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL STORY: RESEARCH FRAMEWORK SYMPOSIUM

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INTRODUCTION

The Archaeology of Argyll conference took place on the 27th and 28th of November 2015. The Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (ScARF) project sponsored six archaeology students from the University of Glasgow to attend the conference and take notes during the discussions within each session. The aim of this exercise was to ensure that any points that arose during the discussion would be noted and, if necessary, be able to be taken further during the creation of a research framework for the area.

This set of notes has been compiled by summarising those of the students and of the ScARF Project Officer. They are intended as a record of the discussion of each session, and a pointer to potential research questions, rather than as a verbatim record of the champions talks – those papers can be found on the Kilmartin Museum website.

The headings in this document were often not explicitly outlined during the discussion but became apparent during the writing up of the notes. These may provide a good starting point for a framework structure. Research questions or action points that were made explicit on the day are highlighted in red.

SESSION 1: PALAEOLITHIC AND MESOLITHIC SCOTLAND

ENVIRONMENTAL TRANSFORMATION

- 8.2 ka event
 - be cautious with probability distributions
 - comes from multiple forms of evidence
 - happens during a period of greater cooling
 - Is 8.2 ka event evident in Irish Mesolithic?
 - Maybe. Change in lithic technology may be tied to it—answering this is a work in progress
 - Was 8.2 ka event impact really that much?
 - Maybe because they were living at too low a density
- single events would've had most impact on people's lives
- knock-on effect in Argyll? (Storegga tsunami)

FINDING SITES

- Argyll has 70% of Mesolithic sites for Western Scotland
- Walkover survey
- Accidental finds including from gamekeepers and farmers – **maybe we should be in touch with these groups more?**
- Public engagement - we need more!
 - people who live in an area find sites
 - **need to recognize and reward public interest**, perhaps with test pits
- Commercial development work
 - Planning process won't identify Palaeo Mes sites
 - Left to chance? Or are we going to do something about it?
 - Prediction = proof = ahead = worth it
 - Important for dating
 - **Important to convince clients that more time may be needed to work on sites that are found – “archaeological headlines”**
 - Advantage in Scotland that we can do 'prospective' archaeological work
 - Reasonable ways to predict in the planning system
 - **Document to go before councilors and give policy weight?**
- most evidence in Scotland is coastal
 - is this representative?
 - Did separate coastal and inland groups exist?
 - Inland sites are being discovered
- Theoretically there should be many sites as people lived in multiple places throughout the year
- **Harvesting of forests = unique opportunity to field walk/explore – dangerous**
 - Bugging the forestry people to plan it in
 - Is not a short term goal
 - Do we need to influence how the harvesting takes place?
 - Train the people planting the trees, work with them
 - Policy level – proper evaluation before trees are planted
 - Forestry standards are outside the planning control.

- Can't do anything once the trees are planted = lost sites
- Repeat the field walking
- walkover survey after felling or before planting
- Outside of planning control, but amateur opportunity
- need to get in at policy level with Forestry for areas that haven't been forested before
- can argue from residual sites and artefacts that that itself is evidence of sites lost.
 - argument for planning
- Need more sites not just for the sake of finding them, but to fit them together
- How can we pick up inland sites?
 - Is there a shift in settlement patterns, e.g. after tsunami?
 - Footpaths?
 - Coastal bias in sites picked up to date and we might lose the wider perspective.

POPULATION

- Stereotype of utopian mesolithic
- Suggestion that the population is actually rather fragile during this period
- Drop in population with disease and resulting in pandemic
- 8.2k event did not as much of an impact as first thought?
- Why didn't people adapt?
 - Too low a density of population?
- Problem with food? Poisoning? Parasites?
 - Look at the day to day lives of people
 - Requires interdisciplinary research
- very little skeletal evidence
 - so how many people were around?—large enough to be challenged by cold front?
- The people moved on from caves
 - Where are they now?
 - Reconstructing is problematic
 - Low key markers simply to indicate
 - Difficult to interpret – chronology, laboratory excavation, always expensive, access, under rock fall from tremors
 - What happened to looking at caves?
 - Still important, hugely difficult to interpret
 - dating especially is very difficult
 - lots of caves under rockfall—access is also difficult
 - development control can be useful here in terms of overburden removal and chasing cave deposits.
- drop in population due to critical level and disease?
 - No research or attention given to this
 - was it never really that densely populated here?
 - is poisoning a possibility?
 - Difficult to explore, but important to have the human story

MANAGEMENT

- How do we present to the public while preserving and maintaining after excavation?
- Is presentation the job of the museum or should it be done in situ?

- Do we focus on Kilmartin? Argyll?
- Go through the landscapes in addition to the sites
 - Technological engagement e.g Mesolithic Orkney room
- Continued care and reporting
 - Kilmartin's redevelopment
 - If the Mesolithic is left as publicly invisible then people won't report it as they don't understand the potential importance
- Geo heritage – education in the public , looking at things differently. use geoheritage for e.g. climate change discussions
- One site does not provide much, it's the entire area
- Presentation relies on research
- What are we doing with sites after we find them?
 - Protect by burying (not scheduled)
 - need presentation (even just a noticeboard?_
- Kilmartin Museum can tell the story of Argyll
 - going through landscapes as much as visiting sites
 - using technology—see e.g. apps for Ring of Brodgar
 - Have the story told in Kilmartin Museum as a centre for the archaeological period?
- do we want research in area of heritage management?
 - How to effect things as opposed to researching technique

SITE SPECIFIC POINTS

- Fiskary, Isle of Coll: radiocarbon dates range across 800 years
 - Interpretation: three sets of visits (not continuous occupation)
- Bolsay—absolutely a palimpsest
 - Neolithic lithics much, much less proportionally
 - haven't got good stratigraphy
 - why not collaborate across periods on palimpsest sites?
 - ¼ million artefact
 - Hunting camp
 - Repeated occupation
 - Who's to say it isn't continuing?
- Should we encourage more research at Oronsay?
 - Difficult to access due to tides and RSPB bird conditions.
 - Maybe revisit old evidence and excavations?
- Slate Islands
 - No sites found yet
 - The resources would have been needed
 - There should be something
 - We find what we recognize
 - Shifting settlement patterns that haven't been picked up?
 - Altitude vs proximity to the sea, inland vs coastal
 - Once you date, you can know what you can do about them
 - Comparable are 3 visits from infill over 2 years
 - Giants grave
 - Progressively sinking
 - Not accessible to the public

- Virtual visit?
- Storakaig. Late and inland – is this significant? Resource exploitation?

CHRONOLOGY

- Do we spend too much time on examining dating?
- chronological distribution of 78 Mesolithic activity sites for Western Scotland
 - phase 1: exploration and pioneering settlement
 - first one is on Islay (Rubha Port an t-Seilich)
 - tephrachronology dates it at c. 12,000 years BP
 - Criet Dubh, Isle of Mull: 10,230 cal. BP
 - phase 2: residential settlement
 - big distribution of events
 - Criet Dubh: postholes, pits, fire—8500 cal. BP
 - Staosnaig, Colonsay
 - Fiskary fishing camp—half site is in situ, half is not
 - Rubha Port an t-Seilich: fragments of red deer bone, tools
 - model for Mesolithic diet and mobility
 - phase 3: population decline (70% activity events decline)
 - consequence of 8.2 ka event? (plants on Isle of Coll)
 - Croig Field, Mull—an 8.2 ka event?
 - Consequence of technological change? Increased destruction? Etc?
 - Phase 4: increased colonization
 - mostly Argyll (especially Oronsay)
 - concentration on coastal diet
 - Storakaig dated c. 6000 BP—date contrary to presence of classic Mesolithic hunting camp?
 - Phase 5: transition to Neolithic
 - Bolsay, Islay—mesolithic artifacts, (mostly) Neolithic dates
 - other sites on Islay—why the overlap? Different populations?
 - Slochd Measach “Giant's Grave”—chambered cairn
 - geophysics done
 - continue work? (chronology of tomb)

RESEARCH

- research priorities:
 - explore the Late Glacial
 - explore Mesolithic-Neolithic transition
 - refine early Prehistoric chronology
 - huge need for heritage management of early prehistory
 - writing a history of archaeology in Argyll
- How do we get people to understand?
 - Make it easily comprehensible – York PhD on public reception of the Mesolithic
- are there gaps in ScARF planning?
 - In Argyll, it's standard to identify site as possible human activity of any period
 - need for a particular planning document to show developers the importance of often ephemeral sites.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Don't need large excavations
- Are we selling ourselves short through press?
- How it comes together is the importance – like a jigsaw
- Should be less debate on dating but work is needed with other disciplines to refine curves and dates.
- Always encourage further research
- late Mesolithic less well-understood
- Many areas to improve and the opportunity to do so as a result of Kilmartin

SESSION 2: NEOLITHIC, CHALCOLITHIC AND BRONZE AGE

FINDING SITES

- Little flying for photography has occurred over this area
 - Military coverage might fill some of the gaps?
 - **Do we need to re-aerial photograph the area?**
- **Mislabelling of sites in CANMORE**
 - E.g 'sheilings'.
 - Transhumance sites could be from any date
 - E.g moving cattle to upland pastures to feed, needs lipid analysis to date dairy farming?

MESOLITHIC-NEOLITHIC TRANSITION:

- Would a Mesolithic activity event look different from a Neolithic one archaeologically?
 - **Redating existing evidence and collections?**
- Breton-style pottery at Achnacreebeag
- carinated bowl Neolithic c. 3800 BCE
- networking with each other
 - Disappearance of things associated with Mesolithic
 - it is a strange result of cultures interacting, for one to disappear completely
 - arrival and precise chronology of immigrants?

FARMING, FISHING AND FEEDING

- Farming regime, hunting, 10% fish diet (only used in starvation mode, otherwise they avoided)
 - Sumburgh burials showed starving children were fed fish for survival but then stopped once the risk of starvation had passed.
- Marine animals exploited for resources, but not food
 - Why were they against fish?
 - Use of boats implied
- changes in diet
 - due to disease?
 - Food poisoning rather than cultural change?
 - History of illness needs explored with other disciplines
- Shells and fish, just shells, fish again – was taboo in Australia (poor explanation)
 - Particular foods claimed unclean because it did not keep well
- Change in consumption
- Farming seems attractive but it is a risky thing
 - farming is an addiction
 - livestock can be easily hunted by non farmers
- Lipid analysis indicates dairy farming and cereal cultivation
 - lipid analysis of carinated bowl pottery—is it from outwith Argyll? Trade implications
 - farming slightly altered the woodland with the effects of graxing and by connecting farms.
- Isotopic analysis of remains—lack of seafood, why?
- Mesolithic woman married farmers
- Incomers brought baby animals in boats?

MATERIAL CULTURE

- How influential is the accumulation of things? - material culture
- Ceramics
 - Heirlooms, origins, trade, design
 - Fine clay that tends to be un-sourcable
 - Other areas are localized
- Groove ware – Orkney and Boyne Valley
- Sense of scale in increasing social impact / sense of identity
 - Does Kilmartin represent this?
- Information coming from just burials as opposed to settlements
- There is a need to return to museum collections to re-date objects
- Storkaig arefacts need looked at again for redating
- Petrological work needs done on the existing collections of West of Scotland pottery in museum collections.

SETTLEMENT AND STRUCTURES

- How many people are we looking for?
 - Radiocarbon dates and summed probabilities for demographic data not favoured as an approach by all.
 - Only works if density of radiocarbon dates is evenly spread.
 - Huge risks
 - No critical judgement
 - Must be rigorous in sample and context
- Did people actually live in Kilmartin? – key research question
 - Was Kilmartin a solely ceremonial landscape?
 - Power of ritual – Kilmartin sacrificial?
- How do you demonstrate transhumance?
 - Ephemeral structures
- Population growth – assume that there was growth?
- Level of impact of population
 - No great impact in the neolithic
 - But Argyll is the best place for this
- Settlement evidence, transition, looking back and looking forward
- Timber halls
 - location analysis – Kilmartin?
 - Usually found on well drained fluvial soils and Argyll doesn't have much of this so potential is lower.
 - Security? Halls would mean several families living together who would bud off once they felt safe
- Did people use caves? Need to redate existing evidence and old excavations that might have been dismissed as from other periods.

TRANSPORT AND LINKS

- Ireland, Scandinavia
 - Seaway – route way
 - Transport pattern should be looked at
- Network contacts
- Interaction along NW façade
 - associated with grooved ware
 - art styles from Ireland etc.
 - rock art

- Kilmartin and the bigger nexus
 - A contact zone Argyll/Ireland (not just stuff coming in—two-way interactions)

FUNERARY SITES

- Where are the timber funerary sites?
- Human remains vs burial items
 - Where are the people?

FUTURE THINGS TO CONSIDER

- How far do the research questions from the symposium work with different models?
 - Framing research questions needs to address differing views.
 - Criteria for argument
 - Evidence needed
- Work out what the possibilities are = framework for answers and other questions – people shouldn't agree
- **Geophysics need done around and between the monuments in Kilmartin Glen**
- **Spirals on stones are neglected**
- Kilmartin Glen's research is old and there's not that much

BREAKOUT: PREHISTORIC MARINE LANDSCAPES

CURRENT SITUATION

- offshore places being developed, so lots of archaeology will be done in the near future, gives us great opportunity.
 - Development led, not research led.
- globally about 120 m of sea level change
 - this is complicated in Scotland by land rebound
 - we cannot do blanket statements of non survival due to repeated ice ages.
 - Argyll is very complicated in terms of sea level evidence, complexity of the coastline
- archaeology in Argyll is dictated by a seascape, as opposed to landscape – fundamental
 - We don't realize how maritime Scotland was
 - Framework needs done from the sea rather than into it.
- Late Upper Paleolithic into Mesolithic . "Hamburgian" sites c. 14,000 years ago
- still no Storegga deposits from the area
 - Storegga as a red herring? Does this one single event mask the everyday?

LOOKING FOR SITES


- sites sitting in intertidal zone
 - have to look at and look for submerged sites for early prehistory
 - intertidal peat deposits need studied
- need more data for Argyll (e.g. sites to core)
- Was the prehistoric coastline at the foot of Dunadd?
- Use geomorphology ties ins and look at river terraces, estuary sites, sand dunes, confluence of burns for Mesolithic artefacts.
- Check local tidal currents to perhaps discount bedrock to bedrock?
- Check for pockets of preservation

TRANSPORT

- importance of seaways
 - maritime transport way more cost-effective, probably therefore used more
 - need to look at land from the sea
- not lots of archaeological evidence for boats, yet

THE FUTURE

- Opportunities for interdisciplinary research, but that hasn't necessarily been done
 - Tie early prehistory into geomorphology
 - Geo problem as opposed to arch
 - Different sources in new way – don't always think of as archaeology
 - Lithostratigraphy
- Tie early prehistory into geomorphology
 - e.g. river terraces have stratigraphy and dating
 - e.g. sand dunes

- Submerged forests
 - Next stage is to do archaeology
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SESSION 3: IRON AGE

- Over 500 dun, broch, fort – only 4% properly excavated and few radiocarbon dated
- Reassessment
- Cultural zones
- Landscape / seascape
- Road houses to Dun

CULTURAL CHANGE

- Is there evidence of influx of new people as a factor in cultural change etc.?
 - Not much evidence as yet but styles similar to Shetland, Spain
 - architectural change fits into wider Atlantic tradition
 - Argyll's got some Irish stuff in it
 - lack of kinds of artifacts and skeletal evidence in Iron Age
 - Argyll looks different than the other – kind of Irish but like a melting pot of culture
- Revisiting sites – correlation between artefacts and buildings – cultural changes
- Is continuity a more interesting research priority than keyhole excavation for just dating?

SOCIETY

- No iron age burials in Kilmartin
 - Something different here!
 - Don't waste energy trying to find certain things
 - Where are the funerary sites?
- Social interpretation and material culture where?
 - Not using to show wealth
 - Not necessary?
 - Using architecture to show wealth?
 - Stone is elite?
 - Make them very different?
 - Maybe expressed in other ways
 - Organically?
 - Feast?
 - Is this different expression unique to Argyll? Contrast Ireland where the iron age is funerary and metalwork based.

STRUCTURES

- Units of land assessment – relationship of how far they go and how they now relate?
- Brochs as landscape markers
 - Think of the social structure between land and people
 - General correlation?
 - Just not physically evident
- Old droveways a better indication of spatial and space control than modern roads?
- Manpower needed to construct a settlement is more than one homestead – maybe the ordinary folk lived in turf houses?

PROBLEM OF DATING

- Keyhole dating

- a lot of finds not diagnostic—so sites dated mostly from “exotic” (imported) objects
- Never know, could just as easily be bronze age
 - o Many of the SERF examples turned out to be Bronze Age
- Need a substantial numbering data system
- Better handle on chronology needed
- **Re-expose for small cost?**
- continuity of use?
 - o Is keyhole excavation (which is problematic) appropriate to this?
 - o Continuity of use or reuse?
 - o Continuity – correlation with high fortification
- Presence of turf and timber houses?
 - o Possible that all stone houses were built in a very short period? (and then used for a long time)
- **revisit sites with long sequences**

MARITIME LANDSCAPE

- How do structures relate to the wider landscape? Seascape?
 - o Landing places
 - o Harbours
 - Especially in relation to Brochs and Duns.
- On the coast but not accessible to the coast? Are they near the landing spots?
- Surveying into tidal zone. How does that factor in?
- Know the sea is important, but no boats have been found
- Links to Ireland

ECONOMY

- Crop regimes
- Comparison to bronze age
- Where is fishing now?
 - They have the technology for deep sea fishing but they don't use it until the Norse come
 - Do they eat fish or just use it as a resource?
- Must remember the timber components
 - o Woodland as commercial crop
 - o Would require large ships to transport
- Forgotten are the shifts in buildings or are timber houses just not being found
 - o Must assume that we haven't found

FUTURE RESEARCH

- **Need basics of the structures**
- Argyll not just a black hole – just need resources
- Connections between areas – melting pot

BREAKOUT: WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT KILMARTIN?

- Prehistoric rock art
- Dunadd
- Landscapes
- The 'specialness' comes from the range and density
- **A statement of significance is needed**

BREAKOUT: MONUMENTALITY

- Mesolithic vs the Neolithic world view
- Visualising and presenting the past
- Improving our understanding of megaliths, societies, and landscapes
- Boyne to Brodgar project
- Targeted research excavations
- More use of developer led work
- Use the community for inspiration
- **Affect Forestry policy**

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DAY ONE CONCLUSIONS

- Where do we go from here?
- Argyll needs a Regional research framework
 - A lever for more money?
 - An action plan in case money suddenly became available, in anticipation of raising money
 - Inspiring questions for others to work on
 - Need to focus on the local site
 - But asking bigger questions
 - Thematic high level research framework needs to be separate from action points for pure research.
- Stray finds – what’s already being done?
- Simple things than can be done with the restrictions
- How are you going to designate?
- Book, website
- Gaps are to imagine the future , explore the younger
- Common themes between the periods will continue
 - Use this to structure the research as opposed to specific things in each period
 - Arrivals/ incomers – questions on this from all periods.
 - Concentration of place/settlement
 - Do we need a multiperiod focus on a small number of locations?
- Regular meeting group?
- Steering group needed
- We need a conservation and management plan
 - Document that can show directions can do a lot more with money if proper collaboration is done.

SESSION 4: EARLY MEDIEVAL

- Being on the periphery of Europe does not make us marginal.
 - Imagine a political, erudite, sophisticated mindset and culture.
- Transition from kin-ship based society to kingdom
- Identity / contact / transformation

SETTLEMENT

- Crannogs
 - Actively used until the 17th century
 - Slow and expensive
 - Archaeologists are single minded
 - used or reused later?
 - Lots of evidence in other parts of Scotland
 - crannogs on Islay
 - Is dating crannogs an easy win?
 - Existing coring programme of lochs adjacent to crannogs?
- Must exploit geophysics and caves
- Population reduction c.600 AD?
 - Many things happened – plague like the black death, volcanoes, climate change overall
 - Need to know what happened
- How society functions
 - Inherently unstable?
 - Bigger theoretical discussion
- Continuity of settlement location
 - sites continued to be reused
 - how can we determine continuity?
 - Hiatus doesn't mean lack of occupation, but you still have to explain the hiatus in the sequence
- Lack of Norse settlement (especially on Mainland)
 - Shetland—Norse used pre-existing buildings
- Need a site without restrictions for lower sites
- Such a black hole here that anything that is done is useful
- Don't have the stratigraphic knowledge to for continuity
- buildings ephemeral?
 - How to find?
- Discover lower status settlements
- aceramic (apart from imported)
 - therefore difficult to find settlements
- We need a settlement site to research that is lower status (rather than high) and without development pressures.

FUNERARY EVIDENCE

- Where is everyone?

- Reunite settlement and funerary evidence
- Where buried? (before churchyards—these are much later)
- early Christian monuments and landscape monumentality approach
- some skeletal material surviving
 - preservation in Argyll is not great but isotope work is currently being done to cover all of Scotland skeletal remains (Kate Britton)
 - NMS human remains store
 - Reanalysis of this existing material is imperative.
- also finding cremated material
- must date any new burials
- antiquarians not great at recording burials
 - e.g. artifacts with burials
 - must be stratigraphically solid
- Kilmartin Museum's got lots of skeletons (not dated) - these need reexamination
- remains that are presumed to be shipwreck victims
 - written off in CANMORE but need reinvestigated.

MARITIME LANDSCAPE

- a sea-based society
- coastal and other surveyors
- there are boats
 - Eigg stem posts need proper excavation
- this is a growth area of study (especially Vikings)
- coastal survey has to be done at low tide (because of stuff in intertidal zone)
- issues of access (e.g. underwater sites)
- Sea based societies and their connection to inland people

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

- The way we draw on interdisciplinary study and must adopt a method
- Range of specialists (placenames, history, art history)
- Different perspectives = different questions
- Similarity of sample sizes and compare
- Importance of place names
 - be wary of bad placename work - place name people have their own agendas
- Like-minded people together – crucial
- New voice = nuances to the voice of the material
- challenging to bring together
 - but you still have to do it
 - use similar methodologies for inter-site compatibility
 - common goals, strong leadership
- keep talking to each other all the time
- build it in early
- also use the local voice— questions we perceive as simple are not
- Collate the people of Argyll
 - National geographic
 - Cheaply – historic Scotland

- Done already

SCIENCE

- few radiocarbon dates, isotope studies, or DNA studies
- Variability of the geography and isotopes
- Chronology of crannogs?
- coring and dating (crannogs and Iona)
- Aerial photo survey
 - Hebridean Airways for aerial photos—get in touch
 - LIDAR and aerial photography
 - Low flying over the islands – aerial photography
- coring is great
 - lots of useful evidence to be gained
 - pXRF
- reception of hybrid identities?
 - Isotopes are not identity
- Clarity of the stratigraphic evidence, no matter how small
 - Chronology, materiality
 - People as individuals

RELIGION

- conversion and Christianization
- Adoption of Christianity
- Plea for monastic sites
- Early Christian monuments – materiality, different approaches
- Early Churches?
- adoption and impact of Christianity
- *hugely* significant carved high crosses
- early Christianization of Argyll?

SITE SPECIFIC

- Potential of Iona
 - major European artistic and intellectual center
 - earliest window glass in the gaidhlig world
 - excavations not well-published, a case study in badly served excavation?
 - new excavations being undertaken
 - **core ditches for dates rather than excavate**
 - sculptured stone
 - other important periods
 - geophysics done (National Trust Scotland)
 - Iona flourishing during Norse period
 - What is the nature of early monastery on Iona?
 - Does Iona need its own research framework?
- can we focus too hard on Iona?
 - e.g. let's look at Kingarth as well

- Neglected sites?
- Whithorn—whittlework or wattlework reuse?
- Dunollie needs large scale, open area excavations
- How did Dunadd come to be seen as royal center?
 - Type, number, quality of items
 - the footprint
 - how special/unique is Dunadd?
- Dunaverly under erosion threat

CHALLENGES

- Accessibility
 - problem: stones at Elory are inaccessible. worried about the stones' condition?
 - Underwater sites

FUTURE RESEARCH

- Large scale open excavation
- Prioritize heritage management
- balance of sites in research
- importance of developer-funded work—we need to keep up on this (e.g. going through grey literature)
- How can we join things up?
 - Accessibility to existing collections and sites needs increased
- Unknown unknowns
- Importance of the open landscape
- Remember other sites
- Importance of being thorough
- Draw the information together
- Skeletal remains reexamination

SESSION 5: MEDIEVAL

- Just read, get things published
- Middle ice age?
- Lack of documentary evidence
- Rings and moulds – no good archaeology on this
- Cultural differences in Argyll

SETTLEMENT

- Hills = expansion or contraction - less populated lands
 - Turf houses – if people lived in them
- a lot of movement after 1100, but not a lot of influx of people
 - Drifting sands
- logistics—where are swords, ships, etc. produced?
 - Some workshops
 - itinerant craftsmen?
 - Evidence for industrial activity (e.g. slag)
- parish structure
- where are people living?
 - ephemeral structures? Bad materials? Contraction?
 - Contraction or expansion into the hills?
- Dun etc. reoccupation
 - Norse diaspora adopting a Celtic view?
- assembly—where? What? (can placename evidence help?)
- placename evidence for e.g. farm boundaries, structure of society

- In Uibhist, land overexploited?
- Forced into less good land
- practicing transhumance?
- lack of towns
 - churches involved in trade?

WOMEN

- Women? Where are they?
- Female evidence – brooches don't convince
- Opening up interpretation and putting women into it
 - identifying women in the record?
 - Agnes Campbell the 'fighting woman'
- Breeding questions arise if you need to replenish lost mercenaries or soldiers

MATERIAL CULTURE

- Hebridean/"Craggan" wares
 - potentially much earlier? (although there is earlier pottery yet)
 - is interesting where it is and isn't found
 - Interesting distribution – reason for transporting such large pots
 - Decoration – relate to warrior class

- Deflecting Scottish legislations
- Walkover survey for pottery?
- At Finlaggan, handmade pottery—but copying wheel forms?
 - Pottery appears to be by-product of the wine trade
 - Vacuum created by the lack of towns meant that trade went to smaller places?
- Where are the people making them? Around the Gaeltachd?
- **expand date range on wickerwork**
- fish traps?—did transplanted men protect fishery rights?

SCULPTURE

- Kilmartin sculpture actually Norse?
 - Possible reuse on Kilmartin church of a cupmarked stone as a mediaeval grave slab?
- West Highland monumental sculpture
 - **Should the new museum have a dedicated area for this?**

WARRIORS

- Warrior class effects on society and the structures built
- Parasitic element of society
 - High use of resources and support needed
 - Where is the industry required to arm and supply these men?
 - Itinerant craftsmen
 - Grave slabs as markers of craftsmen?
- Warrior class? Slavery?
 - Western Isles *producing* warriors?
- Warrior class and grave slabs
 - West Highland monumental sculpture militaristic because of warrior class?
 - Relationship between the warriors and the burial slabs – did they commission their own?

CASTLES

- Early castles
 - very little known (mostly architectural history)
 - is typology really helping?
 - **Many problems with dating need addressed (current phd at Edinburgh – Mark Thacker)**
- Towers (later castles)
- spatial analysis of castles
 - change in function over time
- what are castles used for? (e.g. Where do you put your poo pits?)
- Castles in relation to creation of parishes and church architecture
- Potential to relate castles to specific campaigns or events?
- Mottes and ringworks
 - Any documentary of archaeological evidence for their use in Argyll?
 - Do they survive mostly in what used to be Strathclyde Briton?
 - **Need to revisit old excavations and unpublished material**

- Beginnings of feudalization?
 - Establishment of local hegemonies?
- Island lordly sites
 - an alternative to castles? (same sort of floor space, usage)

RELIGION

- abbeys, priories, nunneries, and patronage

BREAKOUT: LOWER STATUS MEDIEVAL HOUSES

POPULATION

- Do we need a figure?
- Stratigraphic analysis of bodies in burial grounds
- Rental evidence
- Tax evidence and extrapolation

STRUCTURES

- Not necessarily family units
 - Soldiered quarters?
 - Castle retinues?
- can you visually identify them?
 - Lots of lives lived in barns, attics, under boats?
- Turf-built structures?
 - Wicker framed?
 - Remains as postholes?
 - Built in marginal land?
 - Found in field survey
 - Ben Lawers examples with central hearth and some posts but all below the headyke and removed by later ploughing.
 - No earthfast features and maybe one course of stone could not hold a heavy wall
 - Easy to dismantle, no permanence
 - Farmtoun inventory on Bute confirmed buildings were 'flimsy' and turf so should we expect survival at all?
- Charcoal platforms
 - Hearths?
 - Habitations away from hearths?
 - Would you sleep where you cook?
 - Sleep shelter only
 - Maybe you don't need a house at all but just a plaid? Could use as a tent?
 - Should we always be looking for pairs of buildings?
 - Cf Caldwell's Robinson Crusoe
 - Potential for typology of medieval vs later
- Settlement structures one on top of another
 - looking underneath later structures—hard to find (basically obliterated)
 - between buildings that are 'modern' rather than under
 - robbing of materials to make new buildings
- look in Clearance settlements
- tradition of low material culture and ephemeral remains?
- What drove the *later* change to more permanent structures?
 - Improvements
 - turf structures taking away grazing (landlords didn't like)
 - makes people more stationary, ties them down

- built from quarried stone or field stone?
 - Where do we look for potential?
 - Pick a 'pennyland' and survey it extensively.
 - they are building in stone before and after (and during—e.g. Chapels)
- increased emphasis on domestic architecture
 - (before, money in e.g. boat building)
- in the landscape, not the townscape
 - settlements and towns can move
 - do churches indicated earlier settlement?

SESSION 6: EARLY MODERN

EVIDENCE TYPES

- Antiquarians exploring the “wild”
- early fieldwork
- lots of documents
 - tell us as much about the writer as the times
- photos of Erskine Beveridge
- inventories selective and entirely architectural
- RCAHMs weren't required to record post-17th century
- multi-disciplinary work
- landscape approach
- remember to account for the difference between now and then, even though time gap seems small

STRUCTURES

- Generally, lots of sites but little synthesis
- Witches circle
- Building stone
- castles associated with Medieval period, but continued on into early modern period
 - e.g. Duntrune Tower House
- recent fieldwork focused on deserted settlements
 - need a synthesis of Scotland's Rural Past project

INDUSTRY

- Industrial sites
- Role of industrial Argyll in contemporary discussion
- metal mining
- Islay is a post-industrial landscape
- industrial archaeology to feed into current discussions on pollution?
- People with specialist knowledge were brought in in this period
 - how were they perceived? Tensions?
 - e.g. brought in slate workers from Lake District because they ran out
- why did things fail? Why did they not survive?
 - Disappearance of vernacular stuff
 - imperialist gaze on the landscape?
 - Imported, not vernacular forms
 - displacement, disruption
 - BUT not necessarily unwanted or forced—don't romanticise, preach authenticity
 - discuss consumption
 - why don't we get Staffordshire wares?
 - Need not felt to incorporate it
 - transportation issue?
-

SOCIETY

- Elaborate on the identity of this era
- Influx in the medieval vs early modern
- Immigration to Canada, US, Australia
- Gaze of the outsiders
- Gaelic language needs to be looked into more
- Importing of people and changes on society
 - How do we show this in the museum
- Continuity and connectivity of people's lives
- Identity in this period is complex, different
 - we have no especially good sense of what's happening with this
 - different e.g. political, religious affiliations
- Argyllian diaspora

TRANSPORT

- Need to examine
- Remoteness's impact on perception? On industrialization?
- what about railway sites?

MATERIAL CULTURE

- Lots of teapots – but what if we didn't? questioning material ritual
- Look at the material record of the last 500 years
- Retention of material – strategy
- What do we keep and what do we through away?
- we should consider the amount in modern assemblages
 - can't just give museums everything
 - good research design essential (e.g. introduction of industrial pottery into Western Scotland)
- relevance to today's society? Modern perceptions of this material?

ENVIRONMENT

- Environmental impacts and changes

DAY TWO CONCLUSIONS

- Sea based society
- Climate change
- Identity
- Skeletal material
- Argyll on a cultural crossroads
- Inter-period approach
- Environmental stability
- Boundaries and transitional periods
- Biography of places and landscapes
- Extend for Argyll being remote or central
- **Journal for the area? Like Fife?**
- Regional framework –
 - How is it getting used?
 - Fear of restraint.
 - SCARF.
 - Communication is key
 - Process and engagement
 - Argyll importance
 - Overarching questions answered through process and projects
 - Is Kilmartin the right place to do this?
- Virtual work
- Community to be involved
- No model yet for how this would be done as what is wanting to be done is very new
- **Get thought and feedback for those who couldn't be at the conference**
- Gather every couple years
- Remember to document everything