

Unfolding Argyll's Archaeological Story: Research Framework Symposium

Period Summary - Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Bronze Age (Alison Sheridan)

A) Research Questions identified in original paper:

1. What exactly was the process, timing and tempo of the acculturation of indigenous fisher-hunter-gatherer groups? How late did a lifestyle based solely on the exploitation of wild resources continue? Is there any reason to accept Bonsall et al.'s (2002) argument for environmental change having an impact on the Mesolithic–Neolithic transition?
2. Where did the builders of the Breton-style closed chambers and simple passage tombs live, and what was their lifestyle and subsistence practice? And when, precisely, did these putative Breton immigrants arrive?
3. Where (in addition to the sites we already know) did the CB Neolithic settlers live, and what precisely was their subsistence strategy? Is their settlement organisation the same as elsewhere in Scotland (as reviewed, for example, in Sheridan 2007)? And are there any non-megalithic CB funerary monuments in Argyll and Bute, such as we see at Lochhill and Slewcairn in Dumfries and Galloway, for instance (Masters 1973; 1975; Millican 2012)?
4. Why were some of the early Neolithic inhabitants buried in a cave (Raschoille cave) as opposed to a built funerary monument?

B) Other Research Questions identified during discussions:

- What was the population number during these periods?

C) Action Points identified during discussions:

- A programme of aerial reconnaissance required to identify new sites across the area
- A programme of re-appraising sites in Canmore to see if they could be from this period
- Re-dating existing evidence and collections
- Petrological analysis of West of Scotland pottery in museum collections
- Re-date existing evidence and old excavations that might have been dismissed as from other periods.
- Geophysical survey around/between monuments