

SCOTLAND'S ROCK ART PROJECT

NEWSLETTER 6: SPRING 2020

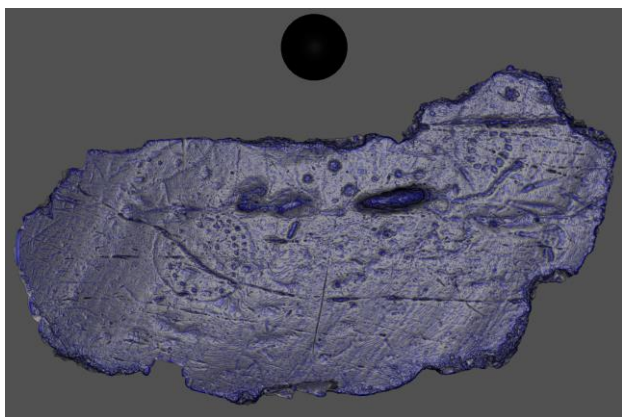


We hope that you are all staying safe and well in these strange times! Things have changed dramatically since our last newsletter, so read on to find out what we have been doing before and during the lockdown.

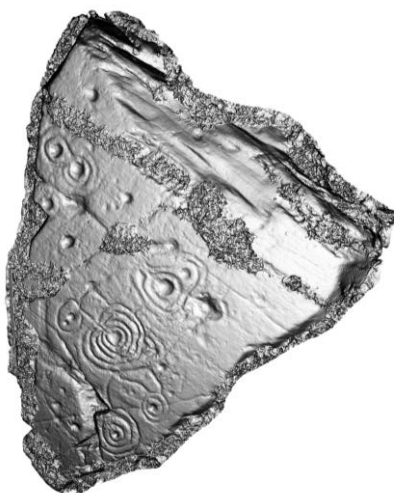
ROCK ART RECORDING

Although fieldwork stopped with the lockdown in March, we and our Community Teams have squeezed in a considerable amount of recording since November, and we are glad to have been able to visit our Kilmartin, Bute, NOSAS and Kirkcudbright Teams in the last few months. We are continuing to support our Community Teams from home, and help complete all records that have been collected but are not yet in our database.

A recent highlight for us was working with our Kirkcudbright Team on the wonderful rock art at Townhead in Galloway. Here, in a grassy field, there are more than 20 carved rocks featuring unusual motifs, such as circles of cupmarks within rings.



Above: Circular motifs at Townhead 20 show up clearly in this virtual RTI render created by Andy Hickie using the 3D model produced by our Kirkcudbright Team. Thank you to Andy for the model rendering!



Right: Complex and varied motifs at Townhead 1, Galloway

NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF SCOTLAND (NMS)

In March, we began recording rock art in the NMS Collection together with NMS staff and members of our Community Teams. There are over 100 panels in their Collection Centre in Edinburgh, many donated in the 19th century. They range from small stones with a single cupmark to large boulders with elaborate carvings. Some are legendary, such as the cup marked stone excavated by Stuart Piggott from Dalladies long barrow, Aberdeenshire, in the 1970s. We will resume this work when it is safe. You can see the 3D models (created by Hugo Anderson-Whymark from NMS) of the panels we recorded on the [NMS Sketchfab account](#), and the records will soon be on our website. Huge thanks to everyone involved!



The cup marked stone from a c.3000 BC context at Dalladies provided the first firm evidence that rock art was created during the Neolithic period

COMMUNITY TEAMS

Our Community Teams continued doing fantastic work right up to the lockdown and have now created over half of the 1100 records in our database – a phenomenal achievement!

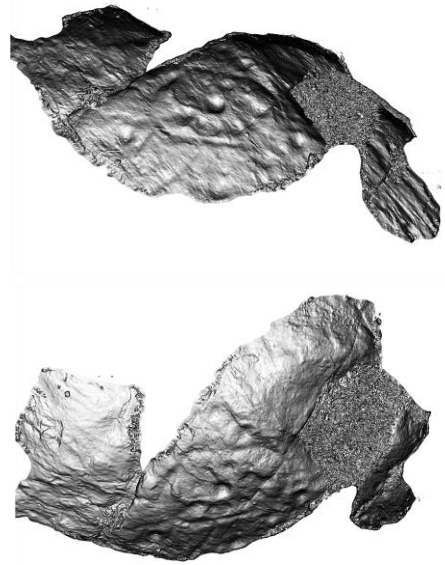
NOSAS (North of Scotland Archaeological Society) alone have recorded around 230 panels, over 70 of which had no previous Canmore entry, and highlighted the density of rock art around the Moray Firth. You can view all contributions by our Community Teams on our [website](#).

With fieldwork currently on hold, our Community Teams are using this time to upload any outstanding records to our database. Congratulations especially to Pat and the Rock Art Bute Team, and new recruits Neil and Barbara for completing 20 rock art records in the last few weeks!

Below: Kilmartin Rock Art Team members with essential equipment for 3D modelling the Torbhlaren Standing Stone



Left: Part of the Blarnaboard 1 panel near Aberfoyle, Stirlingshire, recorded recently by our Callander Team. It comprises an 8m long, segmented stretch of bedrock covered in over 50 motifs including six cups with multiple rings! You can see more images and the 3D model for this panel on our website



Glenvoidean 9 is one of over 40 panels recorded by our Rock Art Bute Team. If you look carefully you can see the lovely rosette motif on this rock

RAISING AWARENESS

We are delighted that many of our Teams are actively promoting their local rock art.

In the last six months, our Kirkcudbright Team, in collaboration with the Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership, ran a guided walk to the wonderful High Banks rock art; Lisa from the Kirkcudbright Team and Alan from NOSAS gave presentations on rock art to local societies; Andrew from the Killin Team published articles in the National Trust for Scotland Ben Lawers Newsletter and *Killin News*, while Nick from the Callander Team has articles coming out over the summer in the Callander magazine *Ben Ledi View* and *Mensa Magazine*. Fantastic work everyone!

We would love to hear from you if you have done something to raise awareness of rock art or would like to publicise rock art in your area.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Thanks to all the fieldwork completed last year, we now have a big chunk of detailed information to work with and have already started analysing the data.

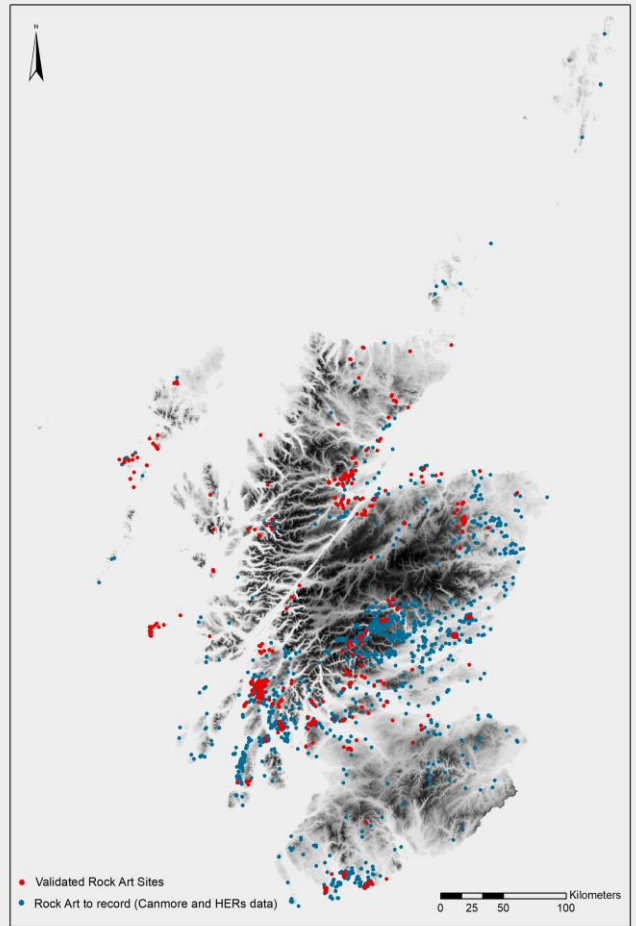
A total of **1100** rock art panels have been visited since the project started (about a third of the total known in Scotland). Of these, about 750 panels were successfully located and recorded as prehistoric rock art. You can clearly see the impact of this work across Scotland on our map.

Although we don't have full access to the resources we need for our analysis during lockdown, there is much that we can do! At the moment, we are exploring the detailed nature and arrangement of motifs from across Scotland in order to understand regional diversity and connectivity. We are also examining hundreds of 3D models to assess whether motifs are superimposed or modified. You will be able to read about the results of this work in our future newsletters.

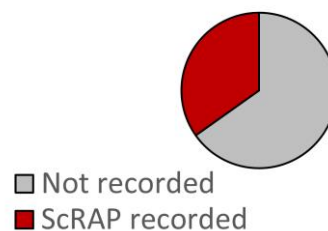
You can search for completed records using our [website map](#) where they are shown by the light blue dots, or simple search. You can also checkout our 3D models in our [Sketchfab account](#) and [here](#).



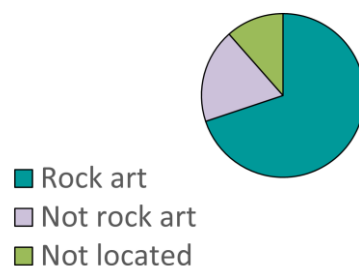
Ardifuir 6 (above) is one of many lovely cup and ring marked rocks around Ardifuir that we and our Kilmartin Rock Art Team recorded over the winter, with help from Kilmartin Museum staff



Relief map of Scotland showing the impact of our fieldwork. Red dots are panels recorded by us and our Community Teams. Blue dots show panels with existing records in Canmore and Historic Environment Records that have not yet been recorded



These pie charts show the overall proportion of Scotland's rock art recorded since the project began in 2017 (top), and the proportion of those panels that have been located, identified as rock art, and recorded in detail (bottom)



NEW DISCOVERIES AND HIDDEN GEMS

There have been some fabulous discoveries since our last Newsletter! We were very excited when a member of the public contacted us about a cup and ring marked panel they found in woodland near Edinburgh. The panel was recorded by our ELF (Edinburgh, Lothians and Fife) Team and is now on our website. There are very few surviving examples of rock art in the Lothians, and this lovely stone with its three cup and ring motifs and unusual single ring hints at the possible original richness of carvings in this area. It is reassuring to know that there is still rock art waiting to be found, even in heavily developed places.



Below: NOSAS Team members re-discovering the Moniak Castle panel under the castle lawn



Above: Lymphoy 1, discovered in woodland near Edinburgh and recorded by our ELF Team



Another encouraging discovery came from NOSAS, who re-found a fabulous cupmarked stone, lost since it was lent to Miss Campbell of Moniak Castle in the late 19th century. The stone had been retrieved from a dyke, installed in Moniak Castle rockery, then displaced and overgrown with turf over the decades. Clever detective work by the NOSAS Team located the stone under the lawn (with the landowner's permission!). It has now been restored to prime position in the Castle rockery. Thank you to NOSAS for the lovely photo!

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SCRAP RESEARCH WORKSHOPS

In November we ran two Research Workshops in Edinburgh to promote and inform our work. These focussed on (1) Research approaches to rock art, and (2) Social value and community engagement.

Each workshop involved a series of provocative presentations and discussions, and was attended by 35 academics, practitioners and members of Community Teams.

You can see view the presentations and read a synthesis of the discussions on our website [Research workshops page](#).

AND FINALLY...

Anyone can subscribe on our website [Resources>Newsletters](#) page to receive our (free!) newsletter.

You can find out more about what we are doing on our [ScRAP Facebook page](#). If you have a favourite panel, or a question or interesting fact about rock art, please send us details as we would love to feature it on our weekly Facebook hashtags #FridayRocks and #DidYouKnow.

CONTACT US AT: ScRAP@hes.scot



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