



Galloway Glens 'Can You Dig It' Community Archaeology project – Technical notes.

Web-based Heritage Research - Training Workshop Note

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There are a range of resources available which provide information on the historic environment. Those listed here either provide all-Scotland coverage or are regional resources specific to the Galloway Glens area. Even when a resource has national coverage, this does not necessarily mean that the data held is of a consistent level across the resource.

Canmore

The ideal starting point for any web-based research is **Canmore**, compiled and maintained by [Historic Environment Scotland](#). This is an online public archive and database, which forms a record of the archaeological and historical environment in Scotland. It contains details of over 320,000 archaeological sites, monuments, buildings and maritime sites - together with an index to the drawings, manuscripts and photographs held in the [National Record of the Historic Environment](#) - which can be searched via database query. Images of over 80,000 of the photographs or drawings in the collection are also available in Canmore.

The information held there has come from a range of sources, ranging from professional archaeologists to amateur antiquarians, which has been amassed over more than a century. It also incorporates work carried out by archaeologists working for the Ordnance Survey. Much, however, was generated through the work of staff working for the [Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland](#) (who continue this role today as part of Historic Environment Scotland). It is the changing character of their work which has shaped and defined the scope and quality of the information held within the National Record of the Historic Environment.

To understand the complexity of Canmore, it is useful to have some knowledge of the way in which the Commission's role has changed since their creation. For many years, one of their primary roles was to compile and maintain an 'Inventory' of monuments. These originally were comprehensive hardbound volumes, often generated using the results of detailed field surveys produced on a county basis. Produced from 1911 to 1992, some 25 volumes were prepared, covering approximately 22 counties. The commission ceased production of Inventories in 1992, recognising that the format no longer met their objectives effectively.

Their focus then changed to survey and publication work specifically targeted towards areas perceived to be under threat. These took the form of the Sites and Monuments volumes, produced on a more expedient basis to address those areas of Scotland experiencing rapid development pressure. Produced between 1978 and 1989, these volumes covered large areas of the north-east, central belt and northern isles. This work was followed between 1989 and 1998 with the Afforestation Land Survey, which targeted strategic areas where afforestation was anticipated, typically marginal ground in upland rural areas. During this period the Commission surveyed large areas of ground with a view to identifying and characterising the archaeology. While all of this data fed into Canmore, some was also published in thematic or area-based volumes (e.g. [Glenesslin Nithsdale](#))

Taking a more thematic approach was the [First Edition Survey Project](#), a 6-year project which covered the whole of Scotland and which identified over 26,000 unroofed buildings depicted on the first edition Ordnance Survey maps of Scotland.

The aim was to plot the changing character of Scotland's rural landscape during the late 18th and 19th centuries. The summary results of the survey are published in *But the Walls Remained*, together with more information about the research value of early Ordnance Survey maps and descriptions of the common types of settlement and landscape features. All data has been integrated into Canmore, and it can provide a useful starting point for those embarking on a detailed study of medieval or later rural settlement.

Now part of Historic Environment Scotland, their staff continue to develop and undertake a range of field survey projects that seek to record endangered or poorly understood elements of the historic environment. These projects can focus on large survey areas such as Donside, Canna or Holyrood Park.

PastMap

All the above have significantly enriched Canmore, but they are generated in a geographically proscribed manner.

To the casual user, Canmore may be a difficult resource to work with, as there are so many variables in the searches. Finding a specific site can therefore be tricky, although for general searches, such as providing information on every Bronze Age cairn in a certain parish, it can be useful. But there are alternative ways of accessing this data, which some may find a more user-friendly approach. These take the forms of map-based searches, which allow the user to identify known sites visually.

Canmore itself has a map-based websearch facility, but an alternative resource is available in **PastMap**, a map-based web tool produced by Historic Environment Scotland which - as well as providing point locations for every site, building, maritime feature or find recorded in Canmore, displays the location of: listed buildings; the boundaries of Scheduled Monuments; the boundaries of designed landscapes and gardens. Here, the query system links the map depiction of each mapped element through to the underlying data explaining what each element represents.

PastMap also allows access to information held by the **Historic Environment Record of Dumfries and Galloway Council**. This is the database maintained by the local authority archaeologist, and it can be accessed independently of the Canmore site. The HER should be the first port-of-call when reporting new information about known sites or new discoveries throughout the area covered by the Galloway Glens Landscape Project.

So far, we have found out how to identify what sites are known, by examining information in a database which allows us to learn what a particular site is, where it is located, and how much - if any- archaeological work has been done previously there in the past. We've examined resources which locate these sites on a modern map, but this is merely the starting point for a much more complex and enriching process. Let's turn now to historic mapping - for this resource, the main repository is undoubtedly the **National Libraries of Scotland** of which the National Map Library of Scotland is a part.

National Libraries

The National Libraries of Scotland (NLS) has its roots in the late 17th century, and was given legal rights to claim a copy of every book published in Britain in 1710. It is one of only 6 legal deposit libraries in Britain and Ireland, and now holds 14 million printed items and 100,000 manuscripts, as well as maps and other items. It should be considered a primary source of reference material for background reading relating to the historic environment, including most – if not indeed all – of the journal runs and major publications listed below. Its Rare Book Collections also include works pertinent to Scotland's history and built environment.

Forming part of the NLS is the **National Map Library of Scotland**. With over 2 million maps in its collections, the Map Library allows access to some of the most important maps of Scotland produced between 1560 and 1928. Many of these are now web-mounted – these include maps of 16th and 17th century date by the celebrated mapmakers Pont and Blaeu, 18th century military maps; 18th and 19th

marine maps; and Ordnance Survey large scale Scottish Town plans, printed between 1847 and 1895.

While there are a broad range of cartographic sources available, two prominent national survey programmes are particularly worthy of mention. The first is the Military Survey of Scotland, which was the first systematic survey of mainland Scotland and is an excellent source for research. The maps show settlements, cultivation, woodland, parkland, roads and tracks in colour at a scale of one inch to 1000 yards (1:36000). This is an important source as it records the pre-improvement landscape, but it should be used with caution as the mapping can be inaccurate and inconsistent while the Gaelic place names can be unreliable. The second is provided by the Ordnance Survey mapping programmes, which began mapping rural Scotland in 1843, at a scale of six inches to the mile (1:10560). This scale is large enough to show individual buildings, roads and field systems. The country was surveyed by county, with each county then re-surveyed on two occasions - it is the initial First Edition of this mapping sequence that provided the data for the First Edition Survey Section which was mentioned previously in the section devoted to Canmore.

Providing an important accessory to the First Edition Ordnance Survey maps is the Name Book, in which surveyors recorded the authorities used for every name which appeared on the map sheet. A short description of each feature is included (eg 'a small farmhouse with suitable offices, one storey, thatched and in poor repair') along with the name of the proprietor. This is a valuable resource which can assist in understanding the rural structures and settlement depicted, and it is amongst the varied range of resources which can be accessed via the on-line web resource **Scotland's Places**.

Maps and Mapping

We'll be learning more about Scotland's Places later, but before we leave the subject of mapping, there's one last resource to mention. This is DAMP, the **Dumfries Archival Mapping Project** which has been web-mounting estate maps and plans throughout Nithsdale and will be doing the same for material in Stewartry and the Galloway Glens Landscape Project area. These plans can be accessed via the National Map Library of Scotland on-line web portal. Please bear in mind, however, that these are organised according to parish, so you'll have to have a broad understanding of your location before you start using this resource.

We've seen already how data from historic mapping was used by staff of the then-RCAHMS to create the First Edition Survey Project; before moving on from mapping, mention should also be made of the **Historic Land Use Assessment** project, still ongoing under the direction of Historic Environment Scotland. Developed as a map-based analysis of past and present-day land use throughout Scotland, this resource provides a categorisation system for landscape history.

Each area with similar origins has been given one of 55 Historic Land-use Types, which also allocates it a Category group, or a Period of origin. Wherever past land-use is detected it is recorded as a Relict Category, Period and Type. This categorisation is largely based on cartographic sources; while ground testing is undertaken to support the assessment where map-based research proves inconclusive, general survey is not carried out.

Forming a modern counterpoint to traditional mapping techniques is aerial imagery. The **National Collection of Aerial Photographs**, held and maintained by Historic Environment Scotland, contains a broad range of aerial images generated from the 1930s onwards. These include: RAF training, reconnaissance and camouflage survey images; Luftwaffe imagery; oblique imagery from RCAHMS sponsored flights; and late-20th century imagery from Ordnance Survey and other mapping projects.

Access to some aerial imagery can be carried out via Canmore, but a much broader range can be viewed via a web-mounted application set up by the National Collection of Aerial Photographs. This helps users to locate aerial photographs held in the collections, containing details of flight plots which illustrate where there will be vertical aerial photographic coverage. Images can be viewed without charge, but only at a very small size - in order to obtain a detailed image, a visit to the Collections is required, or a digital file must be ordered. These images can be useful when viewing areas which were subject to afforestation in the post-war period - RAF sorties in particular may show these locations prior to planting, and hence depopulated settlements in particular may be revealed in some detail.

Up-to-date satellite imagery can also be a valuable source of information, via commercial websites such as **Google Earth** or **Google Maps**. This is particularly useful if you're looking to find out about a particular location's current land use.

So far, we've found out how to find out what known sites are present in the landscape, and we've also explored the historic mapping and aerial imagery resources which can show us how the landscape evolved in modern times, and - following on from that - help us to establish how well a site may have survived to the present. We can also use historic mapping and aerial imagery to identify potential new sites within the landscape. All this is particularly useful for relatively 'modern' sites, in particular for farms and settlements of post-medieval and modern date. We've also seen how this kind of data can be used to create detailed pictures of change in the landscape, through the Historic Land Use Assessment project.

Historic Land Use Assessment

The Historic Land Use Assessment provides a very broad overview of the landscape and its evolution, but for those who are interested, there are web-based resources which can provide a more specialised and localised insight into the environment. These rely on excellent levels of preservation in the environmental data (such as pollen) and therefore they are linked with wetland locations.

Two main specialist datasets are available, covering differing aspects of the historic environment. The first is the **Scottish Palaeoecological Archive Database** - produced jointly by the University of Edinburgh and the then-Historic Scotland, this resource provides information on sites in Scotland where evidence of past environments has been preserved in the 'natural archives' of peat bogs, mires and lochs. By studying such evidence (which includes fossil plants and pollen, animal bones and sediments), palaeoecologists can reconstruct past ecosystems and study their change over time. To date, information relating to the area of the Galloway Glens and its immediate environs is limited.

The **Scottish Wetlands Archaeological Database** is perhaps more interesting to the general user, as it integrates archaeological information with environmental data. It contains 6,000 records and highlights the importance of wetlands as repositories of archaeological information. The information held in the database was generated by combining digital overlays of wetland sites defined using information obtained from Scottish Natural Heritage and the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute, with archaeological information held in Canmore. Created in order to produce a fuller understanding of the potential of Scottish wetland archaeology, it can also be used as a management tool and a source of information for interpretative schemes.

Journals

Much of the emphasis so far has been on archaeological sites relating to the recent past, but those of you with an interest in prehistory or the medieval period, we've seen how Canmore and the Scottish Wetland Archaeological Database can help you learn more. Even more detailed information is available in a number of journals which have direct relevance to the study of the historic environment in Scotland - and that's true of the post-medieval and modern periods, too. These journals often have extensive runs but can be difficult to source - helpfully, one of the roles of Historic Environment Scotland is to collate, synthesise and integrate information derived from such journals and include it within the National Record of the Historic Environment. However, this is not a verbatim transfer of information and more data is almost invariably retained in the primary source, which are referenced from the Canmore entries.

A list of the better-known journals is included here, to give some idea of what is available. Most are available only as hard copies which can be viewed in major libraries, but some are now web-mounted. Those that can be accessed free-of-charge as web-mounted documents can be accessed via links provided.

- **Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland** (1792 - present) – a platform for the publication of articles concerned with archaeology and antiquarian studies across Scotland
- **Transactions of the Dumfries and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society** (1862-present) - a journal dedicated to the natural history, archaeology and history of Dumfries and Galloway.
- Council for Scottish Archaeology's **Discovery and Excavation in Scotland** (1947 - present) – this provides an annual gazetteer of archaeological projects undertaken in Scotland;
- **Scottish Archaeological Journal** (1969 - present) – formerly known as Glasgow Archaeological Journal, this journal has, in recent years, transformed

itself from a regional journal focussing mainly on western Scotland to a publication with a broader scope of interest encompassing the whole of Scotland.

- **Scottish Archaeological Forum Monographs (1969 - 1981)** – these comprise the published proceedings of the various conferences hosted by SAF. All contain some material which is relevant to Scotland, with many volumes devoted entirely to aspects of Scottish archaeology and the built heritage.
- **Vernacular Buildings, Scottish Vernacular Buildings Working Group Journal (1975 – present)** – devoted to the publication of articles relating to Scotland's smaller traditional buildings, built using local materials and methods.

There are also a range of United Kingdom (or International) journals that can include articles directly relating to the archaeology and/or built heritage of Scotland, and its place in a wider national or even international context.

- **Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society** – publishes papers on all aspects of prehistory with an emphasis on the British Isles, Europe, SW Asia, and the countries bordering the Mediterranean;
- **Britannia** – dedicated to the archaeology of Roman Britain;
- **Medieval Archaeology** – the aims of this publication are to support and advance the study of the medieval period (5th– 16th century AD) in Britain and Ireland;
- **Post-Medieval Archaeology** - a bi-annual journal devoted to the study of the material evidence of European society wherever it is found throughout the world;
- **Industrial Archaeology Review** – covers all practical aspects of recording, surveying, excavation, interpretation, conservation and protective legislation relating to the surviving evidence of industrial activity; and
- **Garden History** - its aim is to advance understanding of the history and conservation of gardens and designed landscapes.

In addition, there have been, or continue to be, a number of critical national specialists' syntheses or surveys that provide a valuable source of information at the national level as to the character of the historic environment. These include:

- **Pevesner Buildings of Scotland** - Produced by the Buildings Books Trust detailing the architectural history of the regions of Scotland;
- **Industrial Archaeology of Scotland** – Two volumes by prominent industrial archaeologist, John Hume, devoted to the industrial archaeology of Scotland. Published in the 1970's, Volume I is devoted to Lowland, and Volume II to Highland, Scotland. The author gives detailed but succinct summaries of a variety of industrial buildings, presented on a county-by-county basis;
- **A Guide to the Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland** – a 19th century series authored by architectural historians MacGibbon and Ross which is still considered an important primary source and a definitive guide to medieval and early post-medieval buildings in Scotland;
- **A Guide to the Ecclesiastical Architecture of Scotland** – as Castellated & Domestic Architecture (above), but devoted to churches, cathedrals and other religious buildings of medieval and early post-medieval date.

This summary of journals and syntheses shows just how diverse the study of our past can be, and how many specialist offshoots there are. Whatever your site of interest, it's almost guaranteed that someone, somewhere, will have carried out a more detailed investigation of the type or class of monument that this site represents. Many of the journals listed above are produced by specialist societies such as the Association for Industrial Archaeology, or the Society for Medieval Archaeology, but others represent resources compiled by institutions or even, in some cases, individuals.

Other resources

For those interested in industrial archaeology, an extremely useful resource is provided by the [Scottish Mining Website](#), which provides detailed information relating to all aspects of Scottish extractive industries. Another interesting site to visit is [Scotland's Brick Manufacturing Industry](#), which provides information relating to the numerous brick manufacturers operating in Scotland during the 19th and 20th centuries.

If your interest lies in historic church sites, then the [Historic Churchyards of Dumfries and Galloway](#) is worth exploring, while for those whose interest lies in Medieval or Later Rural Settlement (the Raiders Road sites provide us with typical examples of this kind of site), the website [Scotland's Rural Past](#) project will be of interest. Scotland's Rural Past (SRP) was a five-year (2006-11), nationwide project, which supported local communities across Scotland in the investigation of deserted rural settlements dating from the medieval and post-medieval periods. The website remains as a free resource which provides guidance of the research, identification, recording and protection of Medieval or Later Rural Settlement.

Museums / archives

Looking more broadly at artefacts originating from the prehistoric period onwards, we increasingly find that the accessioned items which make up museum collections are being more widely shared on line as digital records and - often - images. The [Future Museum](#) initiative, which highlights the collections of museums throughout Dumfries and Galloway and Ayrshire, has a map-based search element which links sites and objects. The [National Museums of Scotland](#) has an on-line search facility for its collections, but at present this is poorly populated in terms of the images available. Also worth a look is the [British Museum](#) on-line collections database, which holds some material from the Galloway Glens area.

Another site which includes information and images relating to artefacts is **Scran**, a learning image services which currently hosts over 490,000 images, movies and sound clips derived from museums (including the National Museums of Scotland), archives, galleries and other institutions. including the media. Scran - formerly part of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, but now run by Historic Environment Scotland - aims to provide educational access to digital materials representing material culture and history. This is provided through the wholly owned trading arm Scran Ltd. They are one of the largest educational online services in the UK supporting over 4,000 schools, libraries, colleges and universities. It can be used as a superior form of clip art or for particular learning applications. It uses an advanced licensing system in which the institution retains ownership of the digitised assets but makes these available under licence to Scran, although small versions of the images can be viewed free of charge.

Further resources are available for obtaining contemporary and historic photographs, drawings, etc. Many feature historic buildings, archaeological sites or artefacts, with access to the resource is obtained via subscription. These include the image library of the **University of Aberdeen**, which has in its large and varying photographic collection the George Washington Wilson Collection, which consists of over 40,000 glass plate negatives produced by the Aberdeen photographer's company during the second half of the 19th century. The **University of St Andrews** also has an on-line image library which offers access to the photographic material held within the Special Collections Department of the University of St Andrews Library. The whole collection currently numbers in excess of 300,000 images, and is one of the largest and most important collections of historic photography in Scotland, stemming primarily from the fact that St Andrews played a vital role in the development of the photographic process.

The archive also includes large collections such as the monochrome image archive of Valentines of Dundee, the photographic company which produced Scottish topographical views from the 1860s, and later became internationally famous as the producers of picture postcards. The negatives of Robert Moyes Adam, the well-known Scottish landscape photographer whose work spans the first half of this century, numbers some 15,000 negatives. The work of George Cowie, a local press

photographer from 1930 to 1982, covers all aspects of life in and around St Andrews and the East Neuk of Fife, with a considerable section on the subject of golf. Several other collections from the later 19th century and throughout the present century complement these major archives, with photographs covering a wide range of locations and subject areas.

Last, but by no means least, we're going to move from the study of places and physical structures to people. The past as we see it today was created through the actions and activities of people, and while it's difficult to find evidence for individuals throughout much of the prehistoric, Roman and medieval periods, the post-medieval period sees the introduction of much more detailed documentary sources. Many of these are now available on-line.

People

General overviews of particular locations, which include information on population and land ownership, as well as industrial and agricultural production, can be found in the **Statistical Accounts of Scotland**. The First (Old) Statistical Account (1791-1799) was established in order to investigate the impact and effects of the agricultural improving movement upon the contemporary Scottish countryside. It contains many descriptions of traditional, pre-improvement farming practices, as well as descriptions of improved and experimental methods of agriculture. The Second (New) Statistical Account (1834-1845) was compiled when the improving movement was in full swing and the country experiencing a period of great economic change – the industrial revolution. As well as information about the progress of agricultural improvements, this account contains descriptions of emigration and famine across many parts of the Highlands. Another potential source is the **Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland** (1882-1885) by FH Groome: this is the best Scottish gazetteer to look out for, and whole copies of this publication, or later editions, should be found in your local studies library or archive, the second edition (1892-1896) has been digitised and is available on-line.

The **National Records of Scotland** has a search facility which allows detailed study of specific places or people/families, and this is particularly useful for those interested in detailed aspects of land ownership. Now incorporated into the larger holdings of the National Records of Scotland are records once held by the National Registers of Scotland, the Government Agency responsible for compiling and maintaining the registers relating to property and other legal documents. These can provide information on land ownership. Deeds relating to rights in property were originally held in the Register of Sasines, which was established in 1617; this was the system in place until 1979 when the Land Register of Scotland was introduced to replace it.

More general searches can be carried out via the **Scotland's Places** portal. Run collaboratively by the National Records of Scotland, the National Library of Scotland and Historic Environment Scotland, this resource allows access to a variety of material which includes maps, surveys and plans, photographs, archaeological records, drawings, and a variety of tax rolls. These include links to Canmore, and an ability to search the Ordnance Survey Name Books, which were mentioned previously. The tax rolls, in particular, provide the names and details of individuals, with records going back as far as the mid-1600s in places.

More recent information such as census returns is not included; for this, it is necessary to visit the **Scotland's People** website, which charges a fee for carrying out an outline search of the records in any detail. The 1851 census for Dumfriesshire, Kirkcudbrightshire and Wigtownshire has, however, been web-mounted by **Dumfries and Galloway Council**: it can be accessed via the website of **Dumfries and Galloway Family History Society**, which also provides additional resources which may prove helpful to the researcher.

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