

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Glasgow (UofG)		
Unit of Assessment: 15 Archaeology		
Title of case study: Setting Scotland's first national Archaeology Strategy		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2006–2017		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Stephen Driscoll	Professor of Historical Archaeology	1991–present
Kenny Brophy	Senior Lecturer in Archaeology	2000–present
Ewan Campbell	Senior Lecturer in Archaeology	1993–present
Tessa Poller	Lecturer in Archaeology	2006–present
Dene Wright	Research Associate/Research Affiliate	2009–2020
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2015–31 st Dec 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>UofG's Strathearn Environs and Royal Forteviot (SERF) project combined delivering community benefit with advancing archaeological knowledge that contributes to managing the country's heritage resources. The 10-year SERF project in Perth and Kinross, Scotland, established an integrated model that combined large-scale archaeological research with long-term community engagement, so successfully that it shaped a new national strategy for archaeology. Historical Environment Scotland (HES) supported – and closely observed – the SERF work and outcomes, then embedded the SERF principles, especially the inclusion of community benefit as a key aim, in the ethos of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy. This was launched in 2015 with the statement and overarching principle: <i>'We want to live in a Scotland where archaeology is for everyone!'</i></p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>The SERF project had multiple complementary goals: original archaeological research leading to quality, open-access information, the training of students to a high standard, and meaningful community engagement. Because of this combination of goals on a large geographical scale, and the implications for heritage management, the project attracted a decade of funding from Historic Environment Scotland (HES, formerly HS), the Scottish Government agency responsible for cultural heritage. The research was led by UofG co-directors Stephen Driscoll, Kenneth Brophy, and Ewan Campbell, and other staff, notably Tessa Poller and Dene Wright, took part in fieldwork and teaching, with contributions from Gordon Noble of Aberdeen University (UofG until 2010) and Megan Gondek of the University of Chester. The programme of fieldwork ran from 2006–2017.</p> <p>The archaeological research questions focused on how human occupation of the landscape changed over 8,000 years, between the Mesolithic and Early Modern periods, and across three parishes in Strathearn, in Perth and Kinross. SERF produced a new understanding of long-term landscape change in Strathearn, from prehistoric monument construction and agricultural activity, to churches and burials in the Early Medieval period. For example, the researchers showed how in the late Neolithic period Forteviot became a centre of monumentality, power and pilgrimage comparable with other major Neolithic ceremonial centres in northern Europe, such as Stonehenge and Orkney; and how Early Medieval people were still engaging with places where prehistoric people had previously built monuments. Significant discoveries from other periods included the discovery of a rare Early Bronze Age dagger burial at Forteviot, along with</p>		

the first positive evidence for flowers in a grave of that era, and the most complete fire-making kit of third millennium date known in Europe. Research into Forteviot, one of the major early royal centres in Early Medieval Europe, has offered significant insight into the complex processes that gave birth to Scotland as a nation.

The research also set out to investigate the current state of protected archaeological sites of Scotland, knowledge of interest to the funder HES which is responsible for their maintenance. Perthshire is home to much highly significant cropmark archaeology: 'cropmarks' are surface indications of buried archaeological remains, observed through patterns in the vegetation, and many are designated and enjoy the highest level of legal protection as Scheduled Monuments. One of the research aims was to investigate whether cropmark conservation and management practices were sufficient, so SERF excavated a number of significant cropmark sites and discovered that agricultural practices such as potato farming were causing far greater destruction than was previously recognised. Sadly, some Scheduled Monuments had even been completely destroyed.

The third form of insight the project yielded was the example of combining archaeological investigation with community engagement and participation, on a scale that was unprecedented in Scotland in 2005–2006. As part of its working practice, SERF maintained a close relationship with the communities in Perthshire through a parallel community archaeology programme, and as the investigative process included participative fieldwork, local volunteers formed part of all the excavation teams. So, whereas funding traditionally favoured projects aimed at either generation of knowledge about the past (purely archaeological) or community engagement, SERF demonstrated that combining the two was not only possible but beneficial.

3. References to the research

- 3.1 Brophy, K. and Noble, G. (2020) [Prehistoric Forteviot: Excavations of a Ceremonial Complex in Eastern Scotland](#). Series: CBA Research Report, 176. Council for British Archaeology: York. ISBN 9781909990043 ([doi:10.5284/1082002](#))
- 3.2 Campbell, E. and Driscoll, S. (Eds.) (2020) [Royal Forteviot: Excavations at a Pictish Power Centre in Eastern Scotland](#). Series: Council for British Archaeology research reports. Council for British Archaeology: York. ISBN 9781909990050 [available from HEI]
- 3.3 Noble, G and Brophy, K 2017 [Cremation practices and the creation of monument complexes: The Neolithic cremation cemetery at Forteviot, Strathearn, Perth and Kinross, Scotland and its comparanda](#), *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 83, 213–45. ([doi:10.1017/ppr.2017.11](#))
- 3.4 Noble, G and Brophy, K 2011 [Ritual and remembrance at a prehistoric ceremonial complex in central Scotland: excavations at Forteviot, Perth and Kinross](#), *Antiquity* 85, 787–804. ([doi:10.1017/S0003598X00068319](#)) [available on request from HEI]
- 3.5 Driscoll, ST 2010 [SERFing in the Scottish heartlands: artefacts and the research strategy](#), *Scottish Arch Journal* 32(1), pp. 57-72. ([doi:10.3366/saj.2011.0008](#))

Quality: All are peer-reviewed publications, which in addition to the research were funded by Historic Environment Scotland through a competitive process over more than 10 years. Outputs 3.1–3.2 represent substantial monographs underpinned by five years of excavation data and appropriate synthesis in regional and international context.

4. Details of the impact

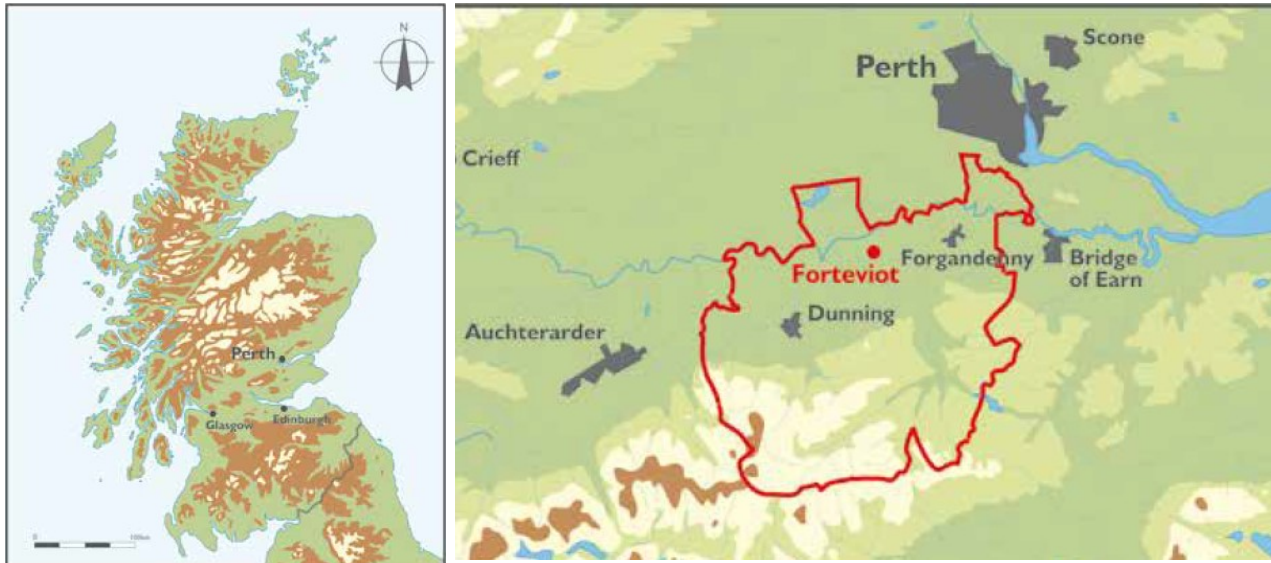


Figure 1: The SERF study area in Perth and Kinross (Figure 1) is rural and sparsely populated, and training volunteers is resource-intensive, so training 120 local volunteers as well as regular public talks and pop-up museums in the course of the project was highly unusual.

Development of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy

The Head of Archaeology Strategy at Historic Environment Scotland (HES, HS's successor) explained that *'due to Professor Driscoll's role as a HS non-executive Director, he was invited to be the first Chair of the new Scottish Strategic Archaeology Committee [SSAC] ... 2013–2019'* [5.1]. To this role Driscoll brought expertise and experience from co-directing the SERF project, leading the SSAC, including representatives from across Scotland's archaeology sector, to develop [Scotland's Archaeology Strategy](#). The HES source [5.1] commented that Driscoll's experience from SERF *'played a considerable role'*:

The integrated approach ... combining research questions through excavation and survey with training, community participation, creative responses, interpretation and exhibition, including pop-up museums, were an exemplar as we created the Strategy.

The Strategy's aims, under the overall themes of *collaboration* and *inclusion*, are 'delivering archaeology', 'caring and protecting', 'enhancing understanding', 'encouraging greater engagement' and 'innovation and skills'. It was launched to an international audience at the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) conference in 2015 by Scotland's Culture Secretary, Fiona Hyslop MSP, who emphasised the Strategy's central goal, repeating in her speech: *'we want archaeology to be for everyone'* [5.2, 5.3].

The impact of the new Strategy and SERF on archaeology in Scotland

Major issues facing the sector previously included a strategic vision for allocation of the annual c.GBP1.4 million budget for HS/HES's archaeological research funding [5.4]. Open to non-academic organisations, this is the largest single source of archaeological project funding in Scotland. Together, HES and SSAC introduced a new central funding eligibility criterion in 2015: all new projects [must state how their work will contribute to delivery of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy](#) [5.5]. Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop MSP, referring to the period 2015-2020, stated that *'to date, over £6 million has been invested in grant funding by [HES] to projects delivering Scotland's Archaeology Strategy'*. [5.3]. The HES Head of Archaeology Strategy explained that *'on average some £1.4 million per annum has been invested in grant-aiding archaeological projects which need to deliver the strategy in order to ensure funding'*. She added that there are

further areas where the principles of the Strategy has influenced HES's practice: *'in all our archaeological activities on our Properties in Care, the various contracts that we tender for archaeology, and archaeological collaborative doctoral studentships...'*

The shift in thinking about the aims of archaeological practice enshrined in the Strategy has also influenced archaeologists in the UK and beyond. A 2017 special edition of *The Archaeologist*, the magazine of the UK Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, was devoted to discussion of the Strategy [5.6]. HES has noted that it has been *'discussed in conferences and meetings in at least nine countries across Europe, featured in keynote addresses at the EAA meetings in 2019 and 2020, and has also been presented in the USA and China'*. The Director of Rathmell Archaeology commented that *'Scotland's Archaeology Strategy is a powerful tool in refocusing our discipline, showing the need for us all to support and achieve structural change for our common benefit'* [5.7].

SERF also explicitly fulfilled a key HS aim at the time, to investigate damage to ploughed sites, discovering that agricultural practices were causing irreversible damage to Scheduled Monument sites (3.1). These findings are now informing HES's thinking as the body responsible for curating this national resource, leading to a review of cropmark Scheduling practice at HS/HES, informed by a workshop given by Brophy to HES in 2016. In turn, this has developed into a full review of the management and research of cropmarks. HES commented [5.1]:

The SERF project has been an important source of information for the cropmark review. ... the SERF excavations provided up-to-date information on ... monuments that were included in the review. SERF's findings directly fed into decisions about designation [and] discussions with SERF project members regarding their findings on plough damage to buried remains have helped inform our approach to the review of these sites.

The Strategy is also impacting the commercial archaeological sector in Scotland, including through delivery of 185 CPD opportunities to explicitly address skills shortages identified through the development of the Strategy [5.3]. The Managing Director of Guard Archaeology Ltd stated that from his perspective, *'AIM 5: Innovation and Skills clearly has the most impact ... [the Strategy] forms a coherent framework for commercial companies to form research strategies around and develop greater potential from the results of development-control work'* [5.7]. The Director at Rathmell Archaeology commented that *'there have [been] clear commercial benefits for us from engaging with the Strategy. It has helped us to: review our working practice; recognise the drivers behind policy change affecting our sector so we anticipate change; and promote collaborative working both within and outwith the commercial sector'* [5.8].

The impact of the Strategy on archaeology beyond Scotland

In 2015, Fiona Hyslop consulted with her counterpart in Ireland, and the SSAC supported the development of the *Archaeology 2025 Strategy* for Ireland. Royal Irish Academy members involved in this stated that during the process of drafting the Irish strategy, he *'found Scotland's Archaeology Strategy an inspiration in terms of its structure, language and vision ... the team behind Scotland's Archaeology Strategy provided invaluable assistance'* [5.9]. HES noted that *'colleagues in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland have acknowledged that it has been instrumental in the development of Strategic approaches for archaeology in their nations, as well as being followed closely elsewhere, such as in Belgium'*. The Assistant Director of Northern Ireland's Historic Environment Division stated regarding *Archaeology 2030: A Strategic Approach for Northern Ireland* that *'Scotland's Archaeology Strategy was, and continues to be, a shining example that influenced the initiative.'* [5.3]. Fiona Hyslop noted that *'the fact that*

Scotland's Archaeology Strategy has helped inspire other countries to adopt a similar strategic approach is testament to its strength'. [5.3]

In 2019, UofG Archaeology, led by Driscoll, hosted workshops with the Medieval Europe Research Community (MERC) to develop an international framework, the 'MERC Manifesto', based on *Scotland's Archaeology Strategy*. This [output](#) was made freely available in Autumn 2020, and MERC's members have undertaken to promote the framework's implementation. MERC's Chair commented that *'The Strategy is an example for many (if not most) other European countries and regions. It was accepted as a viable inspiration for 'mainstreaming' archaeology in Flanders for instance, where the regional government is developing a similar strategy starting from Scotland's Archaeology Strategy'*. [5.10]

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- 5.1 Testimonial letter, Head of Archaeology Strategy and World Heritage at Historic Environment Scotland [PDF], corroborating the importance of Prof Driscoll's expertise and the SERF project in influencing the shape and creation of *Scotland's Archaeology Strategy* and commenting in detail on the significance and impact of the Strategy.
- 5.2 History Scotland [magazine](#), 2nd Sept 2015 [PDF], detailing the launch of the *Strategy* by Scottish Culture Minister Fiona Hyslop and quoting from her speech.
- 5.3 Historic Environment Scotland, 2021: 5-year review of *Scotland's Archaeology Strategy* (2015-2020) [PDF], corroborating the achievements of the Strategy in its first five years with quotations from various stakeholders including Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop MSP, and the Principal Inspector of Historic Monuments and Assistant Director at Northern Ireland's Historic Environment Division. Available at: <http://archaeologystategy.scot/files/2021/03/SAS-Five-Year-Review-Double-Page-Compressed-1.pdf>
- 5.4 Historic Scotland. 2012. *Review of the Archaeology Function*. [PDF of document supplied by HES]. Details issues with archaeological sector in Scotland prior to the Strategy.
- 5.5 The Aims of the Strategy listed as an essential criterion for HES funding detailed on HES [website](#). [PDF]
- 5.6 The Archaeologist issue 100, Winter 2017 special issue [PDF], corroborating the impact of the Strategy on archaeological practice, including reflections on their practice from various practitioners in relation to delivering each of the five aims of the strategy.
- 5.7 Email statement, Managing Director, Guard Archaeology Ltd, corroborating benefits of the strategy for the Commercial sector.
- 5.8 Email statement, Managing Director, Rathmell Archaeology Ltd, corroborating benefits of the strategy for the Commercial sector.
- 5.9 Letter of support for nomination of *Scotland's Archaeology Strategy* for a Europa Nostra award, from co-chairs of the Royal Irish Academy's Standing Committee for Archaeology, corroborating the influence of the Scottish strategy on the Irish one.
- 5.10 Letter of support for nomination of *Scotland's Archaeology Strategy* for a Europa Nostra award, from MERC chair, corroborating the influence of the Scottish strategy on the Irish one.