

## Review of 2015-16

*What is the Clyde river system? A way of getting around, a place to live, a place to grow food? But also a source of power, a place to make things, a place to have fun, and a place which is often beautiful and inspirational. Discovering The Clyde is a 5-year research project looking at people's relationship with the river through time. This review looks at some of the highlights from our first full year. [Underlined text contains links to further information.]*

### [Tales from the river bank](#)

One of the first things we've been doing is to look at the quality of our records on the banks of the river. We've called this project Connected with the Clyde, and we've found lots of evidence of the way people have used the river, from mills to harbours, and from crannogs to pill boxes. The next step is to improve our records so that they can be used with confidence by future research projects.

### [The Clyde by canoe](#)

Following a development phase, the research programme was 'launched' in June 2015 in a novel way: a river journey where canoeists looked at, experienced and recorded some of the traces that people have left beside the banks. Sixteen people canoed down river from Hardington Mains farm to Coulter Wolfclyde Bridge. They included Biggar High School students and their teacher, a storyteller, a photographer, a film-maker, archaeologists, and others involved in



heritage. At the destination, the canoeists met up with many more people for an afternoon exploring, discussing and revelling in the heritage of the area in different ways. With the Clyde and Avon Landscape Partnership we are now [planning a second event](#) down the river for summer 2016.

### [Guarding the river](#)

The Clyde has been strategically important for centuries, as we can see from the rich landscape of prehistoric and Roman forts, medieval castles and country estates. We less often think of the Clyde as a place of power in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Yet this was a period that saw the building of extensive military defences along the Firth of Clyde, to protect the major manufacturing and population centres along the river during the First and Second World Wars. Along with the Glasgow University's Centre for Battlefield Archaeology and local heritage groups, we are recording and researching the defences that were built to protect from attack from the sea.

These sites are almost undocumented: no excavation has ever been undertaken; most have no site record, or at best a very basic one; and none of the structures are listed or scheduled. Our investigations will help local people have a better understanding of the importance of the sites, which we hope will lead to better-informed decision-making about their future.

Along with the naval defences, a comprehensive system of defences protected the Clyde from attack from the air, so we are now developing a second phase of our 20<sup>th</sup>-century defences project that will investigate and record these sites.

*Portkil 4.7 inch battery 2016,  
Built 1900-1904. © HES*



### [Yard by Yard](#)

The Clyde is world-famous for its shipbuilding legacy, but much evidence of this still remains to be found and recorded. Along with a group from the Inverclyde Community Development Trust we have been investigating the shipyards and related sites in Greenock and Port Glasgow. As well as improving on existing records for the yards we are creating ‘polygons’ of them – shapes that show their extent at various points in time. This is helping tell the story of the changing face of the waterfront from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present day, and we aim to extend this project to other yards on the Clyde.



*Scott's Shipbuilding Yard, Greenock, July 1940 SC 1392061 © HES*

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These projects give a flavour of our recent work: we have a dozen more projects planned for the near future, or under development, covering a wide range of topics, locations and period: from Iron Age hillforts to modern graffiti; from Abingdon to the Firth; from early prehistory, to the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond. Please get in touch ( [alex.adamson@rcahms.gov.uk](mailto:alex.adamson@rcahms.gov.uk) ) if you would like to hear more, or if you are working on a project in the Clyde area; perhaps we will be able to work together or, if not, then we would be happy to promote news of your Clyde-related activities through our website, <http://discoveringtheclyde.org.uk/>.

The Discovering the Clyde  
Programme is hosted by:



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