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Scotland's oldest logboat to set sail on a new journey

Images: The Carpow Logboat at Perth Museum and Art Gallery.
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Culture Perth and Kinross have announced that one of the star historic objects from the collection is set to undergo further conservation treatment before going on display in the new Perth Museum currently being created in the former Perth City Hall.

The logboat, one of the oldest and best-preserved of its kind in Scotland, was carved out from one single tree trunk and has been radiocarbon-dated to around 1,000 BCE.

The 3000-year-old Bronze Age Carpow logboat will once again visit the National Museums Scotland Centre for Conservation and Analytical Research in Granton, where it underwent initial conservation work for six years after being painstakingly excavated from the River Tay at Carpow in the summer of 2006.

As part of the original conservation in 2006, the logboat had to be cut into 3 sections, carefully packed, and crane loaded onto a hi-ab lorry for transport to Edinburgh. It has been on display in Perth Museum and Art Gallery since 2017.

The forthcoming treatment is anticipated to be carried out over three weeks, after which the logboat will be stored at Granton until installed in the new Museum.

During this next phase of conservation, the logboat will undergo reshaping work and crack repairs. In the dry museum environment, away from water, the Carpow Logboat has slowly become flatter and less boat-shaped, with balsawood fillings from the original treatment falling out. This new

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conservation treatment will aim to return the boat to its original shape as much as possible and provide a supportive mount to reduce future recurrence of this problem.

Anna Zwagerman, Conservation Officer at Culture Perth and Kinross, said, *“We really look forward to seeing the boat returned closer to its original shape and properly supported, so future generations can marvel at this Bronze Age wonder for years to come.”*

The logboat, one of the most exciting archaeological discoveries made in Tayside this century, was first officially reported in 2001 by metal detectorists exploring the mudflats at Carpow during a summer of exceptionally low river levels. An archaeological assessment, led by Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust, established that the protruding wood was a 9m/30ft long logboat.

When the logboat returns to public display in 2024, it will encourage visitors to explore the importance of the River Tay in everyday and ceremonial life, sitting alongside some of the Bronze Age swords and other metalwork that has been recovered from the Tay. The new Perth Museum will open in Spring 2024, where the Carpow Logboat will return from its latest journey and once again welcome old and new friends.

Mark Hall, Collections Officer with Culture Perth and Kinross, who has been working with the boat since its discovery, said, *“It is a very exciting prospect to think of the boat undergoing further conservation so that it looks its best when it returns to Perth and is able again to share with visitors its rich insights into how people have lived with the River Tay.”*

The new Perth Museum being developed at Perth City Hall is due to open in Spring 2024. It will be managed in partnership between Perth and Kinross Council and Culture Perth and Kinross and is supported by £10 million from the UK Government as part of the Tay Cities Region Deal – a £700 million regional investment programme jointly funded by the UK and Scottish governments and regional partners.

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The Carpow Logboat remains on display at Perth Museum & Art Gallery until 23rd August 2022.

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For further media information, contact Andrew Wallace at Culture Perth and Kinross at adwallace@culturepk.org.uk

Notes to editors

About Culture Perth and Kinross

Culture Perth and Kinross is a charitable Trust responsible for the delivery and development of the archive, library, museum and gallery and creative learning in Perth and Kinross.

Our vision is to be at the heart of a cultural community that connects people, ideas, knowledge, and collections. Our mission is to develop and deliver a range of sector-leading services, public programmes and partnerships which engage a wide and diverse audience in the best of local, national, and international culture.