Introduction

This catalogue has been produced to illustrate some of the more important objects in the Collections of Campbeltown Museum, as well as those that are best-loved by the community. The latter were chosen during an open day in September 2008 and the top four objects were chosen to appear here. Other objects were selected by the curators for a variety of reasons, further elucidated below.

In general, the permanent exhibits in Campbeltown Museum are illustrative of history and social history, but there can be little doubt that the Museum’s Archaeological Collection is its greatest strength. Discovered by chance or by archaeological excavation, these artefacts are of local and, in some cases, national importance. Many were collected by members of the Kintyre Antiquarian & Natural History Society, who were also active in their continued care over the many years of their involvement with the Museum.

In Scotland, all archaeological material, or objects found by chance, are subject to Treasure Trove legislation and are owned by the Crown, not the finder or landowner (although rewards are given to finders of properly reported material). These objects are then allocated by an independent panel to Museums which meet the standards of the Museums and Libraries Association Accreditation Scheme with the preference being that objects should be allocated locally. For some years now, Campbeltown Museum has acted as one of the repositories of archaeological material which is subject to the Treasure Trove System, and as a result, the Archaeological Collections contain material from all over Argyll. Although this catalogue concentrates on objects from Kintyre, one object - a fragment of a Viking arm ring found on the Island of Lismore - is illustrative of the regional nature of the Archaeology Collection.

The Fine Art Collection is made up of prints, drawings, oil and watercolour paintings, many of which have a local connection in terms of subject matter or have been painted by artists who have a connection with Campbeltown and Kintyre. Two of the most important and best-loved paintings in the Fine Art Collection are illustrated in this catalogue. The Social and Industrial History Collections held at Campbeltown Museum are broad in scope and illustrate different elements of Campbeltown’s social and industrial heritage. The natural sciences Collections are rather eclectic and contain a great variety of objects ranging from geological specimens from all over the world to species of birds that are found in Kintyre.
Among other items there is a herbarium of plant specimens collected in Kintyre between 1884 and the 1940s, and a cabinet dating from the late 19th century which contains over five thousand species of butterflies, moths and beetles.

In the last two years, a great deal of retrospective documentation work has been undertaken. During this process a number of conservation problems were identified, especially among the prehistoric metal Collection. As a result we are not always able to display certain objects, although we hope to in the future after conservation work has been completed.

Museums have a vital role to play in the dissemination of cultural history, and we hope that, through this catalogue, we are in part able to strengthen the organisation and gain greater and more widely known recognition for the importance of the institution.

Dr Sharon Webb & Ms Joanne Howdle.

A Brief History of Campbeltown Museum

The building which houses Campbeltown Museum is unquestionably the most admired in Campbeltown, yet it is relatively modern. It belongs to the 19th century, but only just.

The idea of a free public library and museum was apparently mooted by the Kintyre Scientific Association, which in December 1895 initiated a fund-raising appeal. The initiative immediately bore easy fruit. In the following month, a wealthy Campbeltown-born merchant, who had retired to Kintyre after a career in India, offered to finance the entire project. His name was James MacAlister Hall, and by the time the project was completed, in 1898, he had dipped into his funds to the extent of £12,000, which included the building, furnishings, books and endowment. His reward was the Freedom of the Burgh in 1899, a distinction bestowed only twice before, on the Duke of Argyll in 1840 and on the Marquis of Lorne in 1868.

MacAlister Hall’s choice of architect, John James Burnet, was astute, but perhaps influenced by an earlier association with the architect’s father, John Burnet. When MacAlister Hall bought the Kintyre estate of Killean in the early 1870s, he undertook the renovation and extension of the old mansion. The house, however, burned down before reaching completion and he decided to build anew. The architect of the new mansion was Burnet, but it is now thought that MacAlister Hall’s new mansion may well have been designed by the younger Burnet.

Burnet was one of the most celebrated architects of this time, and the Edward VII gallery at the British Museum in London is among his greatest works. At the glorious end of the late Victorian and Edwardian redevelopment of the town itself, the architectural significance of Campbeltown Museum is without comparison. Such is the stature of Burnet and such is the role that Campbeltown plays in his growing reputation. Of all the buildings he designed for Campbeltown, the Museum building is the finest. It consisted, originally, of a hall/news room, museum room, library and ladies’ reading room, with the librarian’s house attached, and a garden with enclosure for the display of archaeological and other exhibits ‘not requiring cover’. That garden is now dedicated to the memory of Linda McCartney, a statue of whom forms the centrepiece.

When, in August 1898, Campbeltown Town Council advertised in the local weekly newspapers for a librarian, ‘Curator of Museum’ was the secondary role. The salary was substantial for the time: £80, with additional
inducements of 'free house, coal, and gas, and allowances for cleaning'. A succession of librarians proceeded to function as curator, aided by the Kintyre Archaeological Antiquarian Society.

The Society was founded in 1921 with the object of studying 'the Archaeological History and Antiquities of Kintyre' and it has certainly fulfilled that object, being active in initiating many valuable projects connected with local history, culture and archaeology, and combining these with a sustained publishing programme during its first 30 years when membership was at its most robust. Since the first librarian was employed in the late 19th century, museum curation had steadily become more professionalized. Although late for most museums, it was eventually decided that a professional museum curator was necessary for not just Campbeltown Museum, but the whole of Argyll and Bute. The first took up post in the 1990s.

Sadly, budget cuts coincided with the move of the library to new premises at Aqualibrium in 2007 and the Museum’s Development Officer’s post was axed. For some time the Museum’s future was uncertain; however, the renovation of the Burnet Building and its subsequent re-opening as Campbeltown’s ‘service point’ has given the Museum a new lease of life and an upsurge in visitor numbers. The Museum and its Collection remain in the ownership of Argyll and Bute Council, but the Collections are now curated under a service level agreement with the curators of Kilmartin House Museum and Auchindrain Museum, who provide specialist archaeological and social historical knowledge to ensure that the objects remain safe, well cared for and in Campbeltown itself.

Adapted from text by Mr Angus Martin, Former Chair of the Kintyre Antiquarian and Natural History Society.
A Westerly Gale

A&BMS2000.13 (Fine Art)

The artist William McTaggart – widely acclaimed as Scotland’s greatest landscape painter – was born in 1835 into a poor family on the farm of Aros, where his father Dugald was a labourer. Both of William’s parents were Gaelic-speaking and William too became a Gaelic speaker. Indeed, his Gaelic background informed some of the finest of his paintings, such as the late series on emigration. With the encouragement of a local doctor, William was enabled to develop his creative talents under formal tuition, and was enrolled at the Trustees’ Academy in Edinburgh in 1852. His distinguished career had begun.

Although McTaggart never returned to Kintyre to live, he was a frequent visitor on seasonal painting trips. Machrihanish, with its rugged coastline and Atlantic surf, was a favourite location, and it was almost certainly there that A Westerly Gale (1897) was conceived. Executed in oil on board, this painting was bequeathed to Campbeltown Town Council in 1950, along with When the Kye Comes Hame, by McTaggart’s daughter, Lady Annie Mary Caw. The stature of the artist and the location of the subject combine to make this painting the best-loved, and probably the most valuable, of the fine art works held by Campbeltown Museum.

On The Kintyre Hills

A&BMS2000.17 (Fine Art)

On the Kintyre Hills is an example of the work of John Campbell Mitchell RSA (1865-1922), perhaps Kintyre’s most distinguished artist after William McTaggart, who was born a generation before him. Mitchell was born in Campbeltown and worked in the office of C. & D. Mactaggart, lawyers, before his father was persuaded to allow him to pursue his real talents. Mitchell studied art first in Edinburgh and then in Paris and made a successful career for himself as a painter, admired for his portrayal of wide expanses of sea and sand. This painting, executed in oils on canvas, evokes the windswept beauty of Mitchell’s native landscape.
Campbeltown Fair

(Fine Art)

Unlike his illustrious compatriot William McTaggart, the painter of Campbeltown Fair, Archibald MacKinnon, has no artistic reputation outside his native town, and that reputation is founded almost entirely on the controversial Crucifixion painting which he executed on the wall of a cave on Davaar Island, at the entrance to Campbeltown Loch. The work created a sensation when discovered in 1887 and has since become a popular tourist destination.

MacKinnon was born in Campbeltown in 1849, but spent the latter part of his life in England and died there in 1935. Campbeltown Fair, which is dated 1886, was first exhibited at the Edinburgh International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art in that same year. It is one of three genre paintings of old Campbeltown – the others were St. John's Night and Hogmanay at the Cross – presented anonymously to the town in 1904. The native charm and social rootedness of Campbeltown Fair, which features a variety of still-identifiable 19th century local characters, has assured its place in the affections of local people, and it has been widely reproduced, most notably for the 300th anniversary celebrations of the foundation of the Royal Burgh of Campbeltown.
Beggars’ Badges

CAPTM1995.057.01 & CAPTM1995.057.02 (Social History)

In 1833, the poor of Campbeltown parish were issued with oval badges made from pewter, which gave them the right to beg in the town on one day in each week. Begging without a badge was forbidden, so they were marked with a unique number. The beggars’ badges that feature in this catalogue bear the numbers 89 and 97, but the names of the people they were issued to is not known.

Herd’s Horn

A&BMS2000.023.01 (Social History)

In the past most of the people who lived in Campbeltown were tenants of the Duke of Argyll. As such they had the privilege of being able to pasture a cow on the town moor, now the farm of Gallow Hill. Every morning the Town Herd went through the streets blowing the horn that is illustrated in this catalogue. After collecting the cows, the Herd took them to the grazing ground at Gallow Hill for the day, returning them in the evening to be milked by their owners.

The Town Herd was evidently an official of some importance, for his appointment was always recorded in the Minutes of the Town Council. The Town Herd received a house on the town moor and fourteen pence salary per annum for each cow that he looked after. The names of all of the Town Herds are engraved on a silver plaque that has been applied to the horn. At some point in its history, the horn was turned into a snuff mill. The Herd’s horn is on loan to Campbeltown Museum from the Kintyre Club.
Model of the *Harvester*

CAPTM1997.019 (Social History)

This model represents a 1960's motorised ring-netter. The ring-net was a method of fishing which evolved on lower Loch Fyne in the 19th century, was advanced by Campbeltown fishermen in the early decades of the 20th century and further advanced by the fishermen of Ayrshire after the Second World War. It became obsolete in the 1970s, having been overtaken by the mid-water trawl and purse-seine methods. The principle of the method was to actively locate and surround shoals of herring, and such was its efficiency that it aroused the determined opposition of traditional drift-net fishermen and their allies, the fishcurers. In 1851 the method was prohibited by Act of Parliament and remained illegal until 1867, a period of hardship, harassment and bloodshed in the ring-net communities, particularly Tarbert.

The first purpose-built motorised ring-netters appeared in 1922 with the launch of the *Falcon* and the *Frigate Bird* for Robert Robertson of Campbeltown, a visionary skipper. These innovative vessels were longer by 3 metres than the longest of the Loch Fyne Skiffs which had previously been in use for ring-netting. Unlike the traditional skiffs, the *Falcon* and *Frigate Bird* had canoe-shaped sterns and lean quarters, and were also completely decked, with a wheelhouse at the stern, where the skipper could stand out of the wind and rain. The majority of fishermen were slow to invest in new-style ring-netters, but by the mid-1920s the change had begun. After the Second World War, the earlier canoe-shaped sterns and lean quarters gave way to cruiser sterns and fuller quarters to cope with bulkier nets and heavier engines. In the 1960s, the boats – now duel-purpose, being also engaged in trawling – began to fill out overall.

This model was commissioned in 1996 by the Friends of Campbeltown Museum. The builder, Joe Brown, is a retired Campbeltown skipper, born in 1936. His models are not strictly to scale, but are constructed entirely by eye as the work proceeds. The companion model, of the Loch Fyne Skiff *Fairy Queen*, is built to scale, and represents the earlier type of ring-netter, designed originally for sail and oar. The prototypes of the Loch Fyne Skiff, the *Alpha* and *Beta*, were built in 1882 for Edward McGeachy of Dalintober. Fittingly, the builder of the *Fairy Queen* model, Sweeney McGeachy, belonged to the same family. The *Fairy Queen* was donated to Campbeltown Museum in 1952.
Clock from the *Stella Maris*

CAPTM1997.023 (Social History)

The significance of this nautical clock, manufactured by Davey & Co. Ltd. of London, and illustrated in this catalogue, is that it was mounted in the forecastle of one of the best-known and most successful of post war ring-netters, the *Watchful* (BA 124) of Maidens in Ayrshire. The *Watchful* was skippered by Matt Sloan, who worked in partnership with his brother, Billy, skipper of the *Wistaria*. As ‘the Sloans’, the brothers were legendary in the annals of modern ring-netting, particularly in the demanding winter herring fishery in the Minches, which Clyde fishermen called ‘the North’. The *Watchful* was built by Weatherhead & Blackie, Port Seton, in 1959 and later renamed as the *Stella Maris* of Campbeltown. The clock was donated to the Museum by the boat’s owner, Mr Denis Meenan in 1995 when the *Stella Maris* was scheduled for decommissioning and destruction. She was, however, reprieved and taken to Ayr for restoration as an on-land exhibit.

**Penny Farthing**

A&BMS2002.050 (Social History)

The Penny Farthing, also referred to as the High or Ordinary bicycle, was invented in 1871 by British engineer, James Starley and came after the development of the Hobbyhorse, and the French Velocipede or Boneshaker. This model is the ‘Club’, manufactured by the Coventry Machinists’ Company Ltd. around 1882. The Penny Farthing was the first reasonably efficient model, consisting of an iron frame with a large front wheel and a small rear wheel, both made of metal and with solid rubber tyres. The pedals were attached to the centre of the front wheel. This bicycle belonged to the late Councillor Willie McDougall, Campbeltown, who actually rode it, though it had become obsolete before he was even born. The Penny Farthing has been chosen by the people of Campbeltown as one of their favourite objects in the Museum Collection.

Local schoolchildren particularly like it, as it is “cool” and “really, really old”.
Rose Quartz

CAPTM 1373/1 (Natural Sciences)

Rose quartz is a semi-precious form of the mineral quartz (itself a form of the chemical silica, SiO₂). The pink colour is due to the presence of trace amounts of either manganese, iron or titanium. The main source of rose quartz is Brazil, but it is also found in many other places including the USA, India and Madagascar. Rose quartz is usually found in ‘pegmatites’, which are rocks that crystallize from the hot, watery fluids that circulate during the final crystallization of large masses of granite. The crystals form by growing out from the walls of fractures or cavities. In this specimen, the wall of the cavity is marked by the dark, fine-grained material on one side, the crystals having grown out roughly perpendicularly from it, and becoming larger with better-formed crystal faces towards the centre of the cavity.

Semi-precious stones have been used to symbolise many things, in different cultures around the world, for example, rose quartz is an alternative birthstone for the month of January. Some people believe ‘crystals’ to hold powers of healing, and ascribe rose quartz as being beneficial for dealing with affairs of the heart, problems of self-esteem and other emotional troubles – although the geologists among us might not ascribe much accuracy to such ‘alternative’ beliefs!

Local school children particularly like the Rose Quartz, and described it as “bling” and “really pink and really cool”.

Stone Axe Head

(Archaeology)

For thousands of years, humans had no knowledge of how to make metal. Instead, they used stone tools made with great care and skill. This axe head would have been made by someone knocking flakes off a piece of stone with another stone, or perhaps a fire hardened piece of antler. Then, with smaller and smaller particles of sand, the maker would have gradually ground the axe to a smooth polish. It would then have been hafted to a shaft of wood with hide or sinew string, and possibly secured in place with a kind of glue (pitch) made from tree resin.

Axe heads like this are iconic Neolithic artefacts, used by the first people to farm in Scotland after about 3500BC. They were introduced alongside the earliest use of pottery and the construction of burial monuments such as Beacharra Chambered Cairn (see below). Together, these heralded a new way of making sense of the world and the cycles of life and death.

The axe was found in 1978 during the renovation of the Crosshill/Meadows housing scheme. The finder, the late Roy Durnan, who was one of the workmen at the site, took it into the Museum for identification where it remained. It was chosen for the catalogue as it is the most beautiful of the Neolithic axes in the Collections and is representative of what was probably the most fundamental change in the way that human beings have lived on this planet – the introduction of agriculture.
Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)

_Cambeltown Museum’s natural history Collections consist mostly of taxidermy specimens gathered to be representative of the variety of birds found in Kintyre. Although the exact history of this particular specimen’s acquisition is not known, we do know that many of the birds were shot specifically for the purposes of display. This was common many years ago, and we might today find it abhorrent. Indeed it is now illegal to shoot most species of bird in Britain. Barn owls and their nests have extra protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 since they are endangered, with the Scottish population estimated to be under 1000 individuals. Loss of habitat and nesting sites, along with deaths from collisions with vehicles and from accidental poisoning intended for rodents, are all thought to contribute to the decline of the barn owl in Scotland. Kintyre however, is a nationally important stronghold of the species, with an estimated 40-50 territories, of which, on average, about a third would be in use in any given year.

These birds have very specific habitat requirements, preferring farm buildings or (as in our diorama) a hollow tree for a nesting site. Once paired, they mate for life and tend to keep to the same hunting range of open grasslands, where they search for shrews, mice and voles. Barn owls screech rather than hoot, and can be seen quartering fields at dusk and dawn.

The barn owl has been chosen by the people of Campbeltown as one of their favourite objects in the Museum Collection. Local school children particularly liked it as being illustrative of the diversity of the wildlife that can be found in Campbeltown and Kintyre and described it as “cute”. It was found dead at Southend – we have no record of how it might have died.

Although many people find displays of stuffed animals distasteful today, we have chosen to keep them in public view. Many were collected many years ago, when stuffed animals were popular for scientific and educational purposes, and rather than dispose of our specimens, we retain them since they are the closest sustained encounter many people will have with the vast majority of Scottish wildlife, albeit in the unnatural environment of the Museum.

Scotland’s population of barn owls is the most northerly worldwide, but it is endangered. If you would like to help the conservation of these fascinating creatures, please visit the Barn Owl Trust web site at www.barnowltrust.org.uk_
Beacharra Pot
CAPTM 162 (Archaeology)

This pot is one of six excavated from the burial cairn at Beacharra, near Campbeltown, by the Kintyre Scientific Society in 1892. The Scientific Society was later to become the Kintyre Antiquarian Society and many of the objects in the Museum today were collected by its members. The Beacharra Cairn was later re-investigated by J.G Scott in 1959 and 1961. As well as the six pots, he found other fragments of pottery, pitchstone and flint, along with an extremely rare jet belt fastener.

J.G Scott was a Curator at Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum when he investigated the cairn, and was also heavily involved in Campbeltown Museum for many years. The work at the Beacharra site was published by Scott, and he also re-examined the pottery found earlier, which had by then become one of the basic groups for the study of Neolithic pottery in Scotland.

The cairn and its archaeological finds date to the Neolithic period, beginning some five thousand years ago and lasting for perhaps two thousand years. Archaeologists believe that it was during this time that people first began to farm, make pottery and domesticate animals. We also know that the people who lived during this time...
were very spiritual, and their world was full of ritual which often found expression in the construction of monuments such as the Beacharra cairn. Although human remains do not often survive in the Kintyre soil, examples elsewhere suggest this was a place of burial, and that the objects found inside the cairn were grave goods.

The cairn would have originally contained up to three burial chambers, entered through a single entrance. It might have been used as a place of burial for generations, but at some point during the last phase of its use it was closed - the chambers filled with earth and the belt slider placed inside. The entrance was blocked with stones. Two pots were found in each chamber. They are all earthenware, made from local clay, and hand made. We do not know if the pots were used before being placed in the cairn, or if they were specially made as grave goods. Some of the bowls are decorated, others are plain. The bowl shown here is the largest of the six vessels, and has a curious uneven decoration around the rim as well as unperforated ‘lugs’.

Beacharra Cairn stands today next to the largest standing stone in Kintyre, which would have been built some time later in the Bronze Age. The islands of Gigha, Cara, Arran and Jura are visible, as is the North coast of Ireland on a clear day. It is a beautiful place to visit, but permission should be sought first, as the cairn is close to a farmhouse.

**Stone Ball**

CAPTM 0129 (Archaeology)

Carved stone balls are probably Scotland’s most enigmatic archaeological artefacts. Most are found on the East coast, in Aberdeenshire, but a small number come from the West, including this example. They date from 3200 and 2500 BC, so are Neolithic, like the Bowl from Beacharra, and the Stone Axe Head from Meadow Avenue.

This ball has been carved with six raised knobs. Other examples are more elaborate and some are decorated on and between knobs with spirals, circles and other motifs. Other examples have many more knobs and pointed protrusions.

It was found on the seashore at Dunaverty Bay, Southend, by Mrs G Beatson. We have no record of when, nor do we know why the object was on the beach.

Archaeologists have puzzled over the function of these objects and the meaning of their decoration. The best explanation is that they were sacred objects, or symbols of power for a people whose understanding of the world was very different from our own.
This magnificent necklace made of jet and cannel coal was found in a burial at the site of the former Kintyre Nurseries in 1970. The site was discovered during building work, following which the landowner contacted Archaeologist Edward J. Peltenburg from Glasgow University, who conducted an excavation.

Two burials in the form of stone-lined coffins, or cists, were found. One contained a small pottery vessel which is now displayed in Campbeltown Museum. The other cist contained the necklace, bracelet, and a flint blade. Skeletal human remains were also found, but they were badly degraded, so it was not possible to determine very much more than that the person was an adult. Research from other areas of Scotland suggested, however, that necklaces such as this are generally found in female graves.

From the artefacts and type of burial, it is possible to date this assemblage of artefacts to the Bronze Age, (c.2500-600 BC). The necklace itself might narrow the date down to somewhere between 2050 and 1800 BC, after which they seem to have rather fallen out of fashion.

Necklaces such as this are rare finds, and it is one of the most important objects in the Museum’s Collection. Many Campbeltonians said that it was their favourite object. In the Bronze Age, the piece would have been worn by a very important person, possibly as an ostentatious display of wealth and status.

The crescent shaped necklace is made up of six spacer plates, one triangular fastening toggle and a hundred and six beads (which archaeologists describe as fusiform in shape). It is made largely from jet, but a few of the beads are manufactured from a similar substance known as cannel coal. The only known source of usable jet is in Whitby, Yorkshire, whereas cannel coal can be found in Scotland. It is probable that the necklace was made in Yorkshire and imported to Argyll, after which some beads might have been lost, and replaced with a native Scottish material. Some beads show signs of wear, which suggests that it was an heirloom piece. That jet was being imported into Argyll shows the area was important with wide ranging trade links some 3,000 years ago.

The excavator reports that the necklace was found in disarray, with beads partially scattered at random. He thought that the necklace might have broken as it and the body were placed inside the grave, scattering the beads.

Although jet necklaces are known from other parts of Scotland, they are rare. Kilmartin Glen to the north has a concentration of such artefacts, along with high status Bronze Age burial cairns.
Bronze Sword
CAMPT 190 (Archaeology)

This bronze sword was found in 1824 by brothers Sam and James Mitchell whilst they were making a drain on Craigs Farm, Kintyre. It was made and used during the Bronze Age, and is therefore around three thousand years old.

It was during the Bronze Age that knowledge of how to make metal came to Scotland. Smiths would probably have been regarded as special people in society – the melting of ore to create beautiful shiny objects would no doubt have seemed a magical ability to the majority of the population. The first metal objects to be made were flat axe heads, but by the time swords such as this were in use, casting techniques had progressed considerably to enable such a long, thin sword to be made. A hollow two part clay mould would first have been fashioned, probably using a wooden pro-forma to create a sword shaped void. Using copper and tin ore heated to an extremely hot temperature in a clay crucible, the bronze was made. This molten metal was then poured into the clay mould and allowed to cool.

Once the metal had cooled completely, the clay could be broken off to reveal the new sword. A handle of wood, bone or metal was then affixed to the ‘tang’ and riveted in place through holes left for the purpose. The handle of this sword has long since rotted away, leaving only the metal. Great skill and patience was required to create these objects and they would have been greatly prized.

There are other swords of the same period in the Museum, along with other objects made of bronze from the same time. Bronze objects are some of the most difficult to look after in the Museum as they are particularly sensitive to changes in temperature and humidity and as a consequence they are also rarely found in archaeological sites – having long since decayed. That these swords have survived is probably due to the lack of oxygen in the watery place in which they were placed some three thousand years ago.

Weapons from this period are often found deposited in watery places such as bogs or pools, for what reason we are only able to speculate. Were these objects gifts to the gods or goddesses? Were they given to the earth in appeasement, or perhaps a celebration of a battle won? This could have been an act of conspicuous consumption – a demonstration of wealth and status. Evidently this was important to people living in Bronze Age Scotland as is clear by examples of other objects found, such as the Jet Necklace (see above). Very often, although it does not appear so in the case of this sword, collections of bronze objects are deliberately broken, or damaged in some way before being placed into water. Archaeologists think that this may have been a form of ritual ‘killing’ of the objects – a practice that adds more to the mystery of why these objects were deposited at all. The tang to which a handle would have been fitted is missing from this example, but this probably decayed rather than having been intentionally broken.

Long bladed swords such as this are the first kind of sword to be made in Scotland. As weapons capable of slashing at some distance, they might have been used from horseback as the earlier daggers could never have been. Were these swords the weapons of a warrior elite?
Glass Bead
CAPTM 0221.01 (Archaeology)

This glass bead was found during excavations at the Dun on Ugadale Point, Kintyre, in 1939. Duns are small defensive structures, probably constructed during the Iron Age (about 600 BC to about 400 AD) and occupied intermittently over the next few centuries into the Medieval Period. Built of dry stone walling in a roughly circular shape, and sometimes interlaced with timber, they occasionally have chambers inside the walls in a similar fashion to ‘brochs’ – a type of monument found further North and East.

Duns were usually located on a high point in the landscape, overlooking farm land and generally close to the coast. There are sixty known of this particular kind of archaeological monument in Kintyre, and there are many more in other parts of Argyll.

Few Dun sites have been excavated in Argyll, and many were investigated when archaeological techniques were less sophisticated than today, so our knowledge remains quite limited. We are able to say that Duns were probably roofed structures, the dwelling place for a single family and possibly their retainers or attendants.

Some Dun sites in Argyll show signs of having been destroyed by fire. If set alight, the timber lacing and stone walls heat to such a temperature that they are literally cooked in a process known as vitrification. Fires might have happened by accident, but most probably the cause was an attack. The prominent position and association with the area’s elite would of course have made these fortified dwellings a target for hostile forces.

This bead is one of two which came from the Dun at Ugadale, and suggests that the occupants must have been of reasonably high status. The bead is made from blue glass with four projections, fashioned from blue glass swirled with white pigmented glass. It might not have been made in the area and might have been an aristocratic gift. We do not know how it was worn, or by whom – it might have been threaded onto a thong and worn around the neck, in the hair, or sewn onto clothing. It was chosen to be included in the catalogue as it demonstrates that Kintyre was a place of some connection and status in the Iron Age and Early Historic Period.

Viking Age Link Plate
CAPTM2007.1 (Archaeology)

This fragment of a Viking Age arm ring was found in the Island of Lismore in the early 2000s. It is an extremely rare object to find in Scotland.

The arm ring would have been made by twisting two rods of gold together and bending them to form a ring. The rod ends were tapered and these were merged together and beaten to form a flat plate upon which ‘dot’ ornamentation was stamped. The twisted rods are still clearly visible on the reverse side. A similar (but whole) arm ring was found in the Sound of Jura by divers in the 1980s. From this, and many examples found in Scandinavia, we are able to tell what the Lismore arm ring would have looked like when whole.

Viking Age arm rings were probably made around the 10th century. This was a turbulent time along the western seaboard. Wealth was often hidden – buried in the ground in groups of objects which archaeologists call hoards. Arm rings are often found in Viking Age graves and hoards in Scandinavia. They are made from gold and silver, but there are very few gold arm rings known from Viking Age Scotland. Gold is used for finger rings in Scotland, and these were made using the same technique of twisting metal rods.

People would have displayed wealth about their person during this time, but could also have used their ornaments in payment for goods and services. Jewellery could be cut up if the payment needed was less than the worth of the whole object, and an appropriate portion of the metal weighed out on a balancing scales. This link plate shows signs of cutting, and has evidently been separated from the rest of the arm ring.

It came to the Campbeltown Collections via the Treasure Trove system. The Museum on Lismore is currently not accredited, and therefore cannot take Treasure Trove material. The link plate is frequently lent to the Museum on Lismore where it is better seen in the context of its find spot.
Cross Fragment

(Archaeology)

Medieval archaeology along the West Highland coast is dominated by carved grave slabs, crosses and effigies. Grave slabs were commissioned as memorials to important people, generally chieftains or religious figures. Some crosses did not serve as burial markers, but were erected as acts of piety (or perhaps penance), or to commemorate an event. They may have also stood on altars, or at praying stations – a practice that abruptly ended with the Reformation.

Carved stones were made by master craftsmen who probably belonged to local workshops, known as ‘schools’. As carving developed from the 14th century, it is thought that four schools (or styles of carving) existed – the Iona and Loch Awe schools, the school centred at Oronsay Priory and the fourth being located somewhere on mainland Kintyre. Some historians have suggested there may have been a fifth, located somewhere near Kilmory, or Keils, at the mouth of Loch Sween. Not all were in operation at the same time. Carvers would have used local stone, and it is thought that they may have travelled around the Highlands and Islands to work on commissions for the area’s wealthy and important people.

The symbols used were wide ranging, sometimes depicting a trade, others portray people, and although generally it is men who appear, there are some examples of women and children. The motifs used were mostly likely chosen by the person who commissioned the work.

On one face, a warrior appears in full West Highland armour, on horseback carrying a spear. Above him is part of an enlarged sword pommel and below him a hound chases a stag. On the other side, two lions appear to be fighting and below them a West Highland galley, or birlinn, is carved. Above the lions, and on the sides of the slab, are interlaced Celtic decoration.

This cross fragment is one of a number of carved stones in the Museum, and is emblematic of the West Highlands in the Medieval period. It was found in the grave yard of Kilchousland old Parish Church and it is thought to have been brought to the Museum for safe keeping as the Church is ruined.

The cross is illustrated in T.P White’s 1872 book ‘Archaeological Sketches of Kintyre’, but shown in two portions, one of which appears to have been lost. This cross, and its missing parts, serve as a reminder that we have to actively care for Kintyre’s heritage or it may be lost to future generations.
Acknowledgements

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If you would like to make a donation to the Museum, please leave it with the reception staff, who will also be able to pass on any enquiries you have about the Museum or its Collections. All donations will be used to benefit the Collections.

For details of opening times please phone 01586 559000.

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