



Neolithic Studies Group Spring Meeting

Bute

15th to 17th May 2026

This year's Spring Meeting will see us return north to Scotland and the isles, although this is probably one of the easiest islands to get to, within a short hop from Glasgow. The NSG has never been to the island of Bute before, and it exists in the shadow (literally and metaphorically) of its better-known neighbour Arran (location of our 2023 trip). Bute has some fine, and unusual, Neolithic archaeology, as befits an island that would have been so well connected to both central and western Scotland, and Ireland.

The weekend will begin with introductory talks on evening of Friday 15th May including an overview of the Neolithic of Bute, recent finds and discoveries, and some contextualisation. We'll spent all Saturday, and the Sunday morning, exploring a range of megaliths across the island's rugged landscape and also get access to the amazing collections in the local museum. Over the weekend we will also be able to find out more about the amazing legacy of Dorothy Marshall who did so much to elucidate prehistory on Bute. As a special bonus, for those who can stay on for the Sunday afternoon, we will return to the mainland and visit **Ballochmyle in Ayrshire**, one of the most stunning rock art panels in northern Europe. Truly a weekend of hidden gems!

The sites we visit will mostly be in fields and relatively close to parking, but there will also be a couple of longer walks across upland moor landscapes albeit on paths. More specific details will be provided nearer the time. A reasonable level of fitness will be required. The weather might also change very quickly, so be prepared for all eventualities and bring your walking boots, gloves and waterproofs as well as sun block and sunglasses.

Our base will be **Rothesay** and in the tradition of the NSG, we ask participants to make their own arrangements in terms of travel and accommodation. We will be based in the **Glenburn Hotel** in Rothesay and have negotiated a special dinner, bed and breakfast rate for this: see below. To reach Bute, one needs a ferry; again, more details below. We will travel around in pooled cars and there will also be a 13-seater minibus at our disposal (aka Brophy party bus); we can firm up plans for who goes in what vehicle when we are all on the island.

Please use the booking form below and return by post or email by **Friday 28th March 2026**. A fee will be charged to cover some costs, **£30 per person / £20 unwaged**, covering cost of venue and minibus hire, fuel and ferry for the minibus and other minor expenses. Please pay cash on arrival on 15th May. If not travelling by car, please ensure you stay within easy walking distance of Rothesay town centre.

Hotel details

We have arranged a deal with the Glenburn, a historic hotel near the centre of Rothesay.

<https://bespokehotels.com/glenburn-hotel/>

The Dinner, Bed & Breakfast rate is as follows:

- Double or Twin Rooms for double occupancy: £60 per person per night
- Sole Occupancy Room rate: £90 per person room per night

To book, please call the hotel on 01700 502 500 or email: reservations@glenburn-hotel.com and the team will be able to take note of your room type and take payment. Please use the reservation reference **GA000839** and it would not harm to mention you are in the NSG party. If you are willing to share a twin room, please let them know, and you will be allocated a roommate once all bookings are complete (this is the £60 a night option; £90 will get you a twin or double room to yourself). Please also tell them of any dietary requirements at the time of booking, although I will remind you nearer the time.

NB The hotel does not open for the season until 20th February, but I have been told emails will still be answered in the meantime.

Please note further: **there are other options in town** including hotels, B&B and a youth hostel. We encourage early booking. You can stay outside Rothesay if you have a car but otherwise I recommend you stay in town.

Ferry to Bute

The ferry to Rothesay on Bute runs more or less hourly and the crossing takes 30 minutes. It leaves from Wemyss Bay, and you can get to this port by car (45 minutes' drive from Glasgow) or train from Glasgow Central. You do not need to book the ferry in advance even for cars, but it is probably easiest if you do this. It is not strictly possible to book onto a specific ferry, so I recommend you get there about 45 minutes before the departure time to get into the queue. It is easy to kill time in Wemyss Bay as there are cafes, a bar, a fantastic second-hand bookshop and one of the finest Victorian railway stations in the UK. You can also cross as a foot passenger or with a bike. The Glenburn Hotel is about 15 minutes' walk from the ferry port in Rothesay or a 2-minute drive, and there is plenty of hotel / street parking.

For bookings, timetables and prices, see <https://www.calmac.co.uk/>

There is a second crossing to Bute from the mainland (Colintraive to Rhubodach) but bear in mind that the Argyll port of Colintraive is a 2-to-3-hour drive from Glasgow, and travel links from Rhubodach to Rothesay are poor unless you have a car.

Itinerary

We will begin with evening talks from 5pm in the Ballroom at the Glenburn, followed by dinner. In the following day and a half, we are aiming to visit a series of stone circles and settings, some rock art sites, a couple of chambered cairns, and access materials in Bute Museum. We will allow time to buy packed lunch supplies on the Saturday and have lunch in Rothesay on the Sunday (both own expense). A full programme will be made available once 6 weeks before the event. Ballochmyle is an optional extra and needs a car or someone to give you a lift / seat on the minibus.

Any questions? Ask the organiser: Kenny Brophy (kenny.brophy@glasgow.ac.uk)



Neolithic Studies Group Spring Meeting to Bute

15th – 17th May 2025

Booking Form

Name:

Email address:

Mobile number: (email will be the main means of contact)

If booking more than one place, please give additional name(s):

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Are you planning on bringing a car? YES / NO / NOT SURE (delete as applicable)

Accommodation plans [please book yourself]: Glenburn Hotel / Other [give details if known]

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Payment: Standard Fee £30 / Unwaged £20 (delete as applicable)

Cash to be paid on arrival, no need for pre-payment

Photographic permission: I give permission to the Neolithic Studies Group for my photograph or video image to be used in the local and national media or other promotional material for which it may be suitable. This use extends to all publicity for the Neolithic Studies Group which may include digital reproduction for use on the internet or in social media as appropriate. Please tick the box below to consent to this.

☐ I consent to my photograph being used as described above.

How we will use your data: Information in this form will only be used to allow us to plan the fieldtrip and communicate with you about the fieldtrip, and will not be shared with others or stored beyond the end of May 2025. This is in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR legislation. Please sign to indicate consent for us to use your data as described here.

Signed

Please email completed forms to: kenny.brophy@glasgow.ac.uk or post to Kenny Brophy, Archaeology, Molema Building, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, G12 8QQ

Completed forms must be received by Friday 28th March 2025