

Unfolding Argyll's Archaeological Story: Research Framework Symposium

Period Summary - Iron Age (Roddy Regan)

A) Research Questions identified in original paper:

Future work on the Iron Age in Argyll should incorporate many of the Scotland wide research recommendations recently outlined by Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (ScARF). These have been summarised below but can be found in full at <http://www.scottishheritagehub.com/content/executive-summary-6>

Building blocks:

1. Revisit the archives of excavated sites to extract more information from existing resources, notably through dating programmes targeted at regional sequences.
2. Identify settlement sequences.

Daily life and practice:

1. Analyse deposits within buildings, organic preservation and waterlogging.
2. Basic studies of material groups, the role of 'art' and other forms of decoration.
3. Better understanding of agricultural systems, agricultural processes, cooking practices and cuisine.
4. Better understanding of ritual practice.

Landscapes and regions:

1. Identify how was the landscape divided (locally and regionally) and understood during this period.
2. Develop improved, integrated survey methodologies to study and understand landscape.
3. Further work required on vegetation studies and sea level change.
4. Identify how landscapes beyond settlement were used.

Reconstructing Iron Age societies.

1. Better understanding of the nature and effect of the introduction of iron.
2. Identify the social processes lying behind evidence for movement and contact.
3. Identify parallels and differences in social processes and developments.
4. How did the nature of houses and households change over this period.
5. Further work is required to understand the chronology, nature and meaning of hillforts and other enclosed settlements.
6. What was the relationship with the Roman world.

B) Other Research Questions identified during discussions:

- Where are all the timber buildings?
- How does the lack of material culture on IA sites in Argyll compare with other IA sites in Scotland?
- Is there evidence of an influx of new people during this period?

C) Action Points identified during discussions:

- Re-visit excavated sites with long sequences

- Substantial dating programme required. There are problems with keyhole excavation approach but a better handle on chronology is required.