

30 June 2025

SCHOOL PUPILS TURNED ARCHAEOLOGISTS UNEARTH BRODICK CASTLE'S PAST

- **National Trust for Scotland archaeologists have recovered a range of artefacts at Brodick Castle, including a 17th-century silver coin.**
- **The coin is understood to be a silver half groat of James VI & I. Other items found include fragments of clay tobacco pipes and shards of pottery, wine bottles, and animal bones.**
- **Pupils from the local Brodick, Kilmory and Corrie Primary Schools assisted with the dig, with one P7 pupil discovering a copper alloy coin.**

Latest investigations conducted by National Trust for Scotland archaeologists and local volunteers at Brodick Castle on the Isle of Arran have recovered a range of historical artefacts, including a 17th-century silver coin.

The location of the dig occurred at the drawbridge leading into the battery of the castle, which was discovered by the Archaeology Team during conservation work to the castle's exterior in 2023. It is estimated that the timber drawbridge was replaced with a set of stone steps in the early 19th century, and the recent excavation took place to the east of the steps to try and locate their foundations and the basal courses of the adjacent battery.

A range of artefacts were recovered during the work, including a silver coin of particular significance, which has been provisionally identified as a silver half groat of James VI & I. Another item of interest is a copper alloy coin, very excitedly discovered by a P7 pupil during one of the Trust's Brodick Drawbridge Dig Days, which is believed to be a Charles I or II. Other finds included fragments of clay tobacco pipes, butchered animal bones, shards of medieval and post-medieval pottery, and some large wine bottle fragments.

Derek Alexander, Head of Archaeology at the National Trust for Scotland, said: "We're excited to share the discovery of a range of historical artefacts at Brodick Castle, including a 17th-century silver coin. We were fortunate to have Katharine Donaldson, Icon Bute Intern and conservator, working with us on site, and who was able to clean the coin. The coin shows a thistle and crown on one side and a rose and crown on the other, indicating a silver half groat of James VI & I.

"In 2023, we were thrilled to discover drawbridge holes at Brodick Castle while repointing the castle's walls, when buildings archaeology specialist Tom Addyman noticed the two vertical slots hidden beneath a layer of cement. As we dug deeper to better understand its infrastructure, we were delighted to find these treasures along the way, which offer a glimpse of Brodick Castle's rich history.

"A particular highlight was also welcoming local pupils from Brodick, Kilmory and Corrie Primary Schools to participate in the excavation as part of the Trust's Brodick Drawbridge Dig Days. One P7 pupil was very excited to discover a copper alloy coin, which is of the right size to be a Charles I or II. We are delighted to be able to support young people to learn more about archaeology and Brodick Castle, and to work with such enthusiastic volunteers."

Ian McLelland, the National Trust for Scotland's Regional Director for South and West, said: 'The conservation work at Brodick Castle contributes to the Trust's conservation goals and supports our vision to care for and share Scotland's nature, beauty and heritage. It's thanks to the generosity of our members and supporters that our charity can continue its work to protect Scotland's rich cultural heritage, share the fascinating stories of the special places in our care, and provide access for everyone to enjoy.'

A 3D model of the archaeological dig at Brodick Castle can be explored on the Trust's SketchFab page <https://skfb.ly/pxWAq>. For more information about Brodick Castle, Garden and Country Park, visit <https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/brodick-castle>.

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Images: <https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740@N04/a0M1203Tph>

About the National Trust for Scotland

Established in 1931, the National Trust for Scotland is Scotland's largest conservation charity and cares for, shares and speaks up for Scotland's magnificent heritage.

Over the last 90 years the Trust has pioneered public access to and shared ownership of some of the most magnificent buildings, collections and landscapes in Scotland. It cares for more than 100 sites, from ancient houses to battlefields, castles, mills, gardens, coastlines, islands, mountain ranges and the plants and animals which depend upon them.

In March 2022 the National Trust for Scotland launched *Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone*, its ten-year strategy which sets out the ambitions of the charity over the coming decade. From speaking up for Scotland's heritage which doesn't have a voice, to improving the lives and wellbeing of people across the country, and responding to the climate and biodiversity crisis, the Trust will build on its work in recent years to grow its impact and conserve and restore more of Scotland's heritage, as it moves towards its centenary in 2031.

Scotland's largest membership organisation, the National Trust for Scotland relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work.

For more information on the National Trust for Scotland visit www.nts.org.uk.

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