

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Field Archaeology for All
Arc-eòlas do na h-uile

Formerly Association Certificated Field Archaeologists

Registered Scottish Charity SC007099

Introduction

ACFA entered a new phase in 2023 following the adoption at an EGM in March of decisions approved at last year's AGM. Although our title, Association of Certificated Field Archaeologists, has been retained for official records, we have adopted the new name ACFA, Field Archaeology for All. This recognises the decision taken to open membership to anyone interested in the practice of field archaeology, with or without qualifications, and the planning of a training programme. This has already proved successful in attracting new members and we hope to build on this through further promotion.

Surveys

Surveys are the meat and drink of ACFA and this year has been particularly busy. In September last year and March this year teams returned to the **Halter Burn Valley** area and continued recording the archaeology of this section of the Scotland/England border with great success. In November 2022 a group of ACFA members, at the invitation of Dr Murray Cook, Stirling Council archaeologist, carried out a survey of **Hermitage Wood**, an 18th century planned landscape, to which we are returning this November. A large team spent a fruitful week in **Tiree** in October with a slightly smaller group returning in May. In March ACFA members spent two days at **Bannockburn House**, at the invitation of Bannockburn House Trust, carrying out a walkover survey and recording two landscape features. A large group of members spent a week in April carrying out a survey of **Balvicar Farm** in **Seil Island, Argyll**. The survey of the farmlands, farms and lime industry of **Thorntonhall** continued throughout the year. A survey of **Little Kilmory Chapel** in the **Isle of Bute** was conducted, and several ACFA members assisted with the Scottish Masons' Marks Project's survey in **Glasgow Cathedral** in July completing our busy year of surveying.

Publications

All our Raasay occasional papers are now available to download at no charge from our website. Plans are afoot for the next batch of papers to be made downloadable. Occasional papers published year are **Isle of Torsa**, the final part of the Luining surveys; **Shotton Hill**, part of the Halter Burn valley surveys; **Kirkhill**, part of the southeast corner of Newton Mearns surveys. The two major publications based on ACFA surveys of Glen Lochay and Tiree are making good progress. **The Coastal Archaeology Enhancement Survey (CARES), Kilchattan Bay to Port Bannatyne, Bute**, was also produced. Ian Marshall and Janet MacDonald continue to produce our much anticipated newsletters.

Winter Zoom Talks

Another successful series of Zoom talks was held drawing an audience of ACFA members and members of the public. Edward Stewart opened the series with Past the Shieling Through the Town based on his work on sites in Glencoe. Colin Davenport of Bannockburn House Trust gave us a flavour of what we would experience in our survey of the house's grounds. Member Jennifer Boag presented her impressions of Albanian archaeology based on her visits to the country over thirty years apart. Kenneth McElroy of the Caithness Broch Project entertained and informed us with his talk Tall Towers and Grass Roots about the project's plans to recreate and broch. Finally Dr Murray Cook, Stirling Council Archaeologist, spoke on Kippen's Lost Viking Age Fort. All these talks are available to watch again on our YouTube channel.

Promotion, Publicity and Social Media

Apart from our website Facebook has become an important method of informing and involving members. Our Instagram account has gained followers and views of photographs illustrating our activities. Twitter (X) has been very useful in marking our place in Scottish Archaeology with over 400 followers who regularly engage with our 'tweets'. In April we took part in BygoneCon, a heritage event in East Kilbride Central Library where our new banner and badges got their first outing. ACFA's activities in Tiree, Luing and Halter Burn were featured in online magazine *Celebrating Archaeology in Scotland 2022*. https://landward.eu/archaeology-strategy-scotland/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2022/12/Celebrating-Archaeology-in-Scotland-2022-ISSUE-5-Single-Page_compressed.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3ULn67k5rWW5T7N8WIDwTrabV6dDZcNSQtXqH_icf36K6i70eTxKx9i60

Social

Our Spring Social in March was well attended and after lunch members were treated to a fascinating talk by Dr Kenny Brophy on the archaeology of the Glasgow Garden Festival which many of us had attended bringing back memories. A group of members revisited Bannockburn House in June this time to experience a guided tour of the house, a fantastic living history presentation on clothes and cooking in the 17th century, and a visit to the excavation in the grounds. The stonework which had been uncovered was not the hoped for remains of the original tower house but was the vault of an icehouse. In August a group of ACFA members were welcomed by Eddie Stewart to the excavations he was directing in Glencoe.

External engagement

Dugie MacInnes gave a talk to Stirling Archaeological Society in December. In June we conducted a reconnaissance of Linn Park with Dr Kenny Brophy preliminary to proposed collaborative survey/training between ACFA, the Department of Archaeology, Glasgow University, and the Friends of Linn Park, preceded by coffee and scones in the Derby Café. Janie Munro and Ewen Smith on behalf of ACFA contributed to Historic Environment Scotland's consultation on their latest strategy document. Ailsa Smith represents ACFA in ongoing discussions with HES concerning issues over the transfer of data from ScRAP (Scotland's Rock Art Project) to CANMORE. Members have taken part in online training from Archaeology Scotland for submitting data to Discovery and Excavation Scotland using the OASIS site. Our friend and colleagues of the Luing History Group produced a Google map of sites of interest on the island of Luing utilising the results of ACFA surveys.

https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1ctW_0jsSZTbUwederi9qHNWT_GGJu9I&usp=sharing

Fundraising

ACFA has embarked on a new initiative to raise funds for the professional analysis of the Tiree assemblage of worked flints and stone tools. Thanks go to Margaret Gardiner for her work in creating a Justgiving account for ACFA. <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/acfa>

