

The British Numismatic Society
Saturday 27 June 2026
The National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh

Coinage in Scotland – Interpreting the Evidence.

SCOPE

Transactions have been taking place in Scotland as long as people have needed to exchange goods, pay a fine, a rent or a tax. Prior to the 1130s different forms of commodity money and precious metal including bullion, jewellery and imported coins acted as 'money'. In the 1130s the means of 'money' was extended with the introduction of a Scottish coinage by David I which lasted until the 1707 Union. This was more often than not beset with problems to which the response was innovation and frequent change. In more recent times Scottish tokens and other forms of 'money' offer unique insights into Scottish society and monetary circulation.

At this this all-day Conference at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, leading figures working on Scottish coinage and monetary history will explore 'money' and coinage in Scotland both before and after the 1130s 'revolution.' It will look at the material evidence drawing on data from hoards, the documentary and the archaeological record to examine how Scottish coinage was shaped by both internal Scottish and external forces. The day will offer the opportunity to hear about current research projects developing the understanding of Scottish coinage as well recent important discoveries.

The Conference will be in person attendance only.

PROGRAMME OF THE DAY.

THE MORNING.

10.00: Venue opens.

(Refreshments on arrival – tea, coffee, water, juice).

10.30–10.35: **Opening Comments** (*William MacKay*).

10.35–10.40: **Dr. Donal Bateson – An appreciation** (*Jesper Ericsson, The Hunterian*).

First session: 10.40 – 11.40: Evidence – Gathering the facts.

10.40–11.10: **Roman Coinage in Scotland: Distribution, Deposition and Diplomacy** (*Dr. Antony Lee, NMS*).

11.10–11.40: **Recovering in-situ hoards: some Treasure Trove Unit case studies** (*Emily Freeman, NMS*).

Second Session: 11.50–13.00: Interpretation – Research and New Discoveries.

11.50–12.20: **The Lord Stewartby Collection of Scottish coins, part III: Revisiting David II and Robert II, 1358–90** (*William MacKay*).

12.20–13.00: **The seventeenth century Methven hoard, Perth and Kinross** (*Dr Mark Hall and Dr Carl Savage*).

13.00–13.45: *Finger buffet lunch.*

THE AFTERNOON.

Third Session: 13.45–14.45: The Scottish Coinage 1136-1707 – Integration or Independence.

13.45–14.15: **'The usual money of Scotland'** The circulating currency in late medieval Scotland 1136–1603 (*Dr Carl Savage*).

14.15–14.45: **National Distinctions During the Anglo-Scottish Monetary Union (1604-1649)** (*Cameron Maclean*).

Fourth Session: 15.00–16.00 Modern Times – Currency and Scottish Society.

15.00–15.30: **An Introduction to the Glencoe Hoard** (*Jesper Ericsson*).

15.30–16.00: **18th century trade tokens in Scotland: Why, Where and Who** (*Professor Simon Herrington*).

Panel Discussion: 16.00–16.30. Summary of key points and discussion.

16.30–16.45: Closing Comments.

PROGRAMME ABSTRACTS

THE MORNING.

The first session will be preceded by a note of appreciation by Jesper Ericsson for the life and work of Dr Donal Bateson (1948–2026).

SESSION 1: Evidence – Gathering the facts.

Dr Antony Lee (NMS), *Roman Coinage in Scotland: Distribution, Deposition and Diplomacy.*

Roman coins have long been recognised as an important strand of evidence for understanding the chronologies of Roman military activity in Scotland. Studies of distribution patterns have further explored the movement of coinage into native communities, sometimes located beyond areas of Roman influence, through means of diplomacy, bribery or perhaps trade. Here, they ceased to circulate as coinage but instead became exotic curios made, in the case of silver denarii, from a particularly desirable raw material which could be recycled into high-status objects. This talk will consider Roman coinage in Scotland through data collated through the Treasure Trove process, highlighting broader trends and recent discoveries

Dr. Antony Lee is the senior Treasure Trove Officer at the Scottish Treasure Trove Unit based at the NMS. He has a PhD in Archaeology from Durham University, where his research investigated the presentation and interpretation of Romano-British religion in museums. Prior to joining the NMS he worked in archaeological museum curation, and spent 15 years managing the large and significant archaeological collections of Lincolnshire Museums. While there he worked on major projects such as the development of the Collection museum in Lincoln and the redevelopment of Lincoln Castle. He has also worked at Derby Museum as the Regional Collection Development Officer for Renaissance East Midlands.

Emily Freeman (NMS), *Recovering in-situ hoards: some Treasure Trove Unit case studies.*

Coins hoards are the most frequent type of hoard reported to the Treasure Trove Unit but it is rare that they are recovered from a secure context. Many hoards are found scattered and by members of the public through activities like metal detecting, which has an impact on the level of information that can be captured and interrogated. Through a series of case studies, this talk will explore some of the hoards the Treasure Trove Unit were able to excavate and the additional contextual information that could be recorded.

Emily Freeman is Head of Treasure Trove Operations, National Museums Scotland. She is responsible for leading the operations of the Treasure Trove Unit (TTU) in analysing, assessing, and recording archaeological finds from across Scotland. Based at National Museums Scotland, Emily has been working with metal detected finds for over a decade, including volunteering with the Staffordshire Hoard project at Birmingham Museums Trust and

recording finds for the Portable Antiquities Scheme as Headley Trust Intern for the West Midlands. She has been part of the TTU since 2017 and holds a particular interest in how museum collections in Scotland have been impacted by the application of Treasure Trove law.

SESSION 2: Interpretation – Research and New Discoveries.

William MacKay, *The Lord Stewartby Collection of Scottish coins, part III: Revisiting David II and Robert II, 1358–90.*

In the coming weeks the third part of Lord Stewartby's collection of Scottish coins at the Hunterian will be published. This volume covers the period 1280 and 1390 with 1421 coins in the collection. Classification and ordering of the coinage from 1280 (Alexander III) to the reforms of David II in 1358 is well established but despite obvious interest he never published, other than in his 1954 Scottish Coinage book, his thinking on the heavy and light coinages of David II or Robert II. This paper will look at the coinage covered in part III and drawing on Lord Stewartby's late unpublished work and the coins in his collection, set out revisions to the classification of the post 1358 coinages of David II and Robert II.

William MacKay is an independent scholar with a long interest in early medieval English and more recently, in Scottish coinage. After a career in business management and marketing, he has worked in numismatics since 2007, initially at Spink and Son and then as an independent consultant. He has published on the ninth century Lunettes coinages of Mercia and Wessex and on the London monogram coinage of Alfred the Great and the Danelaw. Since 2018 he has been working on publishing Lord Stewartby's Collection of 5000 Scottish coins with part I (1488–1625) in 2021; Part II (1390–1488) in 2023. Part III (1280–1390) will be published later this year. He is Director of the British Numismatic Society and a Fellow of the Royal Numismatic Society and the Society of Antiquaries of London.

Dr Mark Hall and Dr Carl Savage, *The seventeenth century Methven hoard, Perth and Kinross.*

This talk will highlight a recent seventeenth-century hoard which was discovered by chance during building works to a private building in the village of Methven. The hoard contains English and Continental coins. The talk will place the hoard into its wider Scottish numismatic and historical context and also highlight the work undertaken on the hoard by Perth Museums for future display.

Dr Mark Hall is Collections Officer at Perth Museum & Art Gallery (managed by Culture Perth & Kinross on behalf of Perth & Kinross Council). His current focus is on contributing to the preparation of a new museum for Perth & Kinross. The new Perth Museum will occupy the renovated former City Hall and will provide extensive new displays exploring the region's archaeology, history and global engagement, when it opens to the public in the spring of 2024. His research interests include the archaeology of play (especially board games) the medieval cult of saints and Pictish sculpture. He has published extensively on these and other related subjects.

Dr Carl Savage works for the Scottish Treasure Trove unit at the NMS in Edinburgh. He is an experienced numismatist with a particular interest in Scottish coinage (see below).

SESSION 3: The Scottish Coinage 1136-1707 – Integration or Independence.

Dr Carl Savage, *'The usual money of Scotland' The circulating currency in late medieval Scotland 1136–1603.*

This talk will consider the circulating currency in late medieval Scotland using both single find and hoard evidence primarily recorded by the Treasure Trove Unit and what that data can tell us about the changing nature of coinage in Scotland. It will pay particular focus on the relationship between the Scottish and English currencies.

Dr Carl Savage, works for the Scottish Treasure Trove unit at the NMS in Edinburgh. He joined the NMS Treasure Trove Unit in September 2022, prior to which he was a CDP researcher in the department for four years and has worked closely with the Treasure Trove unit and the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) in England during this time, delivering special reports on single coin finds as well as hoards. Carl is an experienced numismatist focusing on the medieval and post medieval periods in Scotland and northern England, he has a special interest in the

Scottish coinage and in 2022 completed a die study and new classification of the early coinage of David II. He is an experienced numismatist with a particular interest in Scottish coinage. His book *'Coinage, Landscape and Society in the Borderlands: Economy, Politics and Identity in Scotland and Northern England 1136-1606'* was published in 2025.

Cameron Maclean, *National Distinctions During the Anglo-Scottish Monetary Union (1604-1649)*.

At the formation of the Anglo-Scottish monetary union in 1604, it was agreed that the Scottish and English coinages be minted to common standards. Despite this, aspects of the two national coinages diverged in the following years. This talk will chart this occurrence during the reigns of James VI/I and Charles I, with a particular focus on their gold and copper coinages, and also account for why it transpired through a consideration of the distinct circumstances in each kingdom.

Cameron Maclean is a Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities-funded PhD candidate at the University of Glasgow. His research examines the Anglo-Scottish monetary union during the reigns of James VI/I and Charles I. He has worked with the numismatic collections held by The Hunterian, National Museums Scotland and the Fitzwilliam Museum.

SESSION 4: Modern Times – Currency and Scottish Society.

Jesper Ericsson, *An Introduction to the Glencoe Hoard*.

In August 2023, a University of Glasgow Archaeology student uncovered a small pot containing coins in the summerhouse of clan chief Alasdair Ruadh 'MacIain' MacDonald of Glencoe. The story received wide press attention, with many accounts suggesting that the hoard might relate to the infamous February 1692 massacre of members of the MacDonald clan by British soldiers. This paper offers an overview of the University of Glasgow's work in Glencoe, an introduction to the contents of the hoard and a discussion of the theories behind its deposition.

Jesper Ericsson is Curator of Numismatics at The Hunterian, University of Glasgow. With over two decades of experience in the museum sector, his main interests include military medals, British historical medals, Jacobite-related material and using numismatics to explore themes of discomfort, colonialism and empire.

Professor Simon Herrington, *Eighteenth century trade tokens in Scotland: Why, Where and Who*.

In the late 18th century, the lack of circulating small denomination currency coupled with industrialisation led major industrialists to issue their own token currency in order to pay their increasing workforce. This paper will look at why they were issued, who was issuing them and where. In so doing it will provide a snapshot into the social and economic history of Scotland in the late eighteenth century.

Prof. Simon Herrington is a private scholar with a long-standing interest in coin collecting, starting in the 1960s when silver coins could be collected from circulating small change. More recently, he has developed an interest in tokens, particularly trade tokens from the late 18th century, and is an active collector of Scottish tokens. He is a member of the Token Corresponding Society as well as the British Numismatic Society and the Royal Numismatic Society.

The final session will be followed by a panel discussion of the day's papers.