

## Recently received items from the Treasure Trove Unit

Many thanks to the detectorists who declare their finds!

<https://treasuretrovescotland.co.uk/information/information-for-finders/>

### **1. Early Bronze Age copper alloy flat axehead, from Duffus TT105/19 ELGNM 2019.7**

Although there is some damage to the cutting edge the blade is intact. The axe has been categorised to Needham (2017) Type 3A (Type Lansdown)

Date: circa 2200 – 2100 BC

Finder: Steven Shorters

### **2. Neolithic stone ground axehead, from Alves TT 139/22**

The axehead is smooth on both faces and has been ground but not polished. The shape is typical of the period being an elongated oval, tapering in width at the butt. The cutting edge is ground to a thin edge on both faces. The linear gashes on one face are probably from post-depositional plough damage.

Date: 4000 – 2500 BC

Finder: Ian Murray Tough

### **3. A copper-alloy zoomorphic prick-spur fragment, from Urquhart TT119/22**

The fragment comprises the base of likely U-shaped side arms, an integrally cast zoomorphic neck and extending conical goad (or spur). The neck bears two moulded ears, two eyes and an open snout, these features variously emphasised by engraved lines. This is an unusual find for Scotland.

Date: circa 800 – 1150 AD

Finder: Billy Gault

### **4. Neolithic arrowhead in probable Post Medieval silver frame, from Dufftown TT132/22**

Such artefacts have been described as elf-shot amulets or charms: a combination of an already ancient item thought to be imbued with supernatural power, here a Neolithic flint arrowhead, set into a decorative and wearable personal adornment, memento or keepsake. The purpose may be warding off elf or fairy mischief, apotropaic magic, or a wholly personal artefact as the engraved initials, IK above CS, would suggest. Part of the silver plate in the centre of the reverse has tarnished suggesting the pendant was often touched or rubbed.

Date: 1650 – 1850 AD

Finder: Helen Murray

## 5. Roman coin hoard, from Duffus TT 136/19 ELGNM 2019.13

A group of Roman denarii, fused together either by corrosion or heat. There are four visible coins in the stack with only one obverse visible – but unidentifiable. Coin 1: Obv. [...] A AVG. Bust right, possible laureate. Roman denarii hoards are known from Birnie and Clarkly Hill in Moray, as are single coins, but this is an unusual group given their condition.

Date: 1st – 2nd Century AD

## 6. Chalcolithic/Early Bronze Age Barbed and Tanged Flint Arrowhead, Duffus TT 238/19 ELGNM2020.6

The arrowhead is manufactured from a slightly granular flint and the tip of one barb and the base of the tang are broken. A 'fancy' Kilmarnock type. (See Green, H.S. 1980. *The Flint Arrowheads of the British Isles: a detailed study of material from England and Wales with comparanda from Scotland and Ireland*. BAR British Series 75. Oxford: British Archeological Reports)

Date: 2000 – 1500 BC

Finder: Tom Dempster

## 7. A lead papal bulla of Innocent IV, from Aberlour TT 121/19 ELGNM 2019.12

Obverse reads: INNO/CENTIVS/PP.III inside a beaded border.

Reverse reads: [...]PE (originally SPASPE for Saint Peter and Saint Paul), which surmounts the head of saint Peter, similarly within a pelleted border. PP stands for Pastor Pastorum, shepherd of the shepherds. The depiction of St Paul is heavily worn although the cross between the two saints is still clear. The bulla is bent, but the hole for the hemp or silk cord to run through is still intact.

Date: 1243 – 1254 CE (Innocent IV was born Sinibaldo Fieschi in Genoa in circa 1195 and was Pope from 1243 until his death. His career in the Church, and also in secular matters, was extremely active.)



Innocent IV at the Council of Lyons excommunicating Frederic II, Holy Roman Emperor (Anonymous - *Historia Anglorum* (1250-1259) - BL Royal MS 14 C VII)

## **8. Early Medieval gilt copper-alloy insular zoomorphic mount, from Duffus TT 237/19 ELGNM 2020.5**

The form of the mount is now broadly cruciform: the two short arms have pelta-like terminals but the damaged long ends suggest the shape is not original. There is a zoomorphic beast lying along each of the long arms, At the centre of the mount their bodies intertwine and cross, before branching out into their hind legs, one each of which extends into the pelta-terminals. Spiral hip joints are visible, and the creatures' heads face towards the damaged ends with their forelegs splayed either side of their heads. On the reverse is the stump of an integral lug. There is a possible type link with Norwegian Viking-age grave harness gear.

[pelta – a small light shield as used by ancient Greeks and Romans, and hence an ornamental motif of that outline]

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> Century

Finder: Tom Dempster

## **9. Beaker fragments, near Hopeman ELGNM 1957.60**

An enquiry from Dr Anwen Cooper, Cambridge University and Dr Alison Sheridan, FBA, Principal Curator, emerita, NMS, relating to cist excavations in the Roseisle area led us to link these sherds in our store with Lady Sophia Dunbar's letter to Professor James Y. Simpson in 1866. 'The tenant was absent from home on the day that his [the farmer's] servants [ ] the Cist& the Herd boy unfortunately crept in & cleared out the contents of the Interior which with dust & gravel contained a rough urn about 16 inches high smaller at the base & top & swelling out in the middle perhaps about 8 inches in diameter. There was some tracery & a [ ] interlacing was [ ] on it. It was fragile & sad to say the Boy let it fall & broke it to pieces.' Simpson was the Professor of Midwifery in Edinburgh who introduced chloroform as an aid for childbirth and was in addition to being obstetrician to Sophia, the Vice-president of the Society of Antiquaries. Sophia and family excavated, and she illustrated, several cist burials along the Hopeman to Covesea ridge. (See Women of Moray 2012, by Susan Bennet et al pp 269 - 274)

Dr Alison Sheridan has not seen the actual fragments, but on the basis of a photo of the sherds has created a provisional e-reconstruction. The complex neck design with vertical and horizontal designs is found on David L. Clarke's N4 or Final Northern Beakers (See example from Fyrish in his Beaker Pottery of Great Britain and Ireland, 1970, p. 194)

Date: 2300 -2000BC

## **10. Late Medieval copper-alloy heraldic harness pendant, from Hopeman TT107/22**

The pendant is heater shield-shape in plan. The term is a neologism, created by Victorian antiquarians due to the shape's resemblance to a clothes iron. There is a transversely positioned pierced suspension lug cast on the upper edge. The heraldic design can be blazoned: *A bend between six crosses crosslet fitchy*. No tincture is visible on the heraldic design making it difficult to identify the arms. It may have been tinned or silvered all over and never held enamel. The reverse is plain.

Date: 1200 – 1400 AD

## **11. Medieval copper-alloy harness pendant, from Elgin TT229/19 ELGNM 2020.1**

One face bears heraldic arms comprising a white (intended as silver) enamel background and central cross, with a smaller crosslet in each of the two lower quarters and possibly the upper right. The arms are not Scottish but likely represent the arms of Jerusalem: presented in the Camden Roll (c.1280) with the French blazon as 'Argent, a une croiz de or, crusele de or' (Silver with a gold cross between crosslets). Tiny flecks of gold are visible on the top right charge. The reverse is plain.

Date: 1200 – 1300 AD

Finder: Tom Dempster

## **12. Late Medieval harness pendant, from Duffus TT 144/22**

A copper-alloy heraldic harness pendant. It is shield-shaped but with some edge damage. There is a suspension lug integrally cast to the upper edge, with the loop broken. The reverse is plain. The obverse bears a moderate amount of enamelled heraldic decoration and the shield appears to be quartered:

*'(1<sup>st</sup>) Parted per fess within bordure Gules, paly of the first, unknown in base; (2<sup>nd</sup>) unknown charges possibly quartered, Sable or Argent; (3<sup>rd</sup>) Unknown charge in chief, Sable or Argent, paly in fess of the first, unknown base; (4<sup>th</sup>) Paly in chief Gules, fess unknown, base of the first, within bordure of the first.'*

It has not been possible to do more than speculate on identification; harness pendant production, use and chronology in late medieval Scotland is not well understood and questions remain over the practicality of enamelling detailed heraldry on such small objects.

Date: c. 1200 – 1400 AD

### 13. Flint and silcrete from Culbin Fieldwalking Project TT 62/22

Project Leaders Emeritus Professor Richard Bradley, University of Reading and Aaron Watson

'Worked flint, quartz and silcrete in surprisingly small quantities' was found. Their focus was a re-evaluation of the Mesolithic to Early Bronze Age archaeology of the Culbin area in its context as a prehistoric maritime haven, with comparators of similar and Medieval dates elsewhere in Britain. Dates: 4000 – 2000 BC

Their work is published in *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 82, 2016, pp. 125 – 159. Maritime Havens in Earlier Prehistoric Britain.

Further information for the objects on display is available in the form of the Treasure Trove Unit's reports which we hold on file and the other publications referenced.

Following the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, it is now the King's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer (KLTR) who will offer finds claimed as Treasure Trove to eligible museums such as Elgin Museum.

JT 26/9/2022

## National Fund for Acquisitions

Managed by National Museums Scotland  
Funded by the Scottish Government

Treasure Trove objects acquired with support from NFA  
<https://www.nms.ac.uk/about-us/our-services/national-fund-for-acquisitions/>